

# Supporting the transition to Year 1 – Greater Manchester Research Seminars

Greater Manchester Combined Authority is running a series of research-focused seminars aimed at supporting primary school head teachers and school leaders. The sessions will reflect on the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on shortening the EYFS offer for pupils and the different approaches that can support a positive return to learning in Year 1.

**These short, themed seminars will encourage attendees to engage with relevant research and evidence, provide support with making sense of this and encourage consideration of how this can be applied locally in support of a Year 1 recovery curriculum.**

Seminars will be led by subject experts who will bring you together as a group to explore research around key themes. There will be opportunities to discuss the research in smaller groups and ask questions of the facilitator and wider participants to support sharing of learning and practice across Greater Manchester.

*The seminar programme is part of the Greater Manchester School Readiness Programme which brings together partners from across Greater Manchester with the aim of improving outcomes for young children and their families.*

## Registration

Seminars will take place virtually through Microsoft Teams and are FREE to attend. To sign up, please visit this [Eventbrite page](#) and register your details for all of the sessions you would like to attend.

**We are expecting a large number of people to sign up so please ensure you register for all of the sessions you would like to attend so we can plan for expected numbers.**

Once registered, you will be sent a calendar invite with a link to join your chosen sessions.

If you have any questions about sign up, please contact [laura.knight@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:laura.knight@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk).

## Programme

We are running each session twice in the hope you will be able to attend one of the dates.  
**Both sessions will include the same content so please only register for one of each session.**

**Session 1: Key Stage 1 maths (in collaboration with the Early Education Foundation)**  
**Simon Cox – Maths Lead & Director at Blackpool Research School**

- Thursday 10th September, 14:00 – 15:30
- Friday 11th September, 08:00 – 09:30

The Early Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) report '*Improving Mathematics in the Early Years and Key Stage 1*' reviews the best available evidence to offer five recommendations for developing the maths skills of 3-7 year olds. This session will provide a strategic overview for head teachers of the key recommendations and encourage consideration of how practitioners can be supported to implement these approaches as part of supporting the Year 1 cohort of pupils this year.

### **Session 2: Speech, language and communication skills; the foundations for a child's learning journey**

**Michelle Morris – Consultant SLT at Salford Royal NHS / Lead for GM Early Years Speech, Language and Communication Pathway**

- **Thursday 17th September, 14:00 – 15:30**
- **Friday 18th September, 8.00 – 9.30**

*Language as a child wellbeing indicator (2017)* by James Law, published by the Early Intervention Foundation, is a seminal document which sets out why speech, language and communication skills are so important for a child to thrive in many aspects of their life including making and keeping relationships, self-regulation, and the impact of these skills on a child's transition to literacy and learning.

This session will focus on a selected part of the James Law publication and consider why language and communication difficulties can be sometimes missed, how Covid-19 has increased the needs of many children and how we might set about supporting accelerated learning of speech and language in Year 1.

### **Session 3: The value of play based learning in transition to Year 1**

**Julie Fisher - independent Early Years Adviser and Visiting Professor of Early Childhood Education at Oxford Brookes University**

- **Thursday 24th September, 14:00 – 15:30**
- **Friday 25th September, 08:00 – 09:30**

Many schools in England do not include play as a serious, purposeful integral part of children's learning day in KS1.

Play is viewed as something 'in addition to' the curriculum. Perhaps, indeed, a distraction from the curriculum. Whereas there is research evidence, as well as rich anecdotal evidence, that play is a critical contributor to learning in its own right, and also a major contributor to standards in KS1.

This session with Professor Julie Fisher will explain why play is more than fun and enjoyment. It will provide evidence about play's contribution to skills and attitudes to learning that will benefit and enrich children for life. Importantly, it will also examine the contribution of play to the consolidation of skills, knowledge and understandings taught as part of the National Curriculum.

Knowing what we know about child development at age 5, 6 and 7 years, Julie will suggest that a learning day entirely in the control of the teacher, limits and impoverishes children as learners. Adult-led learning at this age is simply not sufficient. This session will consider how to maintain the highest quality teaching of the National Curriculum whilst also including and embracing play as a powerful, effective and motivating element of KS1 learning – for all children.

### **Session 4: Key Stage 1 Literacy (in collaboration with the Early Education Foundation)**

**Caroline Bilton – Literacy Content Specialist**

- **Thursday 1st October, 14:00 – 15:30**
- **Friday 2nd October, 08:00 – 09:30**

The Early Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) report '*Improving Literacy in Key Stage 1*' presents the key principles for effective literacy teaching, informed by the best available international research. The report is specific to the needs of pupils at Key Stage 1 and emphasises the need for a balanced and engaging approach to developing reading, which integrates both decoding and comprehension skills.

This session will provide a strategic overview for head teachers of the key recommendations and encourage consideration of how practitioners can be supported to implement these approaches as part of supporting the Year 1 cohort of pupils this year.

### **Session 5: Embracing the outdoors post-lockdown**

**Kathryn Solly - Specialist Early Years trainer and consultant**

- **Thursday 8th October, 14:00 – 15:30**
- **Friday 9th October, 08:00 – 09:30**

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to seize the moment and embrace outdoors for all our children. The research about the range of benefits of being outdoors for play and learning increases daily. These include health, wellbeing, physicality and cognitive gains. Nature's rich provision can enrich active engagement and exploration whilst building minds and bodies. It builds upon unique curiosity and motivation over time. The potential for children to create, innovate, transform, combine and imagine with natural resources is enhanced dramatically by being outdoors in nature whilst experiencing some of its joy, awe and wonder.

This session will present why outdoors matters, the possibilities and opportunities for young children's learning as well as the focusing on the crucial leadership it requires if it is to be truly beneficial. It will involve practical considerations of what you need to implement to go outdoors, essential health and safety alongside embedding outdoor practice and pedagogy in forests and outdoor venues.

### **Facilitator biographies**

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#### **Simon Cox - Mathematics Content Specialist (Education Endowment Foundation)**

Based in the North West, Simon has been a secondary maths teacher in Blackpool schools for 16 years. He has worked in a number of schools in an area of high deprivation in often challenging circumstances. Having held a variety of middle and senior leadership positions in schools, he became Director of Blackpool Research School in 2017, and he now sits on the Teaching Committee of the Mathematical Association and on the strategic board of his local Abacus Maths Hub. He currently shares his time between the Research School Director role and the EEF's Maths Content Specialist.

As maths content specialist, Simon is exploring supporting teachers and Research Schools in a number of areas: providing supporting resources for both the KS2/3 and the new Early Maths guidance reports; a particular focus on the use of manipulatives to support maths teaching, and looking at how we can work collaboratively with Maths Hubs and other providers to support excellent existing work; and developing a new Research School training programme supporting maths teaching in Early Years and KS1.

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## **Michelle Morris – Consultant Speech and Language Therapist and lead for GM Early Years Speech, Language and Communication Pathway**

Michelle is Consultant Speech and Language Therapist, Clinical Lead for Enhanced Service Development at Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and Designated Clinical Officer for Salford CCG.

Michelle qualified from Glasgow University in speech pathology and therapeutics and went on to secure her first post in Salford, where she has held a number of clinical and managerial posts, gradually progressing to the consultant post she holds today. Michelle's current responsibilities include developing non-NHS commissioned services, advising on professional and clinical issues relating to AHPs, and supporting service transformation. Having completed a Masters in applied public health, Michelle's area of special interest and expertise is the relationship between speech, language and communication and children's life chances at a population level.

In addition to working in provider services, Michelle supports commissioning as Designated Clinical Officer for SEND contributing to a range of strategic and operational level activities in the CCG and local authority.

Having spent six years as speech and language therapy advisor to the Department of Health, Michelle continues to contribute to children's health and education policy development at a regional and national level. This includes leading on the development of multi-sectorial pathway and specification for addressing Speech Language Communication Needs across the ten Greater Manchester local authorities and acting as a specialist advisor for the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and an associate for the Early Intervention Foundation.

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## **Caroline Bilton – Literacy Content Specialist (Education Endowment Foundation)**

Caroline has been a primary school teacher, in the North East of England, for almost thirty years. She spent 16 years of her career as a class teacher in a town in Northumberland with very high levels of deprivation. The unfairness of disadvantage, whilst she was working in Blyth, was evident to her every day. During this time, she gained an increasing desire to ensure every opportunity was given to the children in her care. She defined each day with a drive to 'fill every minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run'. The joys of a purposeful and enthusiastic class of children are hard to beat in terms of job satisfaction.

Beyond work in her school, Caroline has been an EEF advocate for the North East Literacy campaign. She has also worked as an SLE for the North East reading SSIF. Both roles have seen her work with colleagues across Northumberland and North Tyneside to encourage and support their engagement with research to inform their practice.

Caroline is particularly focused on the teaching of reading and the opportunities that encouraging every child to read for pleasure can provide. There are many challenges and debates that attend early reading in particular, but there are also lots of opportunities to support teachers of older pupils to ensure that they best 'read to learn'.

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## **Kathryn Solly – Specialist Early Years Consultant in Outdoor Play and Learning**

Kathryn is now a specialist early years trainer and consultant working around Britain and internationally. Previously she was the head teacher of the historic and diverse Chelsea Open Air Nursery School and Children's Centre for nearly 17 years. However, Kathryn started her pedagogic life as a secondary school teacher on Voluntary Service Overseas in Papua New Guinea for two years. Since then she has taught across all the phases of education in a variety of places including a short time in an Albanian kindergarten. She retrained to teach in the early years and has since achieved a special needs qualification and an MA in Early Education and Care.

Kathryn was awarded the Unilever Fellowship researching aspects of Early Years Leadership and Management in 2006. She has contributed articles to several journals and books on a variety of aspects of young children's play, teaching and learning. Her first book 'Adventure, Risk and Challenge in the Early Years' was published in December 2014. She is an experienced and passionate public speaker, trainer and consultant at home and abroad. She is a Froebel Travelling Tutor, and is Vice Chair of the Early Childhood Forum.

Kathryn recently contributed chapters on promoting positive relationships and behaviour and learning through risk and challenge to the recent Early Education publication for head teachers and senior leaders: *Achieving Excellence in the Early Years*.

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## **Julie Fisher – Independent Early Years Adviser and Visiting Professor of Early Childhood Education at Oxford Brookes University**

Julie Fisher is an independent Early Years Adviser and Visiting Professor of Early Childhood Education at Oxford Brookes University. She held the post of Early Years Adviser in Oxfordshire for 11 years, before which she was lecturer in early childhood education at the University of Reading. She has taught children from 3 to 12 years and has been head teacher of two urban, multi-cultural schools.

To underpin her consultancy work, Julie draws on her own research projects which engage her in constant contact with practitioners and children in both schools and settings. She is author of numerous articles on early childhood education as well as her books *Starting from the Child* (2013-now in its 4th edition); *The Foundations of Learning* (2002); *Moving On to Key Stage One* (2010) and her recent best-selling book *Interacting or Interfering?* (2016).

Julie currently delivers training and conference presentations on all aspects of Adult-Child Interaction; The Role of the Adult; Balancing adult-led and child-led learning; Transition from EYFS to KS1, and Classroom Management.

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