



## Information for Parents

### What is an educational psychologist (EP)?

There are several different types of psychologists - clinical (mostly mental health or injury), occupational (to do with jobs, working and organisations), sports (to do with sports performance), health psychologist (exploring the connection between physical and mental states), Industrial/organisational psychologists (applying psychological principles to business and organisational issues) to name but a few.

EPs use their training in psychology and knowledge of child development to assess difficulties children may be having with their learning. They provide advice and training on how schools might help children to learn and develop. They recommend methods, or develop strategies in partnership with schools, to help a child learn more effectively. Strategies may include teaching approaches, improvements to learning environments, advice on curriculum materials and behaviour support.

EPs also keep up-to-date with best practice, policy and research relating to how children learn and make sure this informs local policy and practice.

### How do EPs get involved with a child?

A child may come to the attention of an EP in a number of ways. If a child is born with a condition that means they may have learning difficulties, or it is clear from an early age they may need extra support to learn or develop, an educational psychologist may be part of an early years multi-agency assessment team.

Once a child is attending pre-school or school a child's additional support needs may be picked up during play, normal classroom teaching or the school's own assessment processes. A teacher may raise concerns with the EP and request further assessment, advice or support. Any direct work with a child is done with the full consent of a child's parents or carers.

### How do EPs assess a child?

The assessment of a child's additional support needs is not a one-off activity carried out by an EP. Assessment is part of the day-to day routine of learning and teaching. In some cases, an EP will carry out further investigation of a child's needs. Assessment is not separate from the strategies that are put in place to support a child. The information which EPs gather contributes to the planning, action and review process.

If further investigation is needed, the EP will collect information about the child's learning and development. This may be done by:

- talking to the child's current or previous teachers
- talking to the child's parents
- analysing the child's school work and approach to learning
- observing the child in the classroom
- considering the child's emotional and social development and behaviour
- talking to the child themselves.
- In some cases an assessment may be carried out without involving the child directly.

### How do EPs support schools?

Educational psychologists work with schools to help them look at the needs of the whole child so they are able to be included fully in class, school and community life.

They provide advice to headteachers and school staff where needed and provide training to help staff to develop skills to support children with specific needs and enhance all children's learning. They provide advice on target setting for children's learning plans. They are not responsible for drawing up or implementing plans in schools.

They help schools to communicate about a child's needs and support them to fully involve parents.

### Do EPs only work with school age children?

EPs do not just work with children and young people in school, they work with families with very young children in early years settings and in planning for young people leaving school and moving on to employment or further education.

**Your child will be meeting Simon Kitson, Educational Psychologist. He has been helping all sorts of children for more than 20 years. He became an EP in 1999 (the year the full colour Game-Boy came out!)... Before that he was a Deputy Headteacher in a Primary School. He loves music, rock climbing, mountain biking, computer tech (arduino programming) and art.**



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