

VIRTUAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2023

CLOSING THE GAP AND RAISING THE BAR



Meeting the team

Hi my name is
Adela Kay



and I am Assistant Headteacher in the Virtual School looking after Children with a Social Worker across the borough, I also support Efrem, one of our Virtual School leads, with the New to Care Cohort. I joined the virtual school in September 2022 and my role is a strategic one working with headteachers and social care colleagues across the borough to monitor, track and support our most vulnerable children.

Before I joined the virtual school, I had been a teacher for more than two decades and a senior leader in schools across East London, working as a DSL, in partnerships and leading on teaching and learning. I also taught lots of young people music, history, PSHE, HPQ and Adult Life Skills, all of which were a lot of fun! In my last job I worked with the DFE on Cross Sector partnerships between the independent and the state sector, so my experience has been a little eclectic.

I really love the work that I am doing and feel passionately that all young people should have an education which gives them the opportunity to become lifelong learners and thrive, socially and economically. The tools we give them in schools should set them up for life and if their family environment has been challenging it is even more important that we nurture them.

If you would like to find out more about my work or ask me anything at all, please do get in touch!

5 THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD OVER THE EASTER HOLIDAYS

Here are some things to do with the children in your care over Easter, there should be something for every age to enjoy.

1. GO FOR A WALK IN THE FOREST

(see if you can spot an Oak tree, these were used to build houses in the middle ages and ships in the renaissance, the ships that went on the Armada were built of English Oak).

2. WATCH THE SUNRISE/SUNSET

(ask your child if they know their North, South, East or West, which way are they facing when the sun rises (East) which way are they facing if they face the sun at sunset (West) so where is the sun going next as it travels through the sky? (Ireland and then USA/Canada)

3. HAVE A PICNIC IN THE PARK

(Could they make the sandwiches, what do they like to have in their picnics?)

4. ROLL DOWN A BIG HILL

(I think it is easier to roll on your side, can you see which rolls faster, a ball or a frisbee?)

5. VISIT A LIBRARY

(Can they find some age appropriate books, do they have a library card? Could they choose a book?)

THANK YOU TO A VERY SPECIAL COLLEAGUE



The Virtual School is saying **a special thank you and good bye** to Cris Ford who is retiring from the service of London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Cris is one of the longest standing members of the Virtual School team. She started her working career in B&D Social Services as an Education Advisory Lead. Then her role moved into the Virtual School and she has been in Barking and Dagenham for over twenty years.

Her knowledge of the Kent cohort and surrounding schools has been invaluable.

She has a wealth of experience and knowledge and is well respected both in the team and within schools. **We will miss her greatly** as she was an integral part of the team. We would like to wish her health and happiness

VIRTUAL SCHOOL EASTER ACTIVITIES

THIS EASTER WE ARE
CODING FOR FUN!!!!!!

The Virtual School in partnership with Coram Children's Centre is **offering an exciting opportunity** for our children ages 9-11 years to attend a Coding Club this Easter.

This is a fully funded opportunity for the young people to enjoy coding and robotics along with other children during the Easter.

Coach travel to the Coding Club Centre in Central London is also being provided for free.

**Monday 3rd April
to Thursday 6th April 2023**

Foster Carers, Social Workers and Designated Teachers can refer a young person for this Easter Fun Activity

1st Step:

Inform the young person

2nd Step:

Send an email to Kath Adams with the young person's details

3rd Step:

Kathy will send registration forms to the young person's Social Worker

Kathy Adams: Kathleen.Adams@lbdd.gov.uk



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH THEIR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

For many of us, speech, language and communication (SLCN) appears to be something that comes naturally to us and is something we can just 'do'. We do not have to even think about it!

However, SLCN is an extremely complex process that requires a lot of brain power! It can also be affected by environmental factors, such as the amount of language we are exposed to, our personal experiences including trauma, as well as more physical elements such as the way our brain interprets and processes what we hear.

Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) is the most prevalent need in all our schools. The most current statistics, following the pandemic, suggest that up to 60% of reception children in LBBD have some SLCN needs.

It is really important that parents/carers support their children at home with their speech, language and communication from pre-school right up to secondary school. SLCN difficulties directly impact on behaviour as not being able to express yourself can lead to frustration, withdrawal, and low self-esteem. It also directly impacts on reading and writing- if you can't say it, you can't read it, you can't write it!

TOP TEN TIPS

1) BE PATIENT

Some children find conversations difficult for many reasons. Role model good conversational skills and try not to pressurise your child to talk if they are reluctant

2) TALK TO YOUR CHILD

- Ask them about their day at school.
- What have they learnt?
- What did they have for lunch?
- Tell me one thing you liked doing and one thing you didn't like doing. Why?

3) LEARN AND SING nursery rhymes for younger children/rhyming riddles, poetry and songs for older children. Clap out the syllables of words. This supports children with their phonics learning.

4) PLAY GAMES AT ANY AGE

There are many language games you can play for all ages! Board games are a good way of initiating conversation, developing vocabulary and supporting attention and listening

5) GIVE YOUR CHILD THINKING TIME

Some children need time to process information/questions.

6) STRUCTURE YOUR QUESTIONS

When asking questions, make sure they are questions that require full answers rather than just 'yes' or 'no' responses.

7) If your child does not understand the question or the instruction, then reframe, simplify or break down the question/instruction rather than just repeat it.

8) EXPOSE YOUR CHILD TO AS MANY

ACTIVITIES as possible from cooking to days out. These opportunities expose children to a variety of different vocabulary. Make every opportunity a learning experience!

9) GIVE YOUR CHILD OPPORTUNITIES

TO TALK about how they feel- you may have to role model this at first as some children find this challenging.

10) READ WITH YOUR CHILD REGULARLY

and make this fun! Talk about new words and ask questions around the meaning of what they/you have read. Take it in turns to read or just read yourself if your child finds reading challenging.



Here are some links you may find useful
- you will need to right click on the link
below to open the link:

tct_univspeak_0-5_update.pdf
(speechandlanguage.org.uk)

tct_univspeak_5-11_update.pdf
(speechandlanguage.org.uk)

tct_univspeak_11-18_update.pdf
(speechandlanguage.org.uk)

SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY RESOURCE PACK

childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk

Language games for early words -
South West Yorkshire Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust EYFS Focus: 10
Communication and Language Activities
| Family

There are many excellent websites
and ideas that can be accessed through
searching the internet- just type in
'speech and language games and
activities' - enjoy!

For further information, support and
training contact:

CINDY GROVE:
LBBD Advisor for Speech and Language
Email: Cindy.Grove@lbbd.gov.uk

You can book your school in for a
training with Cindy Grove to address
whole school interventions.

THE Attendance CORNER

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE IS VITAL
TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS HAVE
A CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING. THE
DfE IS CURRENTLY FOCUSING
ON ATTENDANCE AND HAVE
CATEGORISED NON-ATTENDANCE
AS PERSISTENT OR SEVERE ABSENCE**

PERSISTENT ABSENCE:

This is when absence escalates and pupils
miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to
1 day or more across a full school year),
schools and local authorities are expected
to work together to put additional
targeted support in place
to remove any barriers to attendance and
reengage these pupils.

SEVERE ABSENCE:

Those missing 50% or more of school.
These severely absent pupils may find
it more difficult to be in school or face
bigger barriers to their regular attendance
and as such are likely to need more
intensive support across a range of
partners. A concerted effort is therefore
needed across all relevant services to
prioritise them. All partners should
work together to make this group the top
priority for support.

The use of targeted intervention and
support in areas of specific need can be
very effective in improving attendance.
Professionals working with young people
should

- Work in conjunction with the Virtual School to alert them to the pattern which should lead to a strategic meeting to discuss interventions.
- Promote and protect the health and wellbeing of the young person.
- Determine whether alternative provision should be provided under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 as outlined in statutory guidance where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days.
- Where support is provided but not engaged with voluntarily, consider whether to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention in the normal way under the existing powers.



FREE WEBINAR

WEBINAR FOR DESIGNATED TEACHERS SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH LOW MOOD & ANXIETY.

Many students experience low mood and anxiety at some point in their development. Sometimes this low mood lasts for a bit longer and starts to make it harder for young people to do the things that are important to them, have positive relationships with others and engage with school. All of these feelings can happen around the same time as the changes happening in adolescence. This webinar will give you to have a better understanding of low mood and anxiety, what influences these emotions and the warning signs. This session aims to equip staff with effective tools and knowledge to support their students during this time in their lives. With ideas, evidence-based approaches and tools, this webinar can support staff from all areas of the school community.

COFFEE MORNINGS FOR FOSTER CARERS

THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL
IS HOSTING COFFEE
MORNING FOR FOSTER
CARERS

An opportunity to have a chat over coffee and receive guidance and support from the Virtual School

All Foster Carers are invited

MORE INFORMATION TO BE
SENT VIA SIMON DODMAN:
simon.dodman@lbbd.gov.uk

DATE: 20TH APRIL 2023
TIME: 3.30 - 5.30PM

FROM AC EDUCATION
REGISTER BY SENDING
EMAIL TO
KATHY ADAMS:
Kathleen.Adams@lbbd.gov.uk