



Inspire a generation...



PEN PORTRAIT

Specialist Leader of Education

Name of SLE: Natalie O'Connell

School Name: St Edward's R.C Primary School

SLE Specialism(s) Early Years | Phonics | Early Reading

Teaching School Alliance: Heart TSA

Area(s) of Expertise

I am an experienced EYFS teacher with ten years teaching experience. I have worked in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class and I am currently in a straight Reception class. I have gained a wealth of knowledge of both the National Curriculum and the EYFS framework. This has always ensured that I have been able to implement the highest standard of teaching. This has had a positive impact, not only on the children I have taught, but also on the development of my fellow colleagues through peer to peer reviews and team teaching.

I am an enthusiastic, creative and passionate Early Years teacher who believes that children thrive in stimulating settings that engage children in first-hand learning experiences. Over the past two years I have worked alongside four other schools and Early Years Specialist, Ann Langston, to improve the teaching and learning of Early Years within our settings. Through peer to peer support and collaboration we were able to re-structure the whole early years department, ensuring that provision and resources were of a high quality and accessible to all learners. An area for development was to add challenges to most of the areas, incorporating the 'rainbow challenge' approach. This ensured that children knew what the expectation of each area was and how to use it appropriately. This allows teachers to facilitate learning, offering a wide range of enticing experiences, modelling learning that the children can then access independently. This approach is now evident in all three Early Years classrooms from Nursery to Reception/Year 1.

Current Leadership Responsibilities

As a middle leader, I currently support the leadership team with the teaching and assessment of phonics and early reading. Over the past few years I have adapted our reading scheme to meet the needs of our early readers, to promote and enhance phonological awareness through EYFS to year 2. I have devised an assessment and tracking system that allows teachers, to see how the children are individually progressing throughout the phases and target any gaps through an intensive intervention. I am involved in leading staff meetings, parental workshops and CPD for staff. I support the Early Years leader and work closely to ensure that we have a consistent approach throughout all of our classrooms to ensure that all children are able to achieve and the enthusiasm of early years learning is evident in every child.

I am actively involved with members of staff within my own school and other settings and look forward to working alongside others to ensure that we can achieve the best for all our children.