

Implementation of technology to support evidence collection in the EYFS

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Executive summary

By introducing a modern approach to observing and recording evidence of learning and development, a more accurate representation of learners in the EYFS class has been able to be captured and moderated using a pupils' individualised 'journal'.

Pupil specific tablets and the use of an App-Tapestry, has improved the quality and consistency of evidence within the EYFS at Park House School. An additional benefit of this is that it has reduced the time staff need to complete evidence of which previously took away from teaching or planning.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes. Previously BeyondAutism Schools have not had pupils of which are 'EYFS age' however, the Development Matters curriculum and targeted observations have been appropriate for our youngest learners to track progress and development across areas of importance of which are outlined in the Development Matters document.

Evidence collection for observations against the Government guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage classes (from now on abbreviated to EYFS), Development Matters has historically been a challenge to manage for tutors and EYFS leads alike due to the limitation in both time and resources to support the observations.

As Park House School now has 2 learners in Pink class of EYFS age, it was apparent

there was a need to improve in this area of our service to effectively demonstrate progress of which our learners are making.

Method

Research into recording methods for the EYFS against the Development Matters was conducted by visiting Greenmead and Cherry Orchard School. Both schools are primary SEN schools within the borough of Wandsworth. Both schools use technology to track progress against the Development Matters.

Both schools used an application on a smart device (iPad or phone) named Tapestry Journal. An app of which has the observations from the Development Matters implemented into the program which registers learner's progress against the observation target as emerging, developing, or secure. This was useful for those schools of which were using the Development Matters as their formal curriculum.

The use of an application to track evidence for the EYFS was observed to speed up the collection of observations and by each key worker. By having their own device, observations were able to be captured in the present moment and when naturally occurring. In addition to this the use of video recording ensured a higher quality of evidence and gave an insight to parents of their child's day.

Key workers were able to record observations throughout the day and either upload immediately or after the pupils had left to go home as the images were stored on the device. This ensured overviews of observations were able to be written up confidently and with precision due to the ease of uploading these to Tapestry.

After researching further into different apps, their functions and costing it was clear that Tapestry was the most appropriate for our setting due to cost, ease of use and the additional features and functions of the app- namely a communication platform for parents to access from their personal devices.

The next steps were to purchase the application for Pink Class, purchase a smart tablet for each student and to install the application.

All tutors, ASPs and Supervisors were trained in the use of the app and accounts were made for each pupil. All Pink class staff members have a personal log-in in which they can upload EYFS evidence daily.

After a baseline assessment was completed on each learner their next steps were set and observations were able to take place.

Results

Since the implementation of Tapestry to log and record pupil's evidence and the introduction of pupil's specific Android tablets to record and capture "on the spot" videos and pictures, the quality and consistency of these have improved.

Pupil's Tapestry journals accurately represent their abilities and provide an insight into learner's strengths and barriers of which is being consistently evaluated and evidence is frequently being uploaded to reflect pupil's achievements.

The introduction of Tapestry has allowed EYFS practitioners within Park House School to encourage exploration, play and naturally occurring observation opportunities as each tutor has access to an overview of their key pupil's journal of which familiarises staff with next steps, gaps in a learner's skill set or pre-requisite skills needed for a future goal. This has diminished the need for contrived sessions of which created a set environment for observations to occur and so the Development Matters now run alongside IEP targets and daily classroom practice.

As we continue to work with Tapestry, we are hopeful we will be able to further the use of technology to record data efficiently and accurately.

Discussion

Overall, the introduction of Tapestry to track and evidence progress against the Development Matters has been a success.

Tutors are able to upload higher quality evidence easily and quickly to each pupil's profile against all areas of the Development Matters and progress in all areas has been evidenced despite the reduced teaching time due to Covid-19.

The next steps to ensure Tapestry is used to the upmost of its ability is to roll out the communication with parents' function. We are however waiting for Tapestry to update their Android app to do so.

References

<https://tapestry.info/>