



Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP)

Early Language and Literacy Development Group

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Early Language and Literacy Development Group will support the implementation of the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020-2023, contributing to the vision and overall themes of the strategy, and leading on Priority 3 of the strategy. (Improve pupil outcomes in literacy (reading, writing and oral) with a focus on early language development)

Our vision as outlined in the Portsmouth Education Strategy is that through working together we can ensure that: *All children and young people make good progress through education which sets high expectations for them, is infused with restorative high support and high challenge and which is supported through leading edge use of digital technology, empowering them to drive their own learning anywhere.*

A central theme of the PEP strategy is inclusion - *creating an educational environment that is welcoming to all children and young people and not giving up on any child whatever their circumstances.*

The strategy will also have running through it a commitment to engage with schools and partners to develop and share anti-racism training and resources in response to Black Lives Matter.

Improving early communication, language and literacy development is a key priority for the city. We know that by the age for four, a child from a disadvantaged background has heard 30 million fewer words compared to their more advantaged peers. We know that a child with a poor vocabulary when they are five is more than twice as likely to be unemployed in their thirties and one and a half times more likely to have mental health problems as an adult compared to a child with a good vocabulary.

Our performance in schools through EYFS and KS1 and KS2 over time underlines the issue despite previous work on initiatives and projects. At secondary, we know that literacy is key to learning across all subjects and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life.

As a result of Covid-19 and the partial closure of schools, the gaps between the most disadvantaged children in Portsmouth and their peers will undoubtedly have widened.

2. Key purpose

The key purpose of the Early Language and Literacy Development Group is to drive forward and support the implementation of key actions set out in this focused priority of the Portsmouth Education Strategy (see Appendix 1).

The Early Language and Literacy Development Group has been inaugurated in response to the high priority that this improvement strand of the Portsmouth Education Strategy has in raising achievement across the city of Portsmouth and improving life chances for children and young people into adult life and in their contribution to society.

Whilst the overarching aim of this group is to focus on improving pupil outcomes in literacy (reading, writing and oral) with a focus on early language development, it is clear that this is a complex and far-reaching goal, with actions that relate across the age range of pre-birth to post-16, involve families and professionals and a much wider remit than just educational settings. Therefore, this group's establishment is to clarify the importance of this work and its distinct nature from, but implicit connectedness to, the School Leadership and Effectiveness Board.

Additional sub groups / task and finish groups may be established to focus on particular aspects within the actions set out in the Appendix of this document.

3. Key responsibilities

The Early Language and Literacy Group will:

- a) **Agree and delegate particular elements of the key actions** to individual members and sub-groups.
- b) **Agree highly focused priority work** so that it is manageable and can have the most impact.
- c) **Build a network** of professionals who can establish strong partnerships with clear channels of communication and collective responsibility.
- d) **Secure funding and co-ordinate bids** for training and professional development of school leaders, teachers and practitioners in education and pre-school and family settings.
- e) **Co-ordinate the sharing of information and resources** including regular updates and data sharing of evidence-based impact so that we can learn from best practice.
- f) **Present to the Strategic Board regular updates on early language and literacy development** programmes and the impact they are having on individual settings, schools and overall outcomes in the city.

4. Membership

The membership of the Early Language and Literacy Development Group is as follows:

Chair:	Matt Johnson, HT Copnor Primary
Vice-Chair:	Alex Blower, University of Portsmouth
Debbie Anderson	Head of School Improvement & Early Years, PCC
Ella Harbut	Early Years Advisory Teacher, PCC
Mindy Butler	Early Years & Childcare Manager, PCC
Sophie Venables	Director, PTSA
Sarah Hilditch	Primary Lead & Moderation Manager, PTSA
Sarah Christopher	PEP & School Inclusion Manager, PCC
Karen Thomas	EMAS Manager & Lead Adviser, PCC
Headteachers from Primary, Secondary and Special Schools - both LA Maintained schools and Academies	Fiona Chapman (Exec Head, Ark Dickens & Charter) Oli Bradley (HT, Bramble Inf & N) Matt Johnson (HT, Copnor Pri) Wendy Fowler (HT, Milton Park Pri) Jo Cooper (HT, Stamshaw Inf)
Schools & settings representatives	Kate Magliocco (ARK Regional Director) Becky Hussey (Cottage Grove Pri) Sophy Tudge (Manor Inf) Lizzie Shackelford & Amy Chambers (Copnor Pri) Ros Middleton (Milton Park Pri) Cathy Seal (Trafalgar Sec)
Bex Shore	ECAR - Strategic Lead of Reading Recovery, New Horizons Primary, TSAT
Jessica Taylor	Speech & language therapist
Diane Wycherley	Tops Day Nursery
Sue Forsyth	Top Tots Day Nursery
Vic Leonard	Speech & language therapist
Becca Dean	Pompey Pirates Lead
Karin Downer	Modern Matron (Health visiting)
Kara Jewell	Childminder
Caroline Prince	School Library Service
Lindy Elliott	Public Library Service
Alex Blower	University of Portsmouth (Literacy Project)
Kirsty Donohue	Health Visitor (Central Locality Team)
Tina Henley / Sarah Major	Virtual School (HT or rep)

The membership of the Group will be continually reviewed and monitored.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, any headteacher within the city is at liberty to request to attend meetings of this group/board in the capacity of an observer.

5. Chairing, frequency of meetings and administration

The Early Language and Literacy Development Group will be chaired or vice-chaired by a local education leader from an education setting or Multi Academy Trust. The length of service will be for at least one year and will be reviewed at the end of each academic year.

The Group will meet at least termly.

Minutes of the meetings will be circulated to all members as soon as available and shared on the PEP website. The agenda and supporting papers will be sent out in advance of each meeting.

6. Accountability and governance arrangements

The Early Language and Literacy Development Group will report and be accountable to the PEP Strategic Board.

Appendix 1

Key actions for 2020/21 from the Portsmouth Education Strategy 2020-2023 Priority 3 : improving pupil outcomes in literacy (reading, writing and oral) with a focus on early language development

1. Improve EYFSP outcomes but with a particular focus on communication and language. This will include:

- Engagement by schools with the national reception year early language programme for 2020/21.
- Launch of '50 things to do before you're 5' initiative to engage parents in supporting communication and language for their children.
- Regularly refresh and publicise Hungry Little Minds on social media platforms.
- Provide training for early years settings and the reception year with communication and language focus.
- Support the early years workforce and partnerships with health e.g. evaluation and updating of key tools (EL monitoring tool, Language Top Tips for Talking) based on current research and a training programme (e.g. masterclass in language theories).
- Develop programme of shared support for early years settings and linked to reception year practitioners based on communication and language provision leading into improving literacy provision.
- Use of the new Speech and Language resource, which is funded for 2 years and shared between Health and Early Years. The impact of the resource will not be seen in EYFSP outcomes until 2022, as the focus is on support and training for EY settings this year.

2. Continue to implement Portsmouth's Early Language Plan which includes:

- Ensuring the **early years workforce** understand early language development and support children to achieve their very best.
- Ensuring that **families** understand the importance of early language development and the vital role they play and take an active interest in supporting children to develop a wide and rich vocabulary.
- Develop a **data-led approach** to the delivery and analysis of the effectiveness of early language programmes across the city.
- **Develop appropriate tools, training and practice sharing** that support schools and early years providers to deliver robust and effective approaches to all children's early language development.
- Work with **health service providers** to ensure they use a range of resources and tools, share key messages about language development with families at every contact and develop mechanisms to share best practice across the health workforce, supporting families at all levels of the Healthy Child Programme.
- Work with **early years providers and schools** to ensure key staff are trained in a way which provides them with a high level of understanding around the acquisition of early language; ensure that the provision has a culture in which early language and communication development is a primary focus and integrated into all activity; and promote engaging and stimulating language rich environments.

3. In our **primary schools** we will focus on supporting schools to deliver the following:

- Develop pupils' **speaking and listening skills** and wider understanding of language development.
 - Use a wide range of explicit and implicit approaches including **planning the teaching of vocabulary, modelling and extending children's language and thinking** during interactions and activities such as shared reading.
 - Use a balanced and engaging approach to **developing reading, integrating both decoding and comprehension skills**. Both decoding (the ability to translate written words into the sounds of spoken language) and comprehension (the ability to understand the meaning of the language being read) skills are necessary for confident and competent reading, but neither is sufficient on its own.
 - Effectively oversee that schools and early years settings implement a **systematic phonics programme** which explicitly teaches pupils a comprehensive set of letter-sound relationships for reading and sound letter relationships for spelling.
 - Teach pupils to use strategies for developing and **monitoring their reading comprehension**. These include: prediction; questioning; clarifying; summarising; and activating and applying prior knowledge.
 - Teach pupils to use strategies for planning and **monitoring their writing**. Producing quality writing is a complex process but a number of different strategies are likely to help, depending on the current skills of the writer. These include pre-writing activities, drafting, editing and revising and sharing.
 - Promote **fluent written transcription skills** (handwriting, spelling or typing) through encouraging extensive and purposeful practice and explicit teaching. Children must develop fluency in these skills to the point that they have become automated.
 - **Collect high quality, up-to-date information about pupils' current capabilities, and adapt teaching accordingly** to focus on exactly what pupils need to progress. This approach is more efficient because effort is spent on the best next step and not wasted by rehearsing skills or content that a child already knows well.
 - Establish a **partnership with Hastings** as part of the Government's social mobility Opportunity Areas Programme which can draw down funding to support a **literacy project 'Destination Reader'** as part of a twinning arrangement with Hastings.
4. In our **secondary schools** we will focus on supporting schools to deliver the following:
- Disciplinary literacy across the curriculum.
 - Provide targeted vocabulary instruction in every subject.
 - Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts.
 - Break down complex writing tasks.
 - Combine writing instruction with reading in every subject and provide opportunities for structured talk.
 - Provide high quality literacy interventions for struggling students. This will include the establishment of the **Pompey Literacy Pirates programme** which will deliver an intensive year long after school learning programme for children aged 9 to 13 who are both falling behind in their progress and are disadvantaged, targeting 60 pupils in the Autumn term rising to 120 in the following Spring term.