

**Primary Schools Partnership  
December Newsletter**



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## A message from our Deputy Dean,

Dear colleagues,

Please can I wish you a great festive break.

The new recruitment cycle is well under way. Nationally there has been an 8% increase in Primary applications and an 11% increase in Secondary applications. The Secondary figures are somewhat distorted by a sharp rise in Physics and Mathematics applications from overseas which have increased workload without increasing the numbers of applicants who have the required entry qualifications. It also looks likely that the increasing numbers of applicants may mean that we are seeing a shift in the number of teachers qualifying which may ease the recruitment crisis that we have seen in recent years. However, it remains to be seen if the retention crisis is shifting.

Jack Worth, The NFER's economist for the teacher education workforce, commented on 4<sup>th</sup> December in response to the ITT census saying:

"Improved recruitment to postgraduate teacher training in England is welcome after years of severe under-recruitment. While targets for core secondary subjects including English, maths and the sciences have been met, overall secondary recruitment still falls short of the numbers required.

"Further policy efforts to improve teacher recruitment and retention will be needed to maintain the stronger recruitment, reverse the impacts of previous persistent under-recruitment and deliver on the Government's objective to recruit 6,500 new teachers."

Best Wishes,

**Matt Sossick**

*Deputy Dean and Head of Initial Teacher Education (email: [matthew.sossick@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.sossick@roehampton.ac.uk)).*

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## In this issue

We have some exciting articles for you, many linked to Early Childhood, Froebel and Froebelian Education and History. This includes our new Early Years Specialism from Sarah Leonard, research with pre-school children from one of our post-graduate students, Bridget Steenkamp, an introduction to our latest 'snapshot' in the archives from Stevie Russell, the start to a new series looking at Froebel newsletters from history from Kornelia Cepok and Amanda Burton-Smith's professional development at the Edinburgh Froebel Network and Froebel Trust conference, 'Being and Belonging'.



There's also International Week, including our 'live' connection with a school in Portugal, information from the library about our School Experience Collection, and more in our Bumper December edition.

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## Celebrating child-led research by Bridget Moira Steenkamp

During the week of the 3 -7th November, Doctoral research student, Bridget Steenkamp hosted an exhibition of 33 child researchers' work at the University of Roehampton.



It celebrated children's reflections on nurturing relational consciousness while outdoors. Over half of the preschool child researchers attended the exhibition as day trips. They enjoyed revisiting their research and made full use of the 6 child-height interactive stations. There was also a mini symposium for the opening of the exhibition with key speakers from the field of early years and childhood research, heads of preschools and children's theologians.

In the summer leading up to the exhibition, Bridget conducted her empirical research using the Theological Action Research method. The

research was co-led by 33 child researchers in three preschools the green, blue and orange preschools.

Each child chose a unique colour shade and research name for their research so that they could easily identify their research on the walls. Favourite books and stories that were used during the research were on display.



Reverend Nicola Morrison the chaplain at Southlands College and the Methodist chaplain to Roehampton University opened the exhibition. She mentioned how much she enjoys the part of her work where research and academic milestones can be celebrated. She also said that she had fondly paged through Eric Carle's 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar story' at the opening evening and reflected on how she had yet to meet anyone who didn't have a good



memory of the story. She said that her work at the university had made her into a kind of hungry caterpillar, both hungry academically and hungry spiritually. This has given her an increased interest in pedagogies that allow for creativity. She said that 'research leads us to celebrate the wonderful diversity of the human mind. We now know more about how we experience the world and how we learn and process information. Child-led research can teach us that, as we listen through a play-based, often nonverbal lens we can recognise the multiple ways that children bring their whole selves to every moment. It is a gift in childhood to be able to be immersed in play and to bring our whole selves to every moment. Somewhere along the journey of growth, we forget how to do that.' She ended by saying that this research and exhibition of the child researchers' findings is an opportunity to see the world from their points of view.



Postgraduate research student Bridget Steenkamp said 'When I started this journey, I didn't know for sure that preschool children could be part of an entire research process. I designed three sessions where the children prepared for research and then three where they conducted

their research, analysed it and shared it. We explored what it was like to be in their outdoor space at the preschool. We looked at relational consciousness, and particularly Friedrich Froebel, the founder of Kindergarten's understanding of spirituality. Froebel saw spirituality as our connection with ourselves, the natural world, each other, and with God, or the transcendent. To answer whether being outside helped those relationships the child researchers made cyanotype prints and photography. The research was designed to nurture each child researcher and give them agency as they find their own unique voice.' The children did feel relational connection when outdoors, and Bridget is continuing to get positive feedback from the preschools and parents as the children share their research journeys at school and at home.

Bridget is now in the process of writing up the research findings. As a freelance educator, she is now hoping to work with preschools and primary schools to offer similar opportunities to groups of children. This is a new addition to the slow eco-workshops she currently offers to groups of adults to facilitate conversations around embedding sustainability into their daily life.

Resources when thinking about conducting participatory research with children:

- The Froebelian Principles of Best Practice (Tovey, 2020) [www.froebel.org.uk/about-us/froebelian-principles](http://www.froebel.org.uk/about-us/froebelian-principles)
- The Open University Our Voices: research with and by children and young people (2022) [www.ourvoicesou.co.uk](http://www.ourvoicesou.co.uk)
- The British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018), <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/ethicsandguidance>

Bridget can be contacted via email here: [Steenkab@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:Steenkab@roehampton.ac.uk)

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## Snapshot from the Archives: Roehampton Institute of Higher Education 50 years on - the "Four Site Saga." Stevie Russell

In our latest Snapshot from the various College archives, we mark the 50th anniversary of the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education (RIHE), the forerunner of Roehampton University. RIHE was formed in 1975 by the merger of four teacher training colleges: Digby Stuart, Froebel, Southlands and Whitelands.

The archives are full of material from this time which sheds light on the complex negotiations of the merger, especially the efforts of each College to protect their individual character, community and mission – a unique feature of life at Roehampton that continues within the fully integrated University of today. It was the Principal of Digby Stuart, Dorothy Bell, who coined the term the "Four Site Saga" to describe the long-drawn-out and sometimes painful process of merging the four colleges.

This Snapshot gives some insight into the views of key stakeholders at the time, with extracts from Froebel's 1975 alumni newsletter The Link, and a 1978 feature on the new Institute from



ILEA Contact magazine. Long before the merger was ever thought of, however, concerns about College identity were already being voiced at Whitelands. There is a map of France held in Whitelands archive, hand drawn by John Ruskin himself in 1829, that was donated to the College by his godson in 1932 with the stipulation that “*If the College ceases to be Church of England it is to be burned.*”

Follow this link for the full saga!

<https://library.roehampton.ac.uk/archives/blog/Snapshot-from-the-Archives-RIHE-50-Four-Site-Saga>

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## Introduction to *The Link* by Kornelia Cepok

*The Link* was created in 1910 as an expanded publication of the Michaelis Guild - the association formed in 1896 and was named after Mme Emilie Michaelis who was the Froebel Education Institute's (FEI) first Principle and designed to keep former students of the FEI connected and engaged in Froebelian ideals.

Expanding its aim to unite past and present students of the Froebel Educational Institute, *The Link* grew out of earlier Guild papers but increased in scope to include not only the Guild's news, but also contributions from current students, reports on college life, developments, examination results, and updates on the Institute's societies and activities. Merging the students' *F.E.I. Magazine* with the Guild leaflet, *The Link* aimed to strengthen communication across generations and to reflect the shared interests of the wider Froebel community; its name captured its purpose: to serve as a living connection—a link—between those who had studied at the Institute and those still in training.

As it evolved, *The Link* became the central means of keeping members informed, engaged, and united in their educational ideals and remained in publication until 2001. It has become an invaluable and versatile source for academic researchers and family historians alike and is available to read at the Froebel Archive for Childhood Studies at the University of Roehampton. Digital copies of single issues – made possible through the generosity of the Froebel Trust – can also be made available upon request.

In this series, we will use *The Link* to publish transcripts or excerpts of articles from its near-century-long run that relate to primary education, covering topics from classroom practice to broader policy. Our aim is to provoke reflection and to connect – link – today's issues with the experiences and insights of earlier generations.

For access and further information, contact Kornelia Cepok at [archives@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:archives@roehampton.ac.uk)

### THE SCHOOL.

[Translated from the French of Anatole France.]

I MAINTAIN that Mdlle. Genseigne's school is the best in the world. Those who say anything else are infidels and slanderers. All the pupils of Mdlle. Genseigne are good and industrious. There is nothing so pleasant to see as their attentive little bodies like a row of small bottles into which Mdlle. Genseigne pours learning.

Mdlle. Genseigne, solemn and sweet, sits erect in her high chair. Her flat coils of hair and her black tippet inspire respect and sympathy. She, who is so learned, is teaching arithmetic to her little pupils. She says to Rose:—

" Rose, if from twelve I take four how many do I still have?"

"Four," replies Rose.

Mdlle. Genseigne is not satisfied with this answer.

" And you, Emmeline, if from twelve I take four how many do I still have?"

" Eight," replies Emmeline.

Rose falls into a profound reverie. She understands that Mdlle. Genseigne still has eight left but she does not know if it is eight hats, or eight handkerchiefs or even eight apples or pens. For a long time this doubt has tormented her. When she is told that six times six is thirty-six she does not know if it is thirty-six chairs or thirty-six nuts. She understands nothing at all about arithmetic.

On the other hand she knows a great deal of sacred history. Mdlle. Genseigne has not another pupil more able to describe the terrestrial Paradise and Noah's Ark. Rose knows all the flowers in Paradise and all the animals in the Ark. She knows as many fables as Mdlle. Genseigne herself. She is not a bit surprised when told that animals used to speak. She would be much more surprised if she was told that they do not speak any more. She is quite sure that she understands the language of her big dog Tom and her little canary Cuip. She is quite right: animals have always spoken and they speak still; but they only speak to their friends. Rose loves them and they love her. That is why she understands them. The easiest way to understand is to love.

To-day Rose has said her lesson without a mistake, so she has gained a good mark. Emmeline, also, has received a good mark for having done her arithmetic well. Rose, on coming out of school, tells her mother that she has gained a good mark and she adds :—

"What is the use of that, mother? "

"A good mark has no use," replies Rose's mother. "That is just why you ought to be proud to gain it. You will know one day, my child, that the most coveted rewards are those which give honour without profit."



*Froebel Educational Institute, Grove House, Roehampton Lane. Front View.*



*Froebel Educational Institute, Grove House, Roehampton Lane. Back View.*

These postcards are part of a set of the new FEI premises from c 1925

Article: From THE LINK. No. 16, March 1925. Pages 39-40.

## Roehampton Library School Experience Collection (SEC)



The School Experience Collection is a specialised part of the Roehampton Library, located on the **first floor**.

It is one of the few UK university–library collections designed specifically to support teaching placements — especially useful for Education students doing school placements.

- What the Collection Contains

The SEC is quite diverse: it includes children's books and many educational/teaching resources. Key categories are:

- **Picture Books** — designed to help children learn to read, understand stories, and explore ideas through images and words.
- **Junior & Young Adult Fiction** — children's and YA novels to keep reading choices current. [!](#)
- **Non-Fiction Subject Books (for children)** — covering a wide variety of subjects (e.g. science, maths, history, geography, arts, languages) that can support children's learning, or help gain subject knowledge.
- **Big Classroom Books** — large-format picture books (fiction and non-fiction) suitable for reading aloud or sharing with a whole class.
- **Teaching Packs, Resources & Equipment** — these go beyond books and include story sacks, puppets, games, posters, subject-specific resources, story aids, religious artefacts, and classroom equipment.
- **Bilingual / Foreign-Language Books** — dual-language picture books, language-learning resources, fiction in other languages — useful for multilingual education or language teaching.



Do encourage your student teachers from Roehampton to access the SEC collection. Did you know you can join Roehampton Library for a small fee? See more details [here](#). Primary Schools Teachers would be included under the Community Membership Category.

More information can be found [here](#)

Thank you to student, Emily Whitehead for the photographs.



## International Week

During International Week at Roehampton University, several activities for staff and students took place, here is a small selection of what was on offer.



The Study Abroad Fair was the main event, with an opportunity for students to explore all the opportunities for studying abroad.

There was an International Food Festival and crafting workshops. Throughout the week there was a range of sporting activities and events to find out more about studying abroad, and summer camps, including a study abroad fair.

Adrian O'Connor from the School of Education **shared** his experiences of internationalising his teaching through the Sports Hub International Summer School Module, which **led** to him receiving a scholarship to travel to the USA.

Also on that day, the School of Education **hosted** a Mystery Partner School Session. Participants **joined** an overseas school online and **tried** to guess each other's locations by asking only yes-or-no questions (see more below). A short introduction **was given** before the online exchange, offering a fun lunchtime activity for staff and students.

On **Friday 21 November**, the Roehampton Abroad team **held** a webinar titled "*Understanding Study Abroad: The People & Processes Powering Global Mobility*." It **provided** academic and professional services staff with insight into how the team operated and how other Roehampton departments **supported** global mobility.

Thank you to the Roehampton Abroad Team who lead this week and supplied the photographs too.

## Mystery Partner School by Emily Rotchell

You may remember a few years ago we featured an article about Mystery Skype and our connection with a school in India. As a Mystery Partner (formally Mystery Skype) event took place during our International Week (see above) and there have been some developments with the 'retirement' of Skype, we wanted to keep you updated on this valuable event.

Mystery Skype was (and sort of still is) an educational guessing game played by two classrooms via a video call, where students use yes/no questions to determine the **geographical location** of the other class (country, region/state/county, city – with the detail dependant on the age and abilities of the class of children). Skype was retired earlier this year, so of course it is no longer Mystery Skype. However, any video call platform can be used for the same purpose, I usually use whichever platform is preferred by the partner school, which has

included Zoom, Teams and Google Meet



Although it is thought that the game may have grown organically, recognising its popularity and educational value, Microsoft's "Skype in the Classroom" initiative embraced the game. They commissioned a group of six teachers to write

an official online guide to the game to help other educators get started.

The primary goal has always been to build cultural awareness, critical thinking, collaboration, and geography skills by having students ask yes/no questions to pinpoint the other classroom's location.

During International Week we partnered with a school in Portugal, and we hope the images show how much the children gain from the experience. We often take the exchange further than discovering people's location and talk about the weather, time (or time difference) and local or national events for example. The connection with Portugal is one of our longest running and most successful partner schools.

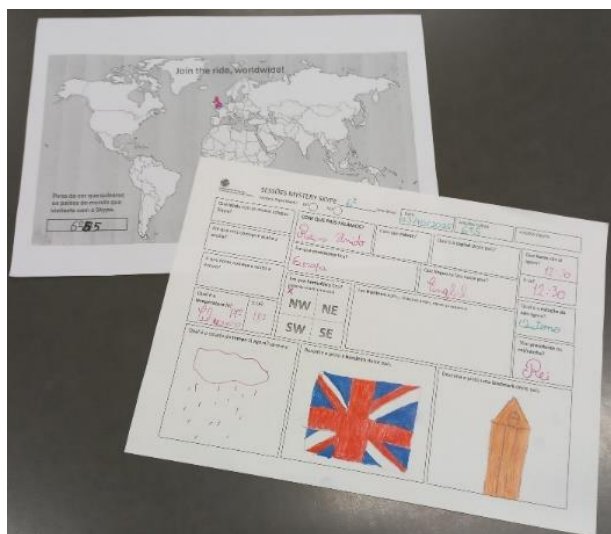
Below you can see the template created by the class teacher (with pupils work) in Portugal for their class to complete during our session. Depending on timings, they can either ask us questions related to this, or research their questions after our call has ended.



**SESSÕES MYSTERY SKYPE** 2025/26 (ano letivo) DATA 13/11/2025 A NOSSA TURMA 6º2 A NOSSA EQUIPA Team boat

Mystery Skype Week? YES ☐ NO ☐

Que idade têm os nossos colegas Skype? Jovem/adultos	COM QUE PAÍS FALAMOS? Inglaterra	Com que cidade? Londres	Qual é a capital deste país? Londres	Que horas são lá agora? 1:08 PM
Em que mês começa e acaba a escola?	Em que continente fica? Europa	Que língua se fala neste país? Inglês	E cá? 1:08 PM	Qual é a estação do ano agora? Outono
A que horas começa e acaba a escola?	Em que hemisfério fica? (assinala-o com uma cruz) NW NE SW SE	Faz fronteira com... (indica os países, mares ou oceanos) País de Gales, Escócia	Qual é a temperatura lá? 5°	Têm presidente ou rei/rainha? Rei
Qual é o estado do tempo lá agora? (desenha)	Desenha e pinta a bandeira deste país.	Desenha e pinta uma landmark deste país.		



Maps are used extensively in collaboration with the worksheet.



The class teacher in Portugal has been recognised as a Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert for 2024-25, marking their 10th consecutive year as an MIE

Expert. Here's what she has to say about these online interactions:



"Despite being a music teacher, I love setting up Mystery Skype games and other international online connections with my students along the school year. It's a wonderful way of learning while developing competences, such as, collaboration, critical thinking, empathy, cultural awareness, but



also instill curiosity, geographic location and language skills, to name just a few. My students' enthusiasm is always high and they learn a lot more, do you know why? Because they relate, they connect with real people in real places. When emotion is associated with knowledge, learning happens!"

Dr Eva Eppler was also able to attend our International Mystery Skype, As an expert in multilingualism with a keen interest in culture exchange and language learning, Dr Eppler happily accepted Emily Rotchell's invitation to join the Mystery Partner School Session on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025. It was a truly inspiring and motivating decolonised event. In Mystery Partner School sessions two teams, located in different parts of the world, need to elicit through questions where the mystery partner is located. The session I participated in was lead by Manuela Correira, a teacher - as we eventually worked out - in Portugal. With her class, Manuela had prepared simple but effective questions to narrow down the time zone, hemisphere, language and area the Roehampton team was placed in. And, it has to be said, the Portuguese primary school team beat us. They solved the mystery of our location first! Apart from being a meaningful and motivating example of Modern Foreign Language use, Manuela Correira decolonised the session beyond MLF use to include questions about language and culture. This gave participants on both sides the opportunity to differentiate their language of everyday use from their mother tongue to highlight that multilingualism is widespread, not only in London but also Portugal. The questions on traditional musical instruments were difficult, but beautifully decolonised the event.

I hope this initiative will continue for a long time and call on all Roehampton students and staff to help Emily find mystery partners in different parts of the world.

Mystery Skype was a catchy title, if you can think of a new title now Skype is retired for our exchanges, do let us know [e.rotchell@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:e.rotchell@roehampton.ac.uk)

Thanks to Manuela, in Portugal – without whom this connection would not have been possible and Dr Eva Eppler for both her ideas in the session and contribution to this article.

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## BA Y2 Specialism visits

We go into depth in subjects with our Undergraduate subject specialists and one of the joys of teaching them is the ability to organise visits to some of London's great institutions. These include what might surprise you – a visit to the dump, the WRWA!

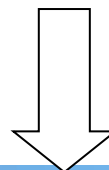
*"One of the highlights of my year is visiting the **Wandsworth Riverside Waste Authority**. Here the expert guides show the students round the waste facility and the various processes which produce bales of cardboard, plastic and metal alongside recycling the glass bottles, all of which are sent in an environmentally sound way in barges using the River Thames. Free\* to the four London boroughs who send their waste to the facility, there are also now resources for other*

*schools (including an insightful video, see below) that you might wish to use in teaching about the five R's: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle.*" Anthony Barlow, Geography Subject Leader.

**Bales of aluminium cans from London – each of them worth about £1000 and featuring tens of thousands of compressed cans.**



**The WRWA site at Smugglers Way, Wandsworth that takes four boroughs' waste: Wandsworth, H&F, K&C and Lambeth.**



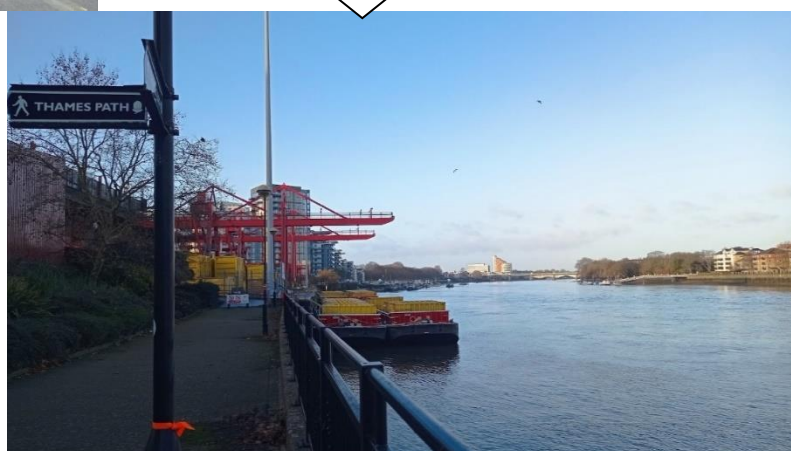
Useful links

<https://wrwa.gov.uk/schools-adult-groups/class-visits/> \*

Useful video- The Wealth in Waste

<https://wrwa.gov.uk/schools-adult-groups/wealth-hidden-in-waste/>

\*Free visits for London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham; Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; London Borough of Lambeth; London Borough of Wandsworth

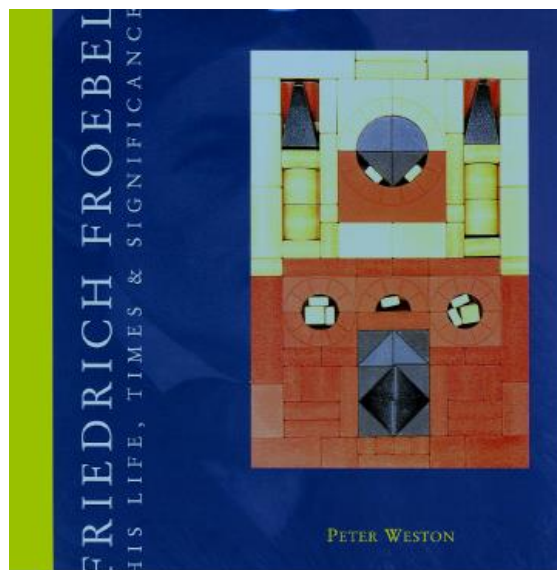


## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE SPECIALISM – Dr. Sarah Leonard

One of the most exciting developments to have followed a series of programme revalidations over the past couple of years has been the reinstatement of the Early Years Foundation Stage specialism within the BA Primary Programme. Whilst understanding early years development and the early years curriculum has always been an integral part of all student teachers' learning (across three years in the undergraduate programme and within the primary PGCE), it is now a number of years since the early years specialism ran but it was an offer that 17 of our current Year 2s have taken advantage of and which they started this September.

The specialism reflects a number of important ideas and principles embedded within the Roehampton BA Primary Education programme. Firstly, it recognises that the Early Years is the most important phase in a child's personal, social and physical development, shaping future learning and outcomes. All our student teachers, but particularly our Early Years specialists, will be central in helping children develop and learn at a crucial time when they are laying the foundations for the rest of their lives. Secondly, they will also be continuing the legacy of Friedrich Froebel (after whom the School of Education's linked, historic college is named), who helped to shape radical changes in the way that young children's development and learning were understood, and who was a very important advocate in celebrating and emphasising the importance of early childhood experiences.

## Froebel and Young Children's Development



Peter Weston's freely available book (link at the end of this article) looks at Froebel's own educational experiences and influences and explores his continued impact on thinking about early years education.

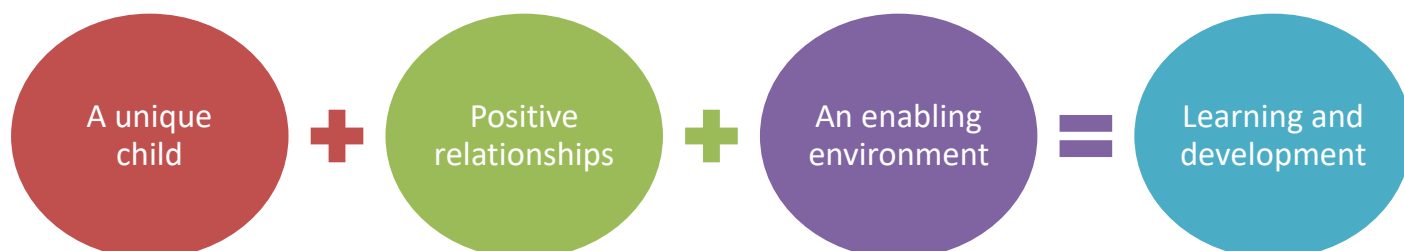
'Friedrich Froebel was probably the most influential educationalist of the nineteenth century. He turned common sense upside down by arguing that the most important part of schooling was the pre-school period. He claimed that the health and happiness of the individual, the family and the state depended on the quality of pre-school education.' (Weston, 1998 p.1). Froebel's proposal about the impact of the earliest years in a child's experience are now better understood and are supported extensive, robust evidence from a host of academic disciplines, including sociology,

education, economics, psychology and neuroscience. They are summarised well by the Centre for Early Childhood 2021 report 'Big Change Starts Small' which sets out the ways in which brain change – which is astonishingly rapid from pre-birth to age five – shapes not just cognitive and social and emotional development but also sets the foundations for long-term physical health.

This reinforces the imperative that our Early Years specialists must be well-equipped to support young children's development and learning and recognises that they will need to acquire an extensive repertoire of knowledge and skills. The Early Years is one of the most complex environments in which to teach and the specialism is intended to help our student teachers develop their understanding and practice so that they can grow in confidence. In this way, we know that they will have the knowledge to gain maximum impact from their placements and become skilful and thoughtful teachers of this phase of children's learning.

### The Early Years Foundation Stage Subject Specialism Curriculum

All the sessions in the Early Years subject specialism have allowed our student teachers to take the four underpinning principles of the EYFS statutory framework (DfE, 2025) and explore each in relation to Froebel's principles and specific elements of child development so that they can make appropriate pedagogical choices.





EFYS principle	Froebelian principle	Child Development	Pedagogical approach
Enabling environments	Unity and Connectedness  Nature  Autonomous Learners	Development of physical skills	Using nature and outside learning

The final sessions of this term allowed us to take use three Froebelian principles with a particular focus on the value of outdoor learning and connection with nature. With increasing evidence that outdoor learning improves physical health, mental wellbeing and promotes young children's learning (Kiviranta et al, 2023), this is an important curriculum strand which will be revisited over the two-year subject specialism. And, because Froebel's own words shape the practice of the programme, the students were asked to have a go at eight different outdoor learning activities themselves ranging from fruit, leaf and seed identification and building courses for human or animal Olympics to creating their own soil and den making to cloud glazing. They were excused only from the 'barefoot safari' which seemed only fair in the middle of December and on a campus shared with a lot of geese! The group were brilliant, engaging wholeheartedly in the whole process, getting dirty (resulting in a positive impact on their gut microbiome!) and finding parts of campus that they did not even know existed.

**We are very keen to ensure that our Early Years specialists can experience the huge variety of amazing EFYS practice in our partnership schools. If you are able to host our students for a visit in your EFYS classes or setting, please do make contact with me as we would be delighted to build our working relationship with you.**

Dr. Sarah Leonard – Head of Primary ITE [sarah.leonard@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.leonard@roehampton.ac.uk)

**"To learn a thing in life and through doing is much more developing, cultivating and strengthening than to learn it merely through the verbal communication of ideas."**

**Friedrich Froebel**

## Readings and resources

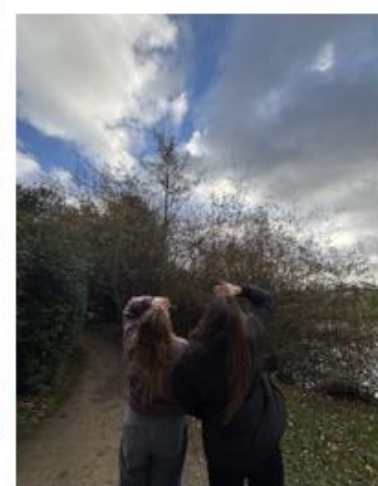
Centre for Early Childhood (2021) Big Change Starts Small. Available from:

<https://centreforearlychildhood.org/our-work/research/the-report/>

Kiviranta, L., Lindfors, E., Rönkkö, M. L., & Luukka, E. (2024). Outdoor learning in early childhood education: exploring benefits and challenges. *Educational Research*, 66(1), 102–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2023.2285762>

Weston, P. (1998) Friedrich Froebel: His Life, Times and Significance. Roehampton Institute: London. [Available here](#)

Ideas for the EFYS outside learning activities available from the [National Education Nature Park](#)



Evidence of their learning is captured here. My huge thanks to them for their enthusiasm, knowledge, participation and for their photographs! – Dr Sarah Leonard

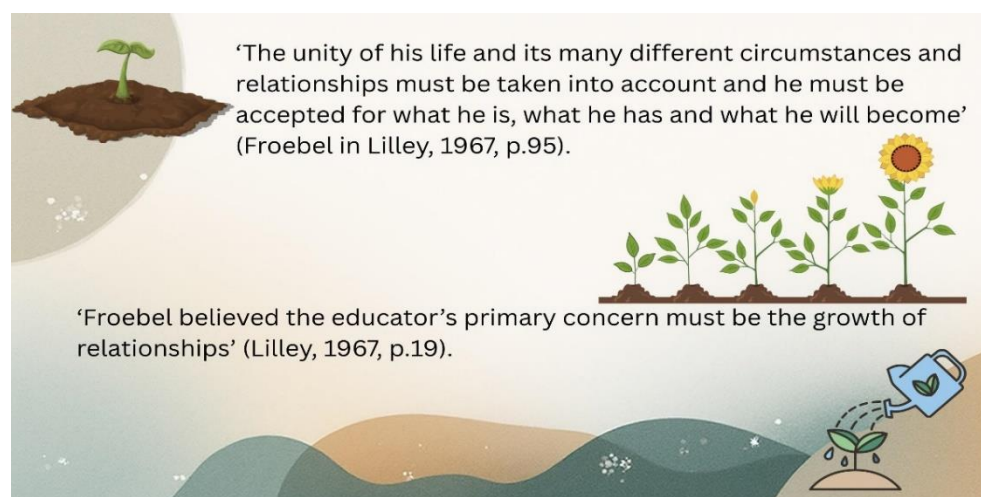
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### **Professional Development on the Froebelian Approach:** Amanda Burton-Smith

In my role as a Lead Mentor at the University of Roehampton, I enjoy professional development opportunities to keep my own practice as a mentor and a teacher current and progressive. A significant area of interest is the Froebelian Approach that is promoted through the work of the Froebel Trust. Friedrich Froebel (1782 - 1852) was the pioneer of early play-based education for young children. He wrote about and trained teachers in the importance of the relationships



children encounter with themselves, with others and with the universe. Froebel held an inclusive



vision of education

(Bruce, 2021, p. 7).

In November, I attended the Edinburgh Froebel Network and Froebel Trust conference named, 'Being and Belonging'. Bringing her significant experience, Jane

Whinnett (MBE) opened the conference with delegates coming from across the UK and beyond. In Scotland, the educational framework 'Curriculum for Excellence' spans the 3-18 age range of a child. The Froebelian Principle of Unity and Connectedness identifies the need for educators to see a child's life as a whole, with all parts connecting through relationships.

Linking with others to learn and share knowledge and experience is a valuable element of the wider professional responsibilities of a teacher and this conference provided a rich context, set in the University of Edinburgh against a backdrop of Arthur's Seat. I took the opportunity to connect parts of my own life, travelling from the South Coast and linking up with a friend from my own school days who now works in a school in Scotland.



The essence of a Froebelian approach is about starting from where each child is and finding the strength within them. In her Keynote speech, Catriona Gill used the terms 'seeing, unfolding and flourishing'. She described how children develop differently from their individual starting points.

The idea of nurturing growth in childhood emerges from Froebel creating the first Kindergarten as a garden for children. By 'tending' to children rather than 'moulding' them, Catriona described how educators can enable development through the 'germinal leaves' of play. Through building relationships of trust, joy and autonomy, educators can enable a child to flourish. The



differences between the physical, emotional and cognitive ways of thinking and being are not disorders, they are indicative of the different composition of a person that makes us who we are. Educators can learn about what children can do, by observing, seeing and getting to know them.

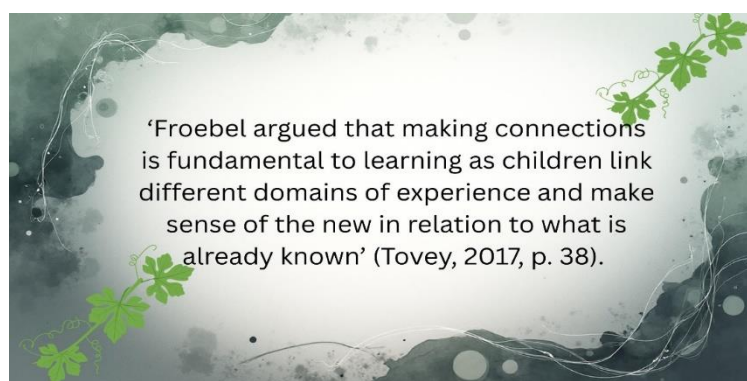
I learnt about anti-racism and decolonisation with examples from Simon Bateson on his work with Dr Shaddai Tembo of children playing with power. The role of the educator is to see and to know the children and their context, to respond appropriately. From a Froebelian perspective, an educator would look for and trust the intentions of a child. Engaging with staff, children and families we can promote environments and interactions in a setting that are respectful in celebrating diversity.



Inclusion of children with complex needs was the topic of one uplifting seminar by Catriona Campbell, highlighting the importance of breaking down the learning into components that enable a child to succeed, giving them predictable

environments in which they can enjoy activities that enable a deeper flow of play. In a seminar about inclusive block play, Caitlin Thomlinson talked about giving children the autonomy to decide how high to build their towers and how to group children to create the most inclusive combinations of children to play safely in the block play area together.

Rachna Joshi closed the day with a keynote speech sharing her journey through life, talking about the 'ripples' of life that make us who we are. Rachna recognised how her family relationships inspired her own professional journey as a teacher and a writer. She recently co-authored a Froebel Trust pamphlet about connecting with parents, families and communities as starting points.



My reflections caused me to look inward and understand myself. As a learner, I am being nurtured by those who teach and lead me in my roles as a mentor and as a student. As an educator, I recognise that each child or student teacher I work with has their own identity, thoughts, creativity and strength. My role is to look closely, listen attentively and nurture them into knowing they belong in their nursery, school or university for who they are.

Many free resources including downloadable pamphlets, videos and podcasts which include contributions and topics covered by the aforementioned speakers are available via the [Froebel Trust](https://www.froebel.org.uk/training-and-resources) website link: <https://www.froebel.org.uk/training-and-resources>

References and links to some of the subjects raised in this article are listed below.

Bruce, T. (2021), Friedrich Froebel, A critical introduction to Key Themes and Debates. London: Bloomsbury Academics.

Lilley, I. (1967), Friedrich Froebel, A selection from his writings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tovey, H. (2017), Bringing the Froebel Approach to your Early Years Practice, 2nd edition. London: Routledge.

Curriculum For Excellence <https://scotlandscurriculum.scot>

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## Step into the world of Seymour Science with BBC Bitesize

BBC Bitesize Primary has launched two new games that invite children to join Seymour and his friends as they learn all about science.

The games are set in Seymour's workshop where he films his very own TV science shows. Friends join him as they share their expertise on the seasons as well as light, sound and electricity.



In Seymour's latest Key Stage 1 game, Smashing Seasons, children learn what makes each season special. They can help a blackbird to build her nest in spring and find food for a hibernating hedgehog. Pupils can explore how weather changes and describe how the daylight varies in each season. Plus, with a little help from

Seymour and Gabby, they will be encouraged to work scientifically by predicting and observing seasonal changes. When children have finished all five episodes, they can download a colourful seasons spotter activity sheet packed with lots of fun things to do.



Ready for Lights, Sound, Power? Using Seymour's Key Stage 2 game, invite your class to learn all about light, sound and electricity, as Seymour prepares for his latest broadcast. They will need to work out how to stop sunlight hampering the filming of his new TV show. With cables and plugs dotted around the workshop,

children will be challenged to spot the safety hazards, and Davina has come up with a cool new theme tune for the show using bottles filled with different amounts of water. Can your class match the sequence of bottles?

To complement the two games, there are five video resources featuring Seymour and his friends. These cover day and night, seasons, electrical safety, forces and sound. Each resource is packed with lots of activities and quizzes to immerse children in each subject area.

Visit: [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary)

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## Thank you to all schools who helped students with Mock Interviews

Thank you to the school partners and school staff who supported the annual mock interview process in mid-December for our BA QTS Year 3s. This was a very successful event and we hugely appreciate the time invested into it. Our Annual Recruitment Fair is the next stage of our support for students looking for jobs in 2020 on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February. Remember we offer a free service to support you if you have vacancies at any time – do send these on to [baprimary@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:baprimary@roehampton.ac.uk) (Yashna) and we will post on our intranet for students to see and consider.

A few quotes from schools who helped with our mock interviews.

"Such a wonderful experience. Felt blessed to be able to nurture the teacher's of tomorrow, however briefly."

"I just wanted to send a quick note to say what a pleasure it was for us in the mock interviews today. We were particularly impressed by how prepared they were, and their responses to the feedback we were able to give them. It is a credit to the teacher training at Roehampton that the trainees were so able to reflect purposefully about examples from their placements and were not phased by any of the questions." Harry Page, Headteacher, East Sheen Primary School.



"It's such a valuable process for trainee teachers and really helps prepare them for the next steps in their careers. My own university didn't offer this, and I can see how beneficial it would have been! I enjoyed meeting and interviewing her...She was incredibly polite, positive, and professional, and spoke with real enthusiasm about teaching and her experiences. In the current climate, it's so encouraging to see individuals like her entering the profession. She demonstrated strong reflective skills, viewing every experience as a learning opportunity. She embraced the chance to discuss practice and procedures and showed excellent initiative and instincts around creating safe, inclusive classrooms. Her understanding of how to champion and support children was impressive, and she articulated clear strategies for building an inclusive environment. I believe she will make a fantastic teacher"

Erin Coleman, English, Music and Wellbeing lead, Deputy Headteacher.

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## **The Children's Society - Beyond Gender Stereotypes (BGS)**

The Children's Society are currently looking to recruit 20 schools (by mid January) to take part in their pilot study and evaluation around challenging gender stereotypes.

It is a PSHE enhancement for KS2 pupils and include 7 lessons, 3 for LKS2 and 4 for UKS2. There is an incentive of a £250 spend at Heath Educational Books for schools that join the programme.

Further details about the programme and sign up information can be found on the link below:

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/lifting-limits/beyond-gender-stereotypes>

## **Exploring the Thames Tideway “Super Sewer” Schools Invited to Join a Curriculum Development Project**

Now that the Thames Tideway “super sewer” has been switched on and is actively improving water quality across London, we are seeking schools who might wish to develop their curriculum and understand this major piece of local geography and engineering.

This aligns closely with the Department for Education’s recent curriculum review, which emphasises the importance of climate change and sustainability education across primary and secondary phases. The Tideway project provides a powerful, place-based case study of how cities like London manage polluted water, protect river ecosystems, and implement mitigations for a different future.

Schools may, therefore, find this collaboration a constructive way to strengthen their provision in this area while giving pupils access to a local, contemporary, real-world example.

Any partner schools are invited in and those located in, or near, areas affected by the project might benefit the most, so get in touch! We’d also like to learn from you if you have already done projects with the Tideway team as we know they have been active in community engagement.

Our project is likely to be best aimed at Key Stage 2 classes and this work will link directly to our Intensive Teaching and Practice (ITAP) module undertaken by our BA Primary Year 2 Specialist students. Our aim is to co-design four lessons which can be both informative, engaging and age appropriate. *How can a large-scale environmental infrastructure project shape and benefit the places in which we live?*

Participating schools may have the opportunity to:

- Work our geography subject lead, Anthony Barlow, to benefit from our emerging thinking in this area. You might then trial resources, lesson plans and practical activities.
- Collaborate (and maybe link with) with our selected ITAP school
- Contribute local knowledge about how the Tideway worksites and river environment have influenced your community.
- Co-create geography-focused learning that supports children in understanding human–environment interactions, sustainability, and river systems.

If your school would like to take part, or if you would simply like more information about what involvement would look like, please contact us and we will arrange an initial discussion. We would be delighted to work with colleagues who are keen to strengthen geographical thinking and environmental understanding across the curriculum.

[anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk)



*Photo: A Thames-side super sewer site at Carnwath Road Riverside, Hammersmith and Fulham as viewed from the Smuggler's Way, Wandsworth, in December 2025. The 15 metre grey ventilation column seen here is on top of one of the three 'main drive sites' from which the tunnel boring machines began building the main tunnel. This 'pocket park' provides a new route to the river, permanent seating and a community space. The design of the space was based on a 'flowing bands' motif, which is a visual reference to the currents in the river bend and nearby reeds.*

## **Thames Tideway 20 things to know for Year 5s!**

- 1.** The Thames Tideway Tunnel is a very long underground pipe built deep beneath London.
- 2.** It follows the shape of the River Thames, running roughly in the same direction as the river itself flows West to East.
- 3.** The project was created to stop dirty water from entering the Thames during heavy rain.
- 4.** Many of London's sewers were designed in Victorian times, so the new tunnel helps the city cope with modern life.
- 5.** Large machines called tunnel-boring machines carved out the tunnel in smooth arcs below the city.
- 6.** Much of the tunnel lies far underneath the riverbed, within thick layers of London clay.
- 7.** Clay in the West is especially useful because it is strong, stable, and easy for engineers to work through. Sand, gravel and chalk further East can be more tricky!
- 8.** The tunnel acts like a giant storage space that temporarily holds rainwater and sewage until it can be treated.
- 9.** Cleaner water going into the Thames helps fish, birds, and river plants to thrive.
- 10.** The tunnel connects different parts of London, linking the west, centre, and east through one continuous route.
- 11.** Several "drop shafts", what you may have seen over the past decade being created and leading to local disruption, lead from the surface down to the tunnel, helping to move water into it quickly.
- 12.** Each drop shaft sits in a carefully chosen location so that water flows through the system using gravity.
- 13.** New ventilation structures help air move safely in and out of the tunnel.
- 14.** Parts of the project sit next to the riverside, changing the geography of some riverbanks.
- 15.** Some sites gained new public spaces and walkways, giving people better access to the river.
- 16.** The tunnel supports London's future population growth by preventing pollution as the city expands.
- 17.** Engineers had to study the landscape closely to avoid damaging historic buildings and transport routes.
- 18.** The project helps protect the Thames Estuary, where the river meets the sea, from pollution carried downstream.
- 19.** The tunnel improves the overall health of London's main river, making it safer for wildlife and people.
- 20.** The Tideway project shows how human geography (cities and people) and physical geography (rivers and landforms) must work together to keep a major river clean.

### **The Tideway super-sewer is:**

#### **1. About 25 kilometres long**

Roughly the same as walking from central London to the edge of the M25.

#### **2. Around 7 metres wide inside**

About as wide as two small cars parked side by side.

#### **3. Built using six tunnel-boring machines**

Imagine six giant mechanical moles digging day and night.

#### **4. As deep as 65 metres below ground in places**

Similar to the height of a very tall office building turned upside down.



**5. Helps stop tens of millions of tonnes of dirty water entering the Thames each year**

Enough to fill many sports stadiums.

**6. Built through more than a dozen main construction sites**

Like having major building works spread across many neighbourhoods.

**7. Drop shafts as wide as about 20 metres**

Roughly the size of a swimming pool at a local leisure centre.

**8. The biggest tunnel-boring machine was more than 100 metres long**

Longer than a football pitch from goal to goal.

**9. The project took more than ten years overall**

About the same length of time as a child growing from a baby into a Year 6 pupil.

**10. Designed to serve millions of Londoners for over a century**

It is built to last longer than most people's entire lifetime.

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**Anna Harrison would like to share with you a festive poem from Brian Bilston**

**Tense Christmas**

**I The Ghost of Christmas Past Perfect Progressive**

Midnight. Awoken by a ghost.  
I thought I must be raving.  
He'd come to me so I could see  
how badly *I'd been behaving*.

**II The Ghost of Christmas Present Perfect Simple**

Later still, a ghost again:  
with a much more recent scene.  
More evidence piling up  
of how unpleasant *I have been*.

**III The Ghost of Christmas Future Unreal Conditional**

Then, a final ghostly vision –  
but this one lacked the pain and strife.  
I saw if I could be a kinder man,  
*I would create* a better life.

*Brian Bilston*

## Subject Advisory Panels: Spring 2026

Please register your attendance here: <https://forms.office.com/e/uqZSNZit4p>

Links to access the sessions are in the table below.

Subject	Subject Lead	Date and time	Online Meeting link
Art & Design	Jo Nugent <a href="mailto:jo.nugent@roehampton.ac.uk">jo.nugent@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> March 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 345 561 326 001 2 Passcode: nW7Lb6Bs
Computing	Lynda Chinaka <a href="mailto:Lynda.chinaka@roehampton.ac.uk">Lynda.chinaka@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> March 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 341 558 139 677 4 Passcode: An9qu7gZ
Design & Technology	Sue Miles-Pearson <a href="mailto:s.miles-pearson@roehampton.ac.uk">s.miles-pearson@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 381 487 296 014 Passcode: Qx63Kr2F
English	Anna Harrison <a href="mailto:Anna.Harrison@roehampton.ac.uk">Anna.Harrison@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 369 501 482 835 4 Passcode: 2P4SQ7y2
Geography	Anthony Barlow <a href="mailto:anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk">anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 385 956 740 064 2 Passcode: C34Dv3ce
History	Susie Townsend <a href="mailto:susan.townsend@roehampton.ac.uk">susan.townsend@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 370 722 691 041 1 Passcode: ZT2f9m9Q
Mathematics	Lorraine Hartley <a href="mailto:lorraine.hartley@roehampton.ac.uk">lorraine.hartley@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 345 979 995 372 3 Passcode: by3ur6Xc
Physical Education	Emerick Kaitell <a href="mailto:e.kaitell@roehampton.ac.uk">e.kaitell@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 311 498 544 418 7 Passcode: Rv9Ej7An
PSHE	Sarah Leonard <a href="mailto:Sarah.Leonard@roehampton.ac.uk">Sarah.Leonard@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 363 554 601 225 6 Passcode: Gs7mD2GP
Science	Nicola Treby <a href="mailto:nicola.treby@roehampton.ac.uk">nicola.treby@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> February 4-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 394 144 798 022 Passcode: jv3ZG7Jo

## Subject CPD for Mentors 2025/26 – Remaining Sessions

Please register your attendance here: <https://forms.office.com/e/uqZSNZit4p>

Online meetings links to access the sessions are in the table below.

Subject	Subject Lead delivering the session	Date and time	Link for online meeting
Art & Design	Jo Nugent <a href="mailto:jo.nugent@roehampton.ac.uk">jo.nugent@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> January 16.00 - 17.00	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 370 857 374 709 5 Passcode: En9od36t
Computing	Lynda Chinaka <a href="mailto:Lynda.chinaka@roehampton.ac.uk">Lynda.chinaka@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> February	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 334 280 740 905 0 Passcode: CW3Gr9Uq
English	Anna Harrison and Steph Laird <a href="mailto:anna.harrison@roehampton.ac.uk">anna.harrison@roehampton.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:s.laird@roehampton.ac.uk">s.laird@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2026 16:00-17:00	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 329 200 520 838 7 Passcode: hv9Ne6du
Maths	Lorraine Hartley <a href="mailto:lorraine.hartley@roehampton.ac.uk">lorraine.hartley@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2026 4pm-5pm	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 342 818 703 299 4 Passcode: zV7HQ27n
PSHE	Sarah Leonard <a href="mailto:sarah.leonard@roehampton.ac.uk">sarah.leonard@roehampton.ac.uk</a>	Thursday, 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 16:00 – 17:00	<a href="#">Join the meeting now</a> Meeting ID: 326 578 053 795 5 Passcode: 86Gi3Zi9

## Upcoming ECT roles at your school

If you wish to advertise ECT jobs with us, then please send adverts (PDF or Word files) to [baprimary@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:baprimary@roehampton.ac.uk) and [pgprimary@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:pgprimary@roehampton.ac.uk), and we will share these with our current students and graduates from last academic year.



## Our Primary Subject Leads



**Subject:** Geography

**Subject Lead Name:** Anthony Barlow

**Email:** [anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 0208 392 3386

**Key subject/research interests:** Pupil understanding of their everyday geography and the locality.

**Professional Links:** Geographical Association Trustee  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/anthonybarlowgeogite>

**Subject:** Computing

**Subject Lead Name:** Lynda Chinaka

**Email:** [Lynda.chinaka@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:Lynda.chinaka@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Key subject/research interests:** Computing Education in Primary settings. Building confidence for the teaching of all elements of the computing curriculum: Computer Science, Information Technology and Digital Literacy. Ensuring practice and pedagogy that intersects with the identities and experiences of all learners. Computing and creativity for everyone!



**Subject:** English (BA)

**Subject Lead Name:** Anna Harrison

**Email:** [anna.harrison@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:anna.harrison@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 8392 3017

**Key subject/research interests:** Digital Literacies, Print and Digital Picturebooks, Reading, Siblings as Readers, Children's Literature, The Classics, Beatrix Potter.

**Professional Links:** Open University Reading for Pleasure, UKLA, IBBY (International Board of Books for Young People).

**Subject:** English (PG/SD)

**Subject Lead Name:** Steph Laird

**Email:** [s.laird@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:s.laird@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 8392 3076



**Key subject/research interests:** The teaching of writing, children's responses to picture books, how children read film and the use of film as a stimulus for writing.

**Professional Links:** Member of the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA)



**Subject:** History

**Subject Lead Name:** Susie Townsend

**Email:** [susan.townsend@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:susan.townsend@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 8392 3369

**Key subject / research interest:** Relativity and History, experiential learning, historic fiction and diversity.

**Professional links:** Regular contributor to Primary History journal and to Historical Association conferences.

**Subject:** Maths

**Subject Lead Name:** Lorraine Hartley

**Email:** [lorraine.hartley@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:lorraine.hartley@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 8392 3365

**Key subject/research interests:** Planning and teaching and assessing in primary mathematics; fractions across the primary age range.

**Professional Links:** ATM/MA; NCETM and consultancy in schools.



**Subject Lead Name:** Jo Nugent

**Email:** [Jo.Nugent@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:Jo.Nugent@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 0208 392 3397

**Key subject/research interests:** Primary Art and Design education, inclusive practice with a focus on using art galleries and outdoor spaces to enhance learning experiences.

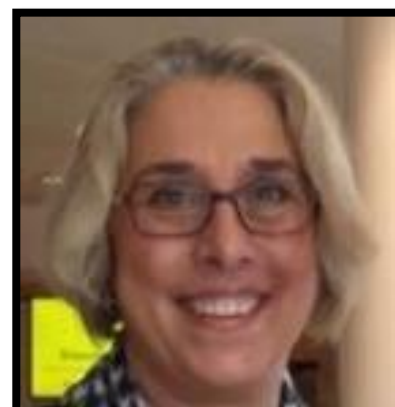
**Professional Links:** NSEAD

**Subject:** Design and Technology

**Subject Lead Name:** Sue Miles-Pearson

**Email:** [s.miles-pearson@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:s.miles-pearson@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 0208 392 5781



**Key subject/research interests:** CAD CAM (Computer Aided Design and Computer Aided Manufacture); Food technology that is being taught in the English primary schools; I am also interested in pupils in the Early years learning the key design and technology skills that they will require for Key Stage one and beyond.



**Subject:** Science

**Subject Lead Name:** Dr Nicola Treby

**Email:** [nicola.treby@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.treby@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 8392 3263

**Key subject/research interests:** Key subject/research interests: My interests include science education, professional attrition and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a framework for examining professional practice.

**Subject:** Physical Education

**Subject Lead Name:** Emerick Kaitell

**Email:**

**Telephone:**

**Key subject/research interests:** My teaching philosophy is centred around a commitment to social justice, ensuring every child has access to high-quality physical education.





**Partnership Materials Page:**

<https://external.moodle.roehampton.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=108>

(click "Log in as guest" & enter the password **RoehamptonTrainee**)

**University of Roehampton Primary Partnership webpage:**

<https://www.roehampton.ac.uk/education/primary-school-partnerships/>

**School Partnerships Team**

email: [primarypartnerships@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:primarypartnerships@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Head of Primary Initial Teacher Education:** Sarah Leonard

email: [sarah.leonard@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.leonard@roehampton.ac.uk)

**Head of Partnerships / Mentor Training Lead:** Natalie Rankin

email: [natalie.rankin@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:natalie.rankin@roehampton.ac.uk)

**BA (Undergraduate) Programme Convener Primary Education:** Anthony Barlow

email: [anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.barlow@roehampton.ac.uk)

**PGCE (Postgraduate) Programme Convener Primary Education:** Steph Laird

email: [s.laird@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:s.laird@roehampton.ac.uk)