Shropshire Council

Shropshire Early Years Conference 2026

WiFi

Name: SOVNET

Password: SOVNET2024!

Agenda for the day

08:30 – 09:15	Arrival with coffee
09:15 – 09:30	Welcome and Introduction from DCS
09:30 – 10:30	**Dr Aaron Bradbury – Bottling Joy in the Early Years!**
10:30 – 11:00	Break, coffee and network
11:00 – 11:45	**RISE Reception Offer - Sharron Philpot**
11:45 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 13:00	Pitches from Marketplace including SPH
13:00 – 13:15	Literacy Trust - Laura Benson
13:15 - 14:00	**Trauma Informed Practice - KCA**
14:00 – 14:15	Break
14:15 – 15:00	**Schema Play - Andrina Flinders**
15:00 – 15:15	Best Start in Life Update - Rosie Boardman
15:15 – 15:30	Closing comments

Welcome and Introductions

David Shaw
Director of Children's Services

RISE | Department for Education

Regional Improvement for Standards & Excellence

'RISE for All'

5th November 2026

RISE | Department for Education

Introduction and Context

Where do I fit in- where do you fit in?

Our mission is to build a school-led, self-improving system

Regional Improvement for Standards & Excellence (RISE) is a structured, evidence-informed programme. We draw on data, for targeted intervention and universal, sector-led improvement, to raise standards everywhere so that every child gets a great education, wherever they live.

1



Targeted Intervention

Targeted, funded & mandatory support for schools that have not made progress across two or more Ofsted inspections.

2



Universal Offer

Improvement initiatives offered to all schools, focused on the four National Priorities – allowing for regional flair.

RISE Advisers

Who are RISE Advisers?

- Experienced school improvement leaders drawn from schools, trusts and local authorities
- Current or former headteachers, trust leaders or senior education leaders
- Work as part of Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams
- Advise Department for Education's Regional Directors on school improvement priorities and strategies

We have 65 RISE advisers. On average, they work 2 days a week for DfE.

What do they do?

Targeted RISE



- Supporting schools facing the greatest challenges
- Diagnose school improvement needs and co-construct improvement plans
- Commission support from high-quality schools, trusts and other organisations
- Monitor progress and sustainability of improvement over time

Universal RISE



- Connect schools to effective practice
- Facilitate networks and collaboration
- Share evidence and innovation
- Support delivery of national priorities

Every school is a RISE school, whether through universal resources or targeted support for schools facing particular challenges

Opportunity Mission

"Break the link between a child's background and their future success"

Pillar 2 : Help **every child to achieve and thrive** at school, through excellent teaching and high standards

RISE National Priorities

- Inclusive Mainstream
- Attainment
- Reception
- Attendance

Targeted	Universal			
	Hubs	**CPD/Resources**	**Convening Activity**	**Call to Action**
Structural intervention or mandatory support through **Targeted RISE** for those schools facing the biggest challenges. Consulting on **extending eligibility** for Targeted RISE support to schools with the **very lowest levels of pupil achievement**.	Exploring how inclusion can be embedded across all hubs	CPD in development; NPQs; Universal SEND services; Inclusion in Practice	Conferences to share effective practice; **Networks** (including those organised by Hubs); Mentoring for school leaders KS3 Alliance Priority conversations (as applicable)	SEND CPD; Access to enrichment
	Curriculum & Teaching School Hubs; Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs; Reception Networks	National Centres for Maths, Physics & Languages; NPQs		KS3 - transition & pupil progress
	Attendance & Behaviour Hubs; pupil mentoring	NPQs; Maths Champions programme Best practice toolkits		Enrichment; Parental engagement

RISE Advisers

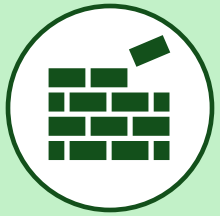
RISE Regional Plans & Partnerships

Universal Grants

Universal Digital service (Oct 2026) "compare & connect with similar schools"

RISE Roadmap

Phase 1



Foundations

2025

- RISE Launched Feb 2025
- First RISE advisers recruited
- First Targeted schools engaged
- Supporting organisations matched
- Diagnostic and planning
- Supporting individual schools

Phase 2



Scaling Improvement

2026

- Regional plans published
- Regional delivery partnerships launched
- Growing networks & alliances
- Continuing Universal Grants
- Digital service launch
- Expand eligibility for targeted support

Phase 3



Sustaining Capability

2027 and beyond

- Mature regional improvement architecture
- School benchmarking through digital services
- Stronger school-to-school networks
- Leadership and mentoring embedded across the system

EARLY SUCCESSES FROM THE FIRST YEAR OF RISE

A national programme, gathering pace

Early Successes 2025 - 2026

Targeted Intervention Delivered

600+
'schools' identified for targeted intervention & support

65
RISE advisers appointed nationally to date

9
DfE regions delivering RISE teams and plans

31
peer-led universal RISE schemes funded to date

Early signs of improvement in attainment (GLD, KS2 and KS4)

Universal RISE Delivered

- **9 regional annual plans**
- **1 National Delivery Partnership Board**
- **9 Regional Delivery Partnership Boards**
- **Reception Year & Primary Networks**
- **Attendance & Behaviour Hubs across regions**
- **KS3 Alliances in every region**
- **A raft of annual conferences on priority areas**

Four national priorities for RISE

In the 2026 Schools White Paper, there are four national priorities for RISE work that drive improvement across the national system.

Reception Year Quality

Reducing inequalities in early years outcomes, especially for disadvantaged (FSM) pupils. The Schools White Paper 2026 targets 75% of five-year-olds reaching a Good Level of Development and 90% meeting the Y1 phonics standard. RISE will share best-practice phonics and oracy provision, strengthen nursery-to-reception transition from May 2026, and has launched new RISE reception networks.

Attainment at Every Key Stage

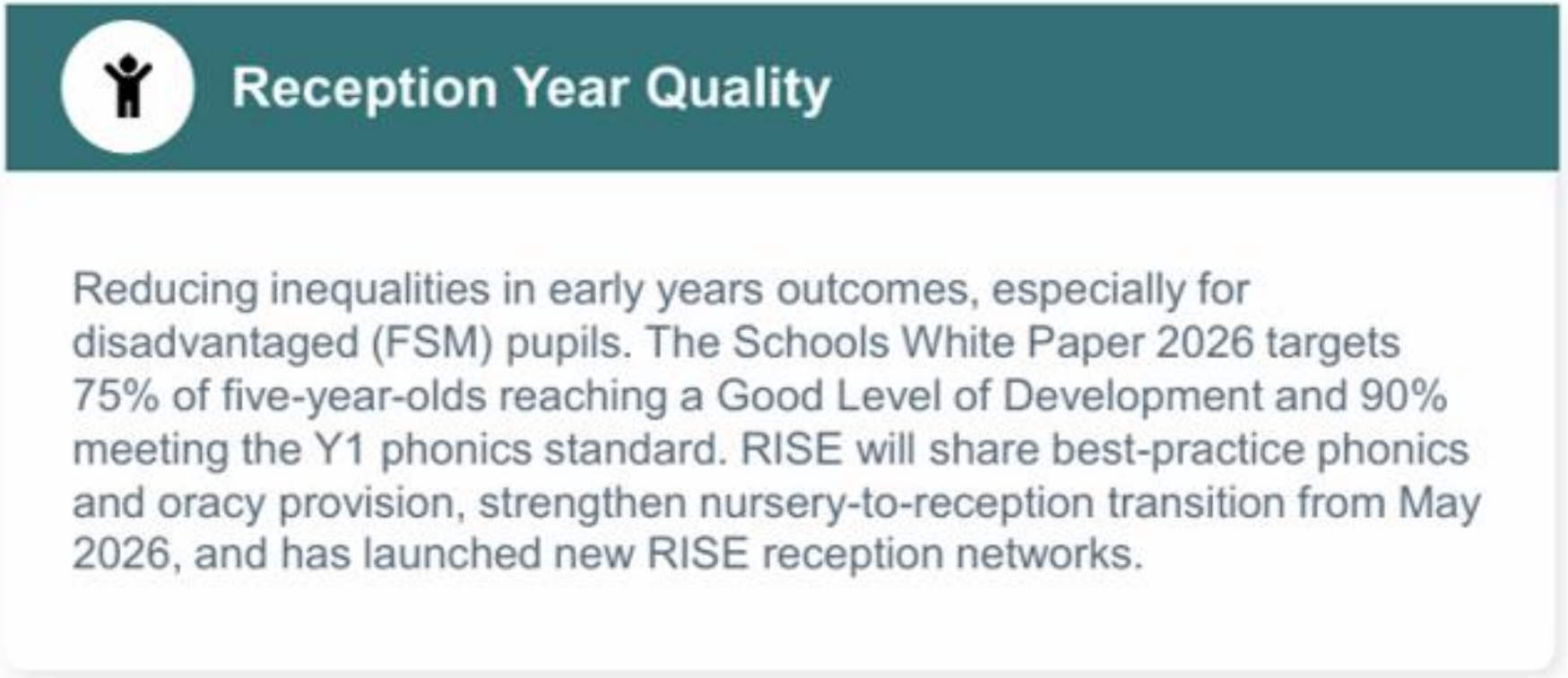
Closing disadvantage gaps and raising results in A8 and English and maths, especially where LAs remain below pre-pandemic levels. The Schools White Paper 2026 aims to raise the average Attainment 8 score to 50 and halve the disadvantage gap — about a full grade higher per GCSE for disadvantaged pupils. At KS2 and GLD, there are reception networks and primary networks that will support high and rising standards. At KS4, support is extended to Year 10 & 11.

Inclusive Mainstream

Strengthening consistency of inclusion, belonging and academic success across local areas. The Schools White Paper 2026 backs this with a £1.6bn Inclusive Mainstream Fund, £1.8bn for Experts at Hand, and new National Inclusion Standards. Regions work with their Innovation and Improvement Alliances (RIIA) to implement SEND reforms, develop inclusion bases and broaden access to specialists.

Attendance & Behaviour

Improving post-pandemic attendance underpins higher outcomes for students in every pupil group. Every lesson, every day counts, especially for those experiencing disadvantage. The White Paper targets a 1.3-point rise to over 94% by 2028/29 — about 20 million extra school days a year — backed by a new belonging and engagement framework. RISE gives intensive support to schools over three terms, plus wider networking, targeting Year 6-7 and 7-8 transitions.



West Midlands Challenges:

- Significant variation in GLD outcomes
- Persistent disadvantage gaps
- SEND outcomes remain a concern
- Slower improvement than national trends

Reception Year Quality

One Connected Early Years System

BEST START IN LIFE

EARLY YEARS STRONGER PRACTICE HUBS

Department for Education

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

Funded by

Department for Education

English Hubs

Department for Education

Reception networks

MathsHUBS

Government initiative, Local Authority led with each LA having it’s own strategy focused on improving outcomes for children from pregnancy through to age 5, ensuring they are healthy, safe, and ready to learn when they start school

Main focus of the strategy

The strategy aims to:

- Improve child development and school readiness.
- Reduce inequalities for disadvantaged children and families.
- Provide joined-up support for families from pregnancy to early childhood.
- Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare and early education.
- Support parents in their child's early learning and development.

Key areas covered

1. Better support for families
2. Parenting and home learning
3. Health and child development
4. Early education and childcare
5. Quality of early years provision
6. Support for children with additional needs

Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs

RISE | Department for Education

The stronger practice hubs support early years settings and childminders in their area to adopt evidence-based practice improvements. From April 2026, Ambition Institute has taken on the role of delivery partner for the programme, appointed by the Department for Education as part of the government's Best Start in Life strategy.

Work with Childminders, PVI settings and school nurseries, primarily focused on birth to 4 (although there are now two programmes running for reception year.

- Professional development and networks and bespoke support as follows:
- Stronger Practice Advisors- working with leaders in settings to support best practice.

EYs Learning Leads – subject specific support (up to 3 days per term) focused on PSED, CLL, Early Maths, plus Professional Development
offer in these areas
They also signpost other National Programmes, and work closely with Maths and English Hubs.

HEART Early Years Stronger Practice Hub — Birmingham, Herefordshire, Solihull

Thrive Together Early Years Stronger Practice Hub — Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton

Weave Early Years Stronger Practice Hub — Coventry, Warwickshire, Worcestershire

Learn & Grow Together Early Years Stronger Practice Hub — Telford & Wrekin, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Shropshire

Department for Education

Reception networks

RISE | Department for Education

Reception networks are part of the government's Best Start in Life strategy and the RISE universal offer to help schools improve the quality of reception-year provision.

They are school-led, locally delivered networks focused on sharing strong, evidence-informed reception practice. Each network is led by a reception-network lead school. Lead schools have sustained strengths in early years provision and leadership, and support other schools in their local area.

Through reception networks, schools can access:

- regular opportunities to discuss reception-year practice with peers
- visits and open days to observe reception provision in practice
- shared resources and approaches that support high-quality reception teaching and leadership

RISE Reception Networks hold regular half-termly virtual network meetings and termly in-person open days

Reception Network Lead Schools do not receive funding for their work and support.

West Midlands

- Billesley Primary School (The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust)
- Co-Op Academy Glebe (The Co-Operative Academies Trust)
- Lea Forest Primary Academy (Lift Schools)
- Montgomery Primary Academy (Lift Schools)
- Ryders Hayes School (Primary Learning Trust)

RISE | Department for Education

July 2025 - DfE launched the Giving every child the best start in life strategy. This included a commitment to improve the quality of education that children receive in early years settings, including childminders and reception classes.

- Additional reception year content in the Early years child development training
- Excellence in reception teaching , a new training course for reception class teachers
- Increased number of places on the Early years leadership national professional qualification
- Enhanced early years content in the Headship national professional qualification (NPQH) (NPQEYL)

RISE | Department for Education

Which programme should I take if I am a **current or aspiring leader** working in a:	
PVI setting and/or as a childminder	**School, including maintained nursery schools (e.g. headteachers, KS1 or Early Years leads)**
NPQ Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)	NPQ Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)
	NPQ for Headship (NPQH)

Which programme should I take if I am a **practitioner/teacher** working in a:	
PVI setting and/or as a childminder	**School, including maintained nursery schools (e.g. current or future reception teachers, KS1 or Early Years leads)**
Early years child development training	Early years child development training
	Excellence in reception teaching

RISE | Department for Education

Coming Soon

- *New RISE Universal webpage (searchable and navigable)*
- *Universal RISE West Midlands bespoke projects (including EYs focused project)*
- *Data tool looking at KS2/4 data aligned to those in place for GLD and attendance*
- *West Midlands 'Discovery Days'*

RISE | Department for Education

West Midlands RISE - Discovery Days

- *Dual focus: Inclusive Mainstream and Reception Year (EYFS)*
- *Practice to share identified across all 14 West Midlands LAs*
- *Offer going out to those schools to host 'Discovery Days'*
- *If successful, planned expansion through the year*

RISE | Department for Education

What can you do?

RISE | Department for Education

Comments, questions and discussion points

Useful Links

- RISE: West Midlands - GOV.UK - the RISE universal offer including the communities of practice and how to get involved
- Regional improvement for standards and excellence (RISE): school support - GOV.UK – links to all national priority pages and resources
- Universal RISE: upcoming events - GOV.UK – detailing upcoming Universal RISE national and regional events.
- RISE attainment improvement - GOV.UK including information on the Key Stage 3 alliance:
- Home | KS3 Alliance
- RISE attendance and behaviour hubs programme - GOV.UK – including sign up form for the Attendance and behaviour hubs offer.
- Early years stronger practice hubs - GOV.UK – for further information on the Early Years hub offer, including further information here:
- Sharing evidence-informed best practice to support early years education and childcare | Stronger Practice Hubs

Please feel free to get in touch with the regional RISE team at westmidlands.riseregionalmailbox@education.gov.uk with any queries, feedback or suggestions.

New, national peer networks for inclusion bases that have been launched for:

- autism specialism
- specialism in speech, language and communication development
- social and emotional development

Settings can sign up to these here: National Inclusion Bases networks - sign up form – Fill in form

Additional Links:

- Reception networks - GOV.UK - information on reception networks including confirmation our regional reception network lead schools are
- School-based Nursery Capital Grant 2027 to 2030 - GOV.UK - school based nursery information
- Best Start Family Hubs: what parents need to know – The Education Hub
- Inclusion bases in schools - GOV.UK
- Developing an inclusion strategy using the inclusive mainstream fund - GOV.UK

Lunch 11:45 – 12:45

Learn & Grow Together
Early Years Stronger Practice Hub
Staffordshire | Stoke-on-Trent | Telford and Wrekin | Shropshire

Welcome to The Learn and Grow Together Stronger Practice Hub

Supported by Ambition Institute
Supported by Department for Education
BEST START IN LIFE

Welcome to the Learn and Grow Together Stronger Practice Hub

Our vision is to make evidence-informed practice and research accessible to all early years providers, enabling babies and young children to thrive. Drawing on a breadth and depth of early years knowledge and leadership, our Hub brings together trusted experts and partners, including SENCOs, Early Years Area Experts, PVI managers, childminders, and experienced leaders from across the sector.

Learn & Grow Together
Early Years Stronger Practice Hub
Staffordshire | Stoke-on-Trent | Telford and Wrekin | Shropshire

Our Commitment

We are committed to learning, growing, and improving together.

- We believe that every early years professional deserves access to high-quality research, practical ideas, and meaningful professional development that can make a **real difference** to children's lives.
- By making **evidence-informed** practice accessible, sharing effective approaches, and nurturing **strong professional networks**, we create opportunities for educators to reflect, collaborate, and develop their expertise.
- Together, we support babies and young children to thrive, ensuring they get the **Best Start in Life** and build strong foundations for future learning and development.

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Our Theory of Change

Through collaboration, professional development and shared learning, we strengthen early years practice so that every child has **the best start in life.**

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Strengthen Partnerships
Work in collaboration across Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire to add value, share expertise and maximise impact.

Build Knowledge and Expertise
Enable early years practitioners and leaders to learn from the best available evidence and sector practice.

Invest in People
Make the most of public funding to provide high-quality professional development, coaching and support for the early years workforce.

Be a System Leader
Act as a system leader, working with stakeholders in the wider early years sector for settings, childminders and schools.

Develop a Sustainable Workforce
Support, retain and develop the early years workforce for the future.

Our Purpose
To strengthen early years practice across Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire through collaboration, professional development and shared learning.

Our Outcomes

Improved Practice and Leadership
Practitioners and leaders have increased knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver high-quality early years education.

Inclusive, High-Quality Early Years Provision
Settings are supported to create inclusive, nurturing environments where all children can thrive, including those with SEND and disadvantaged children.

Better Outcomes for Children
More children are ready for school, with strong communication and language, PSED, early maths and foundations for future learning.

A Stronger, More Sustainable Sector
A skilled, confident and valued early years workforce, working together to create a lasting, positive impact across our region.

Our Long-Term Impact
Every child in Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire has **the best start in life,** supported by high-quality, inclusive early years education and a connected, confident workforce.

We cover...



The Hub supports providers across:

- Staffordshire
- Stoke-on-Trent
- Telford and Wrekin
- Shropshire

Staffordshire County Council

City of Stoke-on-Trent

Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Shropshire Council

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Our Lead Setting and Partners

Lead Setting

Oaklands Nursery School
Hub Lead – Sally Lynch

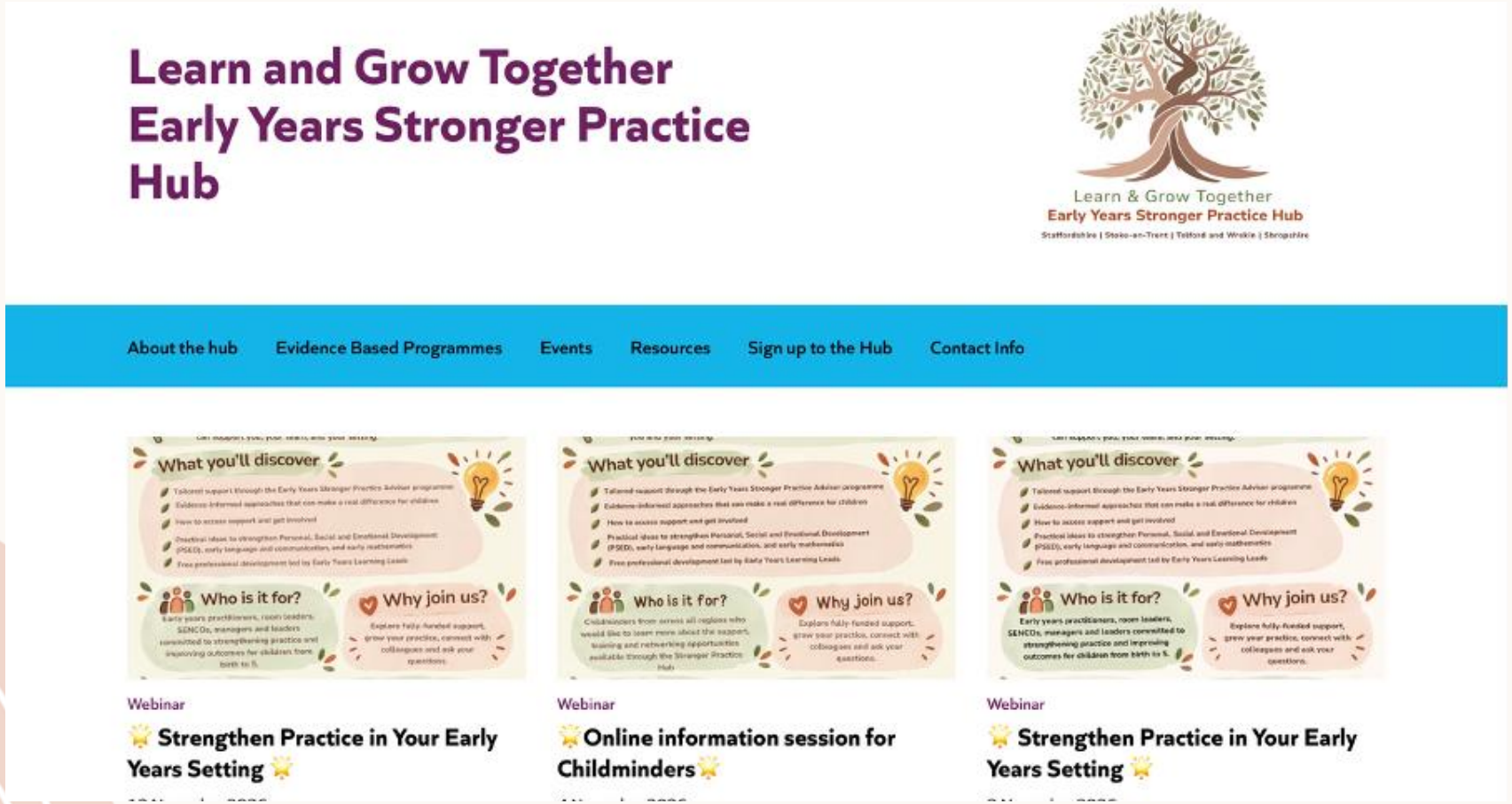
EYSPA Programme Lead
Jude Brown

Partners

- Little Owl Childcare Ltd
- Burnwood Primary Academy
- Shiny Stars Day Nursery
- Hednesford Nursery School
- Cindy Hayden Childminder
- Halesfield Day Nursery

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Learn and Grow Together Hub Page



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Share you ideas for the hub here!

SCAN ME!

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Our EY Support Programmes

The hub will deliver 2 fully funded programmes starting in January 2027

- EYSPA (Early Years Stronger Practice Advisors)
- EYLL (Early Years Learning Leads)
- For all settings that have children aged 0-4

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EYSPA

Early Years Stronger Practice Advisors

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Our EYSPA Team

Melanie Wright
Group-based EYSPA



Lauren Atkinson
Group-based EYSPA



Natalie Tranter
Group-based EYSPA



Charlotte Cartwright
Group-based EYSPA



Cindy Hayden
Childminder EYSPA



Our experienced team of advisors will work across all 4 local Authorities: Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Telford & Wrekin. 4 group-based advisors and 1 childminder advisor.

Supported by

Ambition Institute

Department for Education

BEST START IN LIFE

The Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser Programme is building on
those foundations by delivering targeted support to eligible early years
settings to:

- Boost children's development
- Improve outcomes
- Narrow the disadvantage gap

- As announced through the Best Start in Life Strategy, an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub can offer bespoke support, coaching, and guidance to help leadership address issues quickly and effectively.
- EYSPA supports leadership across the setting in identifying areas for improvement and making sustainable changes.

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To be eligible for support, a setting will have at least one of the following:

- Have received a ‘Needs Attention’ or ‘Urgent Improvement’ grading on their most recent **Ofsted report card** (or ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’ under the old framework)
- Have a high number of children on roll eligible for **Early Years Pupil Premium**
- Have children on roll eligible for the **disadvantaged 2-year-old** offer
- Have a significant number of children on roll with **SEND** and who qualify for support
- Settings that do not meet the criteria can still self-refer or be referred by their local authority; however, eligible settings will be given higher priority.

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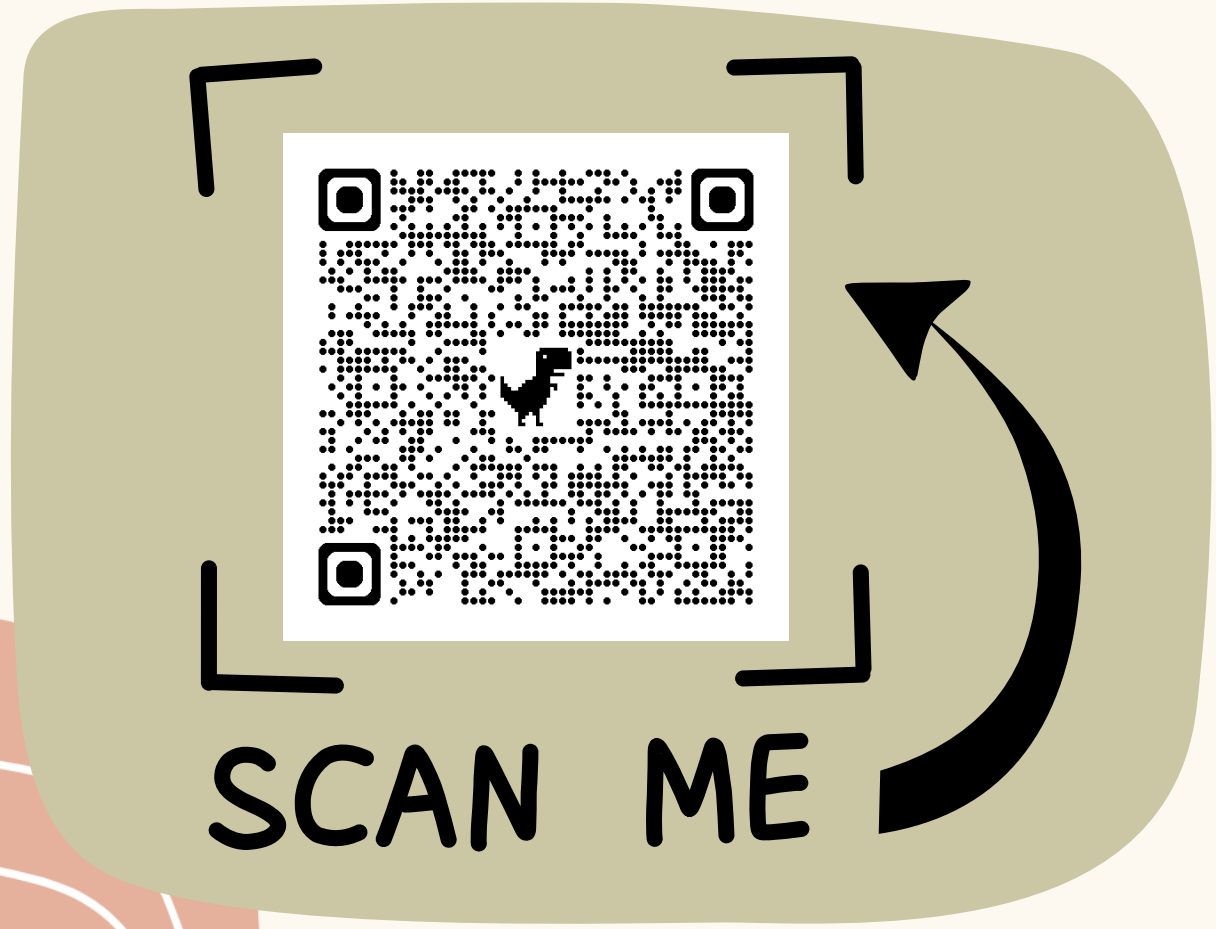
Application is through a self-referral form

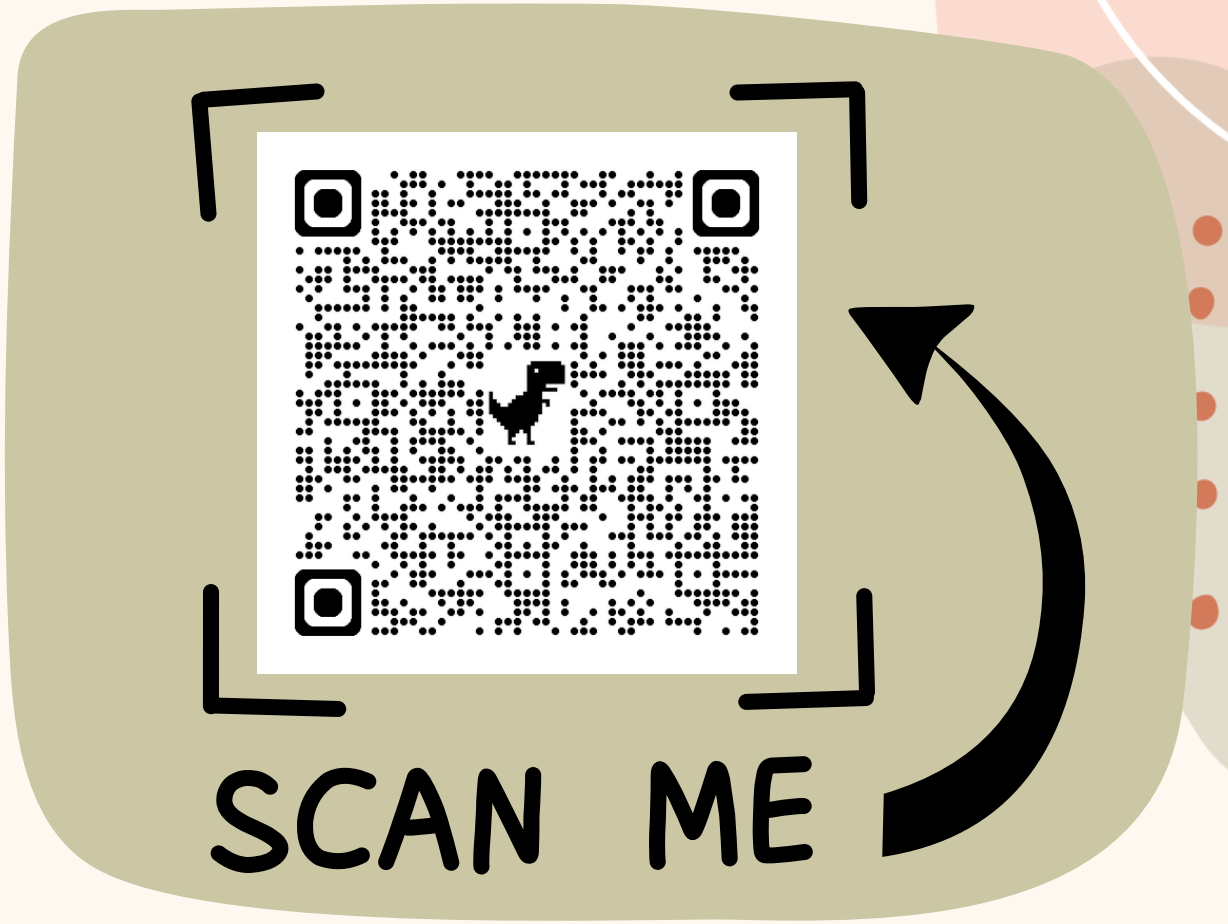
- Settings that are offered support through the programme will be asked to complete an online diagnostic form.
- This allows the EYSPH to learn more about the setting and their main areas of concern.
- The precise balance of activities will depend on the setting's needs and the priorities identified through the diagnostic process.

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Group-Based Childminders

Application is through a self-referral form





EYLL

Early Years Learning Leads

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The EYLL Programme

EYLLs will deliver evidence-informed professional development programmes, designed by early years experts, to strengthen knowledge, confidence, and practice in key areas of children's learning and development.

Support will include:

- Specialist support in early language, early mathematics and PSED for educators working with children aged 2 to 4 years
- Dedicated early maths and early language professional development for educators working with children under 2 years
- Practical strategies that can be applied within everyday practice
- Opportunities to collaborate and learn alongside other professionals
- Guidance to help translate research into meaningful action
- Resources and tools to support continued professional development

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The Delivery Model

- Between 12 and 18 participants to take part in each cohort
- Blended model of delivery
- Opportunity to learn with peers
- Settings can apply to the hub for bespoke support
- Leads will be able to collaborate with you to develop personalised action

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Benefits for Settings

- Building Stronger Practice
- Increased staff knowledge and confidence
- Evidence-based approaches
- Reflection and improvement of practice
- Better outcomes for children

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EYLL CPD Programmes

Choose a programme

- Early Language
- Early Maths
- PSED

Register your interest

- Complete the application/Expression of Interest form
- Confirm staff availability and commitment to attend sessions

Join a cohort

- Access online learning through the Learning Management System (LMS)
- Attend live webinars and seminars throughout the term

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Thank you

We are excited to be part of the Stronger Practice Hub Community

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NATIONAL YEAR OF READING 2026

Why is 2026 the National Year of Reading?

In 2025, fewer than 1 in 3 children said they enjoyed reading.

Only 1 in 5 read by choice daily

1 in 6 (18% / 6.6 million people) adults aged 16 to 65 in England have very poor literacy skills.

In 2025, 1 in 10 children do not have a single book of their own at home.

This rises to 1 in 6 of children receiving free school meals.

Why does this matter?

Reading for pleasure helps makes people



- Happier
- Healthier
- Wealthier
- More Employable
- Less Lonely

The National Year of Reading 2026 is unlocking a love of reading that lasts a lifetime, through:

- A national public-facing creative and media campaign
- A comprehensive, free schools offer from EY to Secondary
- Work in the criminal justice sector
- Work in communities and workplaces

We are working across the country, getting people reading by celebrating all types of reading, and encouraging people to Go All In on their passions through books.



Since January we have...

Reached over 2 million children

Helped distribute over 600,000 books, magazines and audiobooks

Signed up over 1000 partners and 150 ambassadors, reaching at least 30million people

Seen almost 70,000 volunteers commit their support

Activated in over 3000 libraries and 150 Local Authorities across the UK

Our impact...

Across the 12 regions/devolved nations participating in NYR, over 300 Lead Literacy Champions have been trained, over 50 of whom are in the West Midlands

Mid-2026 polling found that found one in five adults said their feelings about reading had become more positive over the previous six months

The Annual Literacy Survey 2026 found the first increase in reading enjoyment in children aged 5-18 in 5 years, but socioeconomic gaps continue to widen, and EY children still need more support

GO ALL IN

There’s more work to do…

That’s why the Education Select Committee has now called for a **Decade of Reading**.
We are now planning for a lasting legacy of the work that has happened in 2026.



CTAs

Sign up

Log in

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN THE JOURNEY .

Amplify

Promote sign-up to the autumn offer and events

Explore

Explore working with us on digital-by-default, asynchronous learning models that give flexibility for the schools and settings we work with across the organisation.

Engage

Engage with and support wider engagement with the programme

In partnership with

National Literacy Trust

Change your story

BEST START IN LIFE

Embedding the Home Learning Environment in Best Start Family Hubs

NLT Early Years Activity

Programmes

- First Words Together
- Early Words Together at age 2
- Early Words Together 3-4
- Talk With Tales for Children

Resources

- Practitioners: www.nationalliteracytrust.org.uk
- Families: www.wordsforlife.co.uk

Campaigns

- Early Words Matter
- National Year of Reading
- Best Start in Life

Policy & Research

- Influencing policy
- Early years research



We are in receipt of a grant from the Department for Education to continue to support Best Start Family Hubs with the parenting and Home Learning Environment Delivery expectations.

We support delivery through dissemination of information and good practice, direct support of LA's & FH's, and a suite of family facing resources.



GO ALL IN

DfE funded offer for all LAs

- Practical, evidence-based HLE resources for families
- Communications pack, containing campaign assets
- Support with digital offer
- Practitioner guidance and training
- Place-based system support
- Dissemination of good practice – NCFH CoP's & webinars




Using actions and sitting face to face will help build their understanding


National Literacy Trust
Change your story
Download our free booklet
Share stories with me
Simple, fun ways to share books and stories with your little one
In partnership with
BEST START IN LIFE


National Literacy Trust
Change your story
In partnership with
BEST START IN LIFE
Share stories with me


National Literacy Trust
Change your story
In partnership with
BEST START IN LIFE
Embedding the home learning environment:
evidence, practice and partnerships


Check out our favourite activities and tips to boost your child's speech, language and communication, while having fun too!
Download our free resources
Here are some of our favourite activities to complete with your 0-5 year olds. Each one is free and will help your child to learn new words and develop their communication skills, while having fun.
Chat, Play, Read
Walk and talk trail
Chat, Play, Read booklets
Our walk and talk trail is packed with tips and tricks to help develop your child's early language and communication skills. It's a great reason to get outside and have fun exploring together.
Chatting, playing and reading with your children are all great ways to support them to learn new words and communication skills. This booklet is filled with simple, fun activities to try at home.
Learning to talk
We've worked with an expert speech and language therapist to create five simple steps to help you encourage your baby or toddler to talk. Each tip should easily fit into your day-to-day life and support your child's speech, language and communication development.
View the tips


When you're outside, why not:
Count 1 2 3 4
Move in different ways
Splash in a puddle
Use your senses
Notice the small things
Play I Spy
National Literacy Trust
Change your story
In partnership with
Better Health Start for Life


When you're outside, chat about these things:
National Literacy Trust
Change your story
In partnership with
Better Health Start for Life

GO ALL IN

1. 

Better Health Start for Life: Sing songs and rhymes to your baby
National Literacy Trust • 712 views • 4 months ago

2. 

Better Health Start for Life: Talk with your baby as much as you can
National Literacy Trust • 409 views • 4 months ago

3. 

Better Health Start for Life: Share stories with your baby
National Literacy Trust • 291 views • 4 months ago

4. 

Better Health Start for Life: Talk when you're out and about
National Literacy Trust • 248 views • 4 months ago

5. 

Better Health Start for Life: Sing songs and rhymes together
National Literacy Trust • 309 views • 4 months ago

6. 

Better Health Start for Life: Talk about the sounds around you
National Literacy Trust • 272 views • 4 months ago

7. 

Better Health Start for Life: Follow your child's interests when playing
National Literacy Trust • 205 views • 4 months ago

8. 

Better Health Start for Life: Talk with your child about every day tasks
National Literacy Trust • 236 views • 4 months ago

9. 

Better Health Start for Life: Read and talk abo
National Literacy Trust • 274 views • 4 months ago

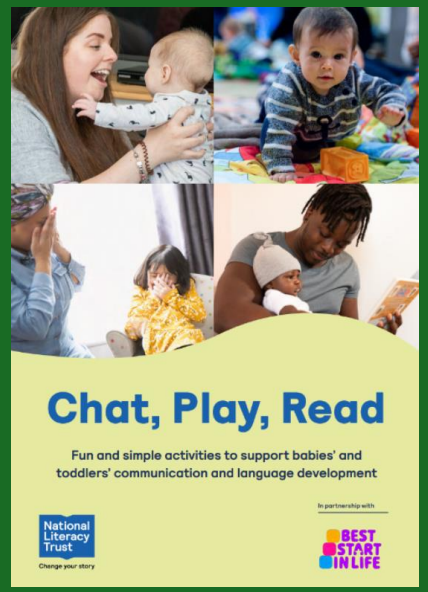
10. 

Better Health Start for Life: Talk to each other
National Literacy Trust • 403 views • 4 months ago

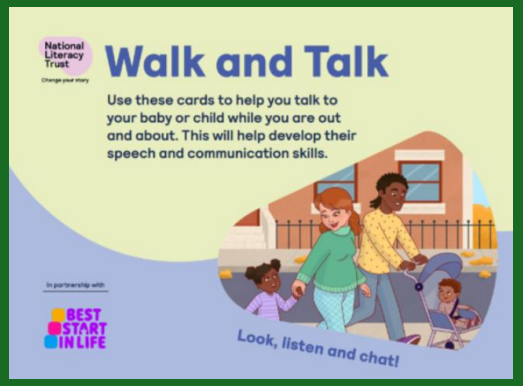














Get in touch for more information:

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Shropshire Council

Andrina Flinders

Schema Play

Together, we'll explore the SchemaPlay journey;

What is SchemaPlay?

Understanding the patterns in children's play and what they might reveal.

What do educators notice and do differently?

Looking beyond the activity to consider the thinking and potential learning.

How do we make it part of everyday practice?

Learning from others and exploring small changes we can make in our own settings.



Beginning to see play differently ...



What do you see?

What might the child be finding out?



What do you see?

What might the child be finding out?



What is SchemaPlay?

- Children often repeat patterns of action in their play.
- These repeated patterns can offer clues to what they are exploring.
- SchemaPlay helps adults notice these patterns and think about how to respond.



Inclusive and wholistic value of play and thinking

Carrying objects from one place to another.

Dropping objects repeatedly.

Wrapping, covering or hiding objects.

Our journey at Fullbrook

- Over 8 yrs ago, we were the 1st SchemaPlay accredited school in UK.
- It remains central to our approach.
- It's sustained because of how much ou educators value it.
- Because of impact on children and families

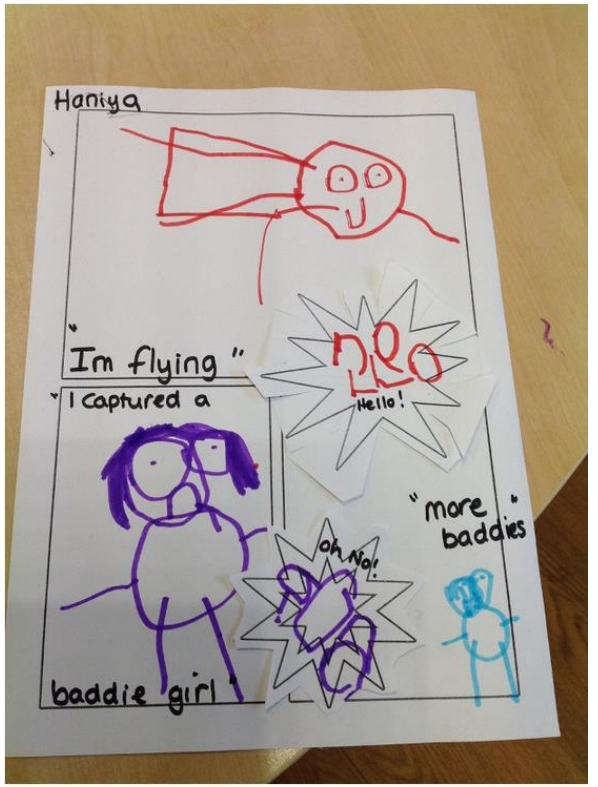




Our journey at Fullbrook

- SchemaPlay allows us to follow children's genuine interests.
- Initiate and respond to learning in meaningful contexts.
- Focus clearly on a number of prerequi skills for PSED, CL, Maths and Literacy.





Our Journey through Thrive

Six-week project in May 2026, commissioned by Thrive Together Stronger Practice Hub in collaboration with St Edmunds Stronger Practice Hub.

- 70 educators and childminders took part.
- Twilight seminars supported reflection and shared learning.
- The project created opportunities to develop a community of practice.
- Share the impact of the project through collection case studies.

Thrive Together
Early Years Stronger Practice Hub
- Black Country

Three children, three stories...



Bobby - seeing the thinking in patterns



Schema: *Positioning*

What Katie noticed:

Bobby repeatedly arranged, aligned and compared objects, carefully considering size, colour, length and how pieces fitted together.

What she did differently;

Rather than seeing simple sorting or lining up, Katie recognised Bobby's interest in order and spatial relationships. She observed his choices, trial and error, and independent problem-solving more closely. She used his interest to sequence stories and delopment mathematical language.

The shift: From "He's lining things up" to "What is he working out about order, space and relationships?"

Sally - seeing investigation, not misbehaviour



Schema: Trajectory

What Claire noticed

Sally repeatedly dropped, bounced and tipped objects, exploring movement, height, speed and cause and effect. Her communication was rich in gaze, gestures and facial expressions.

What she did differently

Claire began offering resources that invited movement, tipping and transferring. She gave Sally time to repeat actions, adjust her body position, test ideas and try different strategies. These interactions formed a stronger connection, nurtured shared attention and motivated communication

The shift: From “She keeps tipping everything out” to “What is she discovering about movement and testing what happens next?”

Kian — Following the pattern across play



Schemas: *Connecting and containing*

What Jade noticed

Kian repeatedly joined magnetic shapes and train tracks, put vehicles inside enclosed spaces, and filled and emptied sand moulds.

What she did differently

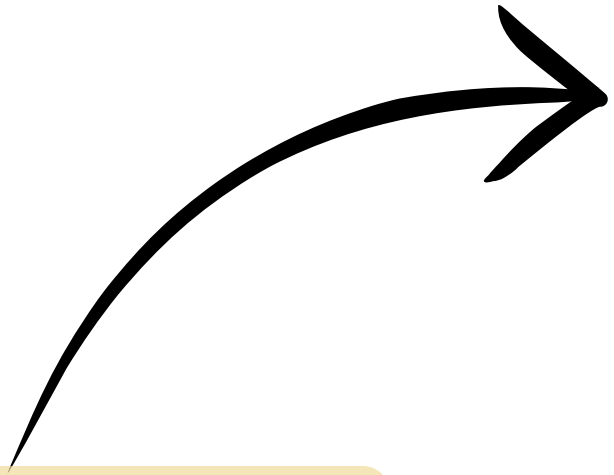
Jade recognised an interest in how things fit, join and contain. She introduced boxes, tubes, bottles, loose parts and connectors in different contexts. She introduced positional language, demonstrated how materials could be connected and commented on his play.

The shift: From seeing separate play activities to recognising a continuing line of enquiry and that a link could be made to mathematical language.

Nudging your practice forward...



Noticing the thinking behind the play



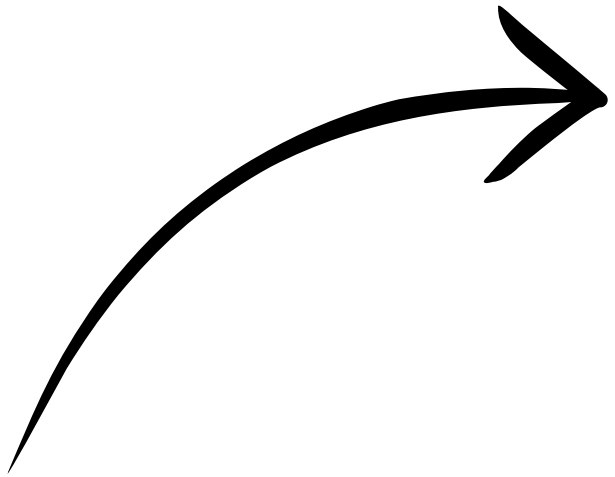
Focusing on the activities you plan.

What do you see now?

What might the child be finding out ... thinking about?



To thinking about what is the child learning



Focusing on what is the child doing.





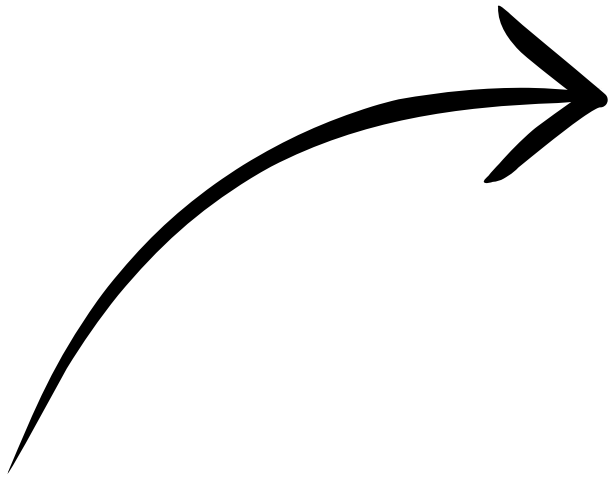






What could Amirah be learning?

How can I respond? How could I extend or expand their tinking



What can I plan next?

Lorenzo has an interest in rotation and trajectory play

- Comment on the motion, speed, direction
- Play anticipation games, ready...steady...GO!
- Modelled turn taking



We expanded to the motion and movement of other objects, substances....







We introduced new vocabulary, new knowledge and skills....

Nudge your practice from.....to

Moving a child on because they are repeating themselves	Pause and notice what they are exploring
Planning another activity	Think about how to extend the child's current interest
Asking lots of questions	Watch, wait and comment on what you notice
Showing the child what to do	Give them time to test their own ideas
Seeing each activity as separate	Look for patterns across different play and routines

I've shared our journey....

How practitioners noticed more....

How they interpreted children's play differently.....

How that influenced their responses.



Take the first step on your journey

Over the next week, choose one child and:

- **Notice something they return to or repeat.**
- **Pause and consider what they might be exploring**.
- **Make one small change to how you respond;** *Do you need to watch for longer or how might you join in? What can you comment on, draw their attention to, extend or expand?*
- **Notice how the child responds**. *What might this tell you?*

Funded by
UK Government

Questions.....comments



Shropshire Council

Best Start in Life

From Plan to Practice

Rosie Boardman

Best Start in Life Programme

What is Best Start in Life?

- A national strategy to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Brings together Family Hubs, Start for Life and early years services.
- Focuses on prevention, partnership working and school readiness.
- Supports the ambition for 75% of children to achieve a Good Level of Development by 2028.



Giving every child the best start in life - GOV.UK

The Best Start in Life: three outcomes

1 • Empower families

Timely, accessible advice; home learning environment; targeted outreach; community and family voice.

2 • Strengthen partnership

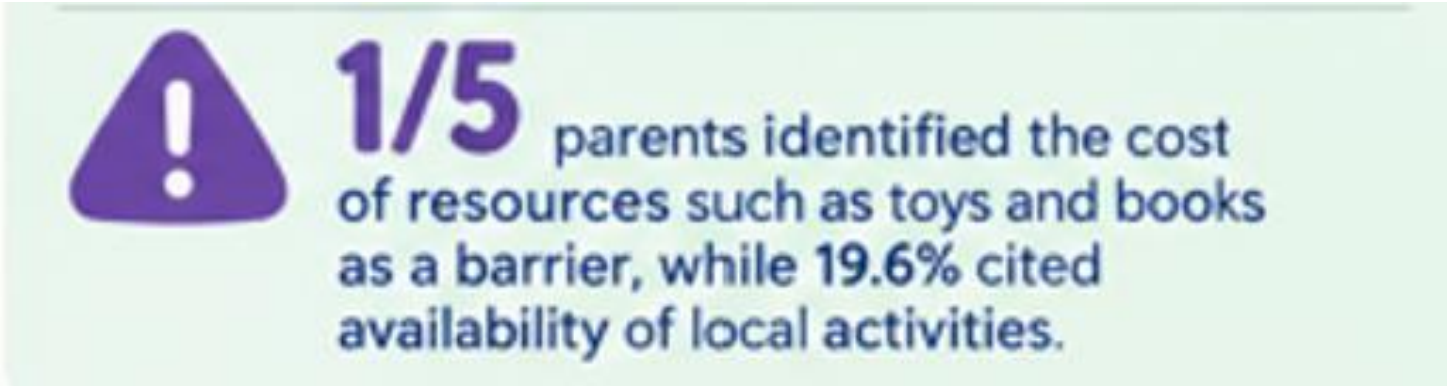
Right support, right time; earlier identification; multi-disciplinary working; shared messages.

3 • High-quality inclusive EY

Workforce development; communication & language; SEND; entitlements; transition and GLD.

From Plan to Practice





How can we support our families to empower them as home learning educators?

- Develop HLE provision in our Best Start in Life Hubs which includes providing resources
- Develop key messaging across services
- Encouragement and praise
- Signposting to local resources
- Continue the conversations with educational settings
- Development of a digital offer



From Plan to Practice

How can we ensure strengthened partnership working to improve outcomes for children?

- **0-19 Services:** Clear pathways for children with emerging needs
- **Key Partners:** FIS, PAC and SENDIAS signposting and support
- **Multi-Disciplinary Teams:** Joined-up, family-centred support
- **SEND Transformation:** Integrated Early Advice, Help and SALT pathways
- **Outreach & Engagement:** Stronger links with VCFS and education settings



From Plan to Practice

High- quality inclusive practice in the early years

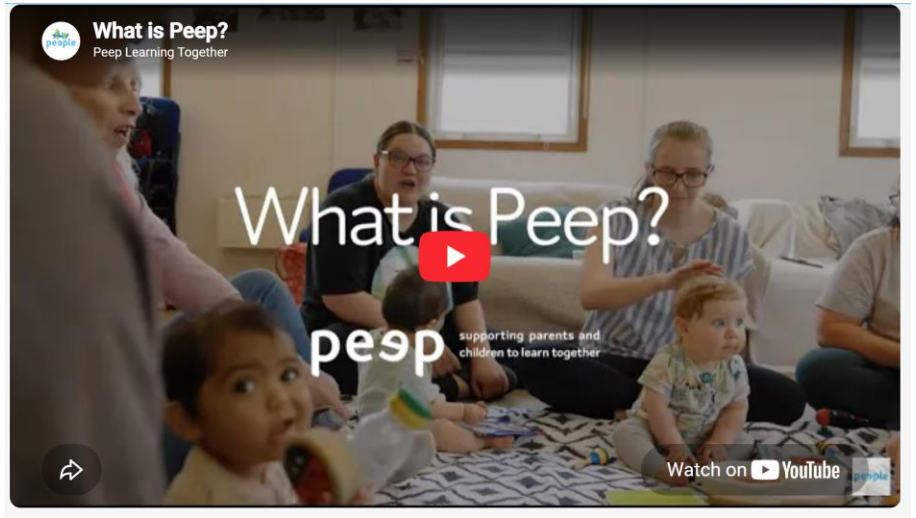
- ✅ Targeted workforce development
- ✅ Sharing best practice through Strong Practice Hubs
- ✅ Increased inclusion support through dedicated practitioners
- ✅ Joined-up SEND support and pathways
- ✅ Positive transitions into school



What support can currently be accessed?

What's Happening at The Lantern?

- ✅ A responsive Family Hub offer, including accessible digital support for families
- ✅ **Understanding Your Child** parenting programme available for families with children aged **0-5**
- ✅ New **PEEP Learning Together programme (**for ages **0-2** and **3-4** launched this autumn
- ✅ **Early Words Together** now launched in a selection of education settings



https://peeple.org.uk/programmes/learning-together-programme/

Thank you!

[Early Years Information | Shropshire Learning Gateway]

[EQS CPD Training Brochure | Shropshire Learning Gateway]

Shropshire Early Years Conference 2026