

# Attachment Aware Schools

**A Safe Space, a Nurturing Learning Community**

“Derbyshire’s Attachment Aware Schools programme supports schools through a year-long action research process which transforms school ethos and pedagogy. Building attachment awareness equips schools with greater knowledge, understanding and practice, which is better attuned to the needs of all children and young people. Attachment Aware Schools value the role of relationships, and place these at the heart of good teaching and learning.”

**Action  
Research**

**Theoretical  
Input**

**Network of  
excellent practice**

**Paul Kelly and Lizzie Watt**

# Introduction

This booklet will give you a brief overview of Derbyshire's award winning Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) programme, which is designed and led by the Virtual School. You will read a brief overview of why we run this programme, how it was designed and an overview of its structure. You will then find a short description of all the action research projects that have taken place in the schools we have worked with. All of these schools are now part of our AAS network and have an open door for you to visit – hear about their project - and share the excellent practice which they have developed. You will read that being attachment aware can mean many different things, but fundamentally the common thread that runs through all of the schools is understanding the importance of building good relationships: young person to adult, young person to young person and adult to adult – all of this builds a safe and nurturing learning environment where everyone can flourish.

Please take the opportunity to get in touch with our AAS schools - perhaps make time for a visit and see how they can help your school on its own attachment aware journey and the benefits that this has for the whole school community.

## Rationale for the AAS programme

Nationally, Virtual Schools have the responsibility to oversee the education of Children in Care and it is widely accepted that these young people benefit from a nurturing, attuned approach, which is grounded in attachment theory. However, an attachment aware approach is not only beneficial for Children in Care; attachment is a universal process, which is fundamental to the healthy development of all young people and adults. Therefore, a good theoretical understanding of this, coupled with the reflective ability to develop related practical approaches, will equip schools with the necessary skills to show best practice in becoming an Attachment Aware School.

Derbyshire County Council and its Virtual School are committed to pursuing the best outcomes, in the widest meaning of the phrase, for all of our Children in Care and young people. Therefore, the Attachment Aware Schools programme has been carefully designed to build on the good practice and good practitioner intuition already seen in many Derbyshire schools and to develop a network of schools committed to becoming even more attachment aware in their own school, but also to support others in the county.

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**“The opportunity to take part in the Attachment Aware programme has had a huge impact on our students – and our staff too.”**

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We know that schools want support in how to work more effectively with children and young people with additional attachment needs; and in how to create a safe and nurturing learning environment throughout the whole school and wider community. The Virtual School has been pioneering an Attachment Aware Schools Programme in Derbyshire, which launched in April 2015. ‘Attachment Aware Schools’ is a term used by a number of different local authority areas but it is important to recognise that it is not a licensed training product or prescribed programme that is delivered in the same way by any of those using this term. Our Derbyshire version of Attachment Aware Schools (AAS) is a unique and highly successful programme designed by the Virtual School for Derbyshire schools. This programme has received national recognition as being the ‘gold standard’ of ‘attachment awareness’, and the Virtual School has been visited and invited to talk to many other Virtual Schools and local authorities about this innovative work. We were also runners up in the national government led Pupil Premium Awards.

The AAS programme allows us to:

- Improve the conditions for Children in Care and vulnerable learners in schools and settings
- Raise awareness of the issues and needs around attachment and trauma
- Consolidate working relations between the Virtual School and all Derbyshire schools
- Catalyse a new community of outstanding practice amongst schools
- Encourage pedagogical development – trialling new ways of working led by the Virtual School

The Attachment Aware Schools programme was conceived and devised by Lizzie Watt, Assistant Headteacher and Dr Paul Kelly, Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist within the Virtual School in Derbyshire.

**Lizzie Watt:** Assistant Headteacher, leading on Innovation, Teaching and Learning for Derbyshire’s Virtual School. She has taught at primary and secondary level as well as being a senior lecturer at three Midlands Universities. Much of her work has concentrated on developing teacher pedagogy and school practice to improve the enjoyment, engagement and attainment of vulnerable learners. Lizzie has completed a Master’s in Education, which focussed on the increasing responsibilities for schools to support emotional health and wellbeing. Lizzie is co-founder of the Attachment Aware Schools Programme: A Safe Space, A Nurturing Learning Environment and is delighted to be working with Derbyshire schools on this transformational programme embedding action research at the heart of school development.

**Dr Paul Kelly** is the Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist with Derbyshire’s Virtual School. He has been an honorary tutor at the University of Manchester, has presented at regional and national conferences, and has appeared on national radio and television. Having taught in primary and secondary schools earlier in his career, Paul’s doctoral research highlighted the importance of collaborative working with schools and settings in understanding and applying attachment theory, and its implications, for all children, young people and adults. He has jointly pioneered the Attachment Aware Schools Programme in Derbyshire.

**Dr Sara Giddens** works alongside Paul and Lizzie to guide the action research that takes place at all of the schools involved on the programme. She is a choreographer and lecturer (University of Central Lancashire), with a background in action research and school development. Sara provides theoretical and practical ways to approach action research through consultation meetings within each school throughout the AAS year. She brings her considerable experience of creative social pedagogy to the programme, ensuring the depth and innovation of each school’s action research project.

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**“As educational practitioners the AAS programme gave us the opportunity to reflect on our own practice and that of our colleagues and school as a whole. But most of all, it enabled us to develop a bespoke and much needed system of support for our children and their families which in turn has brought about positive outcomes and change for our most vulnerable children! This has been a career enhancing experience which has given me the knowledge and the confidence to fight even harder for those who need it most - Thank you!”**

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# Three Strands – what our logo represents



This three line illustration was designed to represent visually how the Derbyshire AAS programme has been conceived. The three different coloured strands are symbolic of the integration of: theoretical learning, action research and partnership working that evolves into a county-wide school network. All of these three lines of activity take place every year in the AAS programme between the participants, Virtual School and wider Derbyshire school community.

The AAS programme develops pedagogy, practice and school ethos through theoretical input, deepening knowledge and collaborative practice.



## 1. Action Research (green arrow)

The action research projects, which every participating school undertakes, are the engine of the AAS programme. The year begins with each participating pair analysing the current conditions for teaching and learning for Children in Care and all vulnerable learners in their school. This also involves looking at the school's overall ethos and physical environment. From this initial analysis, each participating school focuses on a particular area of concern and decides upon an inquiry focus for their research project. Each school must release two members of staff to join the programme, with one having to be a senior leader and the other the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (known in Derbyshire as Children in Care). They, in turn, disseminate the learning back to school and lead the action research. With this amount of commitment we ensure that new ideas and practice become embedded across the whole school and that the developments are sustainable.



## 2. Theoretical Input (orange arrow)

The programme offers six days of theoretical input, facilitated support and challenge throughout the year. The training and support comes from the Virtual School and some bespoke input from Kate Cairns Associates. The programmed days have been carefully designed to develop and deepen participants' knowledge around attachment theory and trauma-informed practice, equipping them with knowledge, practical information, reference books and an e-learning package to help them disseminate the learning back to school and within their wider learning communities.



## 3. Network of excellent practice (purple arrow)

The development of an AAS network across the county enables an improved knowledge of attachment needs in our schools, awareness of the impact that this has on students and staff, and develops pedagogy and practice. The participating schools, in turn, can spread knowledge and share practice with others (in a hub and spoke style model) amongst their cluster groups and localities. Those participating 'sign up' to a commitment to offer support and share practice with other schools, who may not have experienced the programme. The Virtual School is aiming to improve the educational attainment and life chances for Children in Care and through this programme we endeavour to enhance Derbyshire schools with a better understanding of the needs of Children in Care. With this deeper knowledge and improved practice there will be benefits for all vulnerable learners; in fact for all young people and staff in schools and settings. Our ambition is to see all Derbyshire schools practising in an informed and empathic way towards Children in Care and vulnerable learners – and this of course will benefit the whole school community.

# Derbyshire Attachment Aware Schools

All of the schools who have taken part to date are listed below under an Inquiry Area heading, with a short description of their action research and who took the lead within their school, plus how to contact them.

## Inquiry Area Parent, Carers and Community

### 1. Bennerley Fields Specialist Speech and Language College

Stratford Street, Cotmanhay, Ilkeston DE7 8QZ.

T: 0115 9326374

**Name of Project Leads:** Sue Firth, Julie Addison

**Project Title:** Support, Risk and Resilience

**Action Research Question:** How can an increased engagement with attachment awareness, impact upon targeted young people and the adults around them?

**Project Description:** Our work began with a focus on a small group of our most vulnerable students and has led to palpable impact upon all staff in the school. Through our greater understanding of Attachment Theory and especially our developing understanding of behaviour as a form of communication, we have grown in confidence and have been able to invest in a culture of supportive risk taking, building staff's resilience and flexibility and reducing exclusions. The ethos in the school has changed, we understand how to support regulation to a much greater degree, and are able to articulate how the programme has contributed to our desire to see each child as a whole being.

### 2. Heath Primary School

Slack Lane, Heath S44 5RH.

T: 01246 850277

**Name of Project Leads:** Rachel Farnsworth, Loretta Hill

**Project Title:** Building Bridges not walls

**Action Research Question:** How can we positively engage and strengthen the connections with vulnerable families and identified children?

**Project Description:** Our project is based around building stronger, positive relationships between pupils, key families and the school. Not everyone's past school experience is a positive one and so it is vital that we break this cycle for the next generation. Positive parent engagement is important to lay the foundations for life-long learning for all our children. We have implemented ways of reaching out and engaging our key families by developing a nurture team approach. A direct impact from this has been improved attendance, increased parental participation within the school community and more engaged confident children.

### 3. Poolsbrook Primary School

Cottage Lane, Poolsbrook, Chesterfield S43 3LF.

T: 01246 472540

**Name of Project Leads:** Linda Roberts, Laura Jeffries

**Project Title:** The Long Game

**Action Research Question:** How can we build more effective relationships with parents/carers in order to build more positive life aspirations with their children?

**Project Description:** Through working with creative practitioners we have implemented new ways of engaging with our parents and carers to nurture and support a more positive relationship between school and community. Our intention is to have a direct and longer term impact upon all our children's learning and aspirations in partnerships with their families/carers.

### 4. Swanwick Primary School

South Street, Swanwick DE55 1BZ.

T: 01773 602268

**Name of Project Leads:** Mel Walton, Helen Stone

**Project Title:** How Many Peas in a Pod?

**Action Research Question:** How does social and emotional wellbeing affect readiness to learn of our most vulnerable pupils?

**Project Description:** Our aim has been to strengthen and extend relationships between pupils, staff and parents to better support vulnerable learners and their families in school and overcome pre-existing barriers. We have tailored this bespoke intervention to the child and their families so as to ensure sustainable impact on attendance, emotional wellbeing, readiness to learn and home school communication. Through this project we have been able to increase parental engagement creating a supportive network around the child to maximise their learning potential.

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**“Every parent and carer now remarks on how calm and happy all the children are – they want to come to school and this leads to better outcomes, socially, emotionally and academically.”**

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## 5. Woodbridge Junior School

Grange Street, Alfreton DE55 7JA.

T: 01773 833138

**Name of Project Leads:** Lindsey Ford, Patrice Grant

**Project Title:** Beyond the School Walls

**Action Research Question:** How can we develop our Personalised Mentoring Programme to build more resilient relationships between children, their families, carers and the school?

**Project Description:** Our project has extended and strengthened relationships between pupils, parents, carers and the school. We have increased parental engagement, improved resilience, and self-esteem and supported self-regulation. A more consistent, open and honest line of communication has been built with our most vulnerable families - breaking the cycle of negativity and building greater trust between them and the school.

### Inquiry Area

### Transforming Environment

## 6. Bramley Vale Primary School

York Crescent, Chesterfield S44 5PF.

T: 01246 850289

**Name of Project Leads:** Sharon James, Jan Brown

**Project Title:** A Space for Me

**Action Research Question:** How can we adapt our environment to help and support Year 6 boys who are displaying attachment needs and behaviours related to developmental trauma?

**Project Description:** Our project has enabled us to work alongside our Year 6 boys who were displaying challenging behaviour and were getting sent out of the classroom too often. We wanted to support them to make better choices about expressing themselves and their needs. With them, we have designed and constructed a safe space where all of our children can go when they need to step outside of the classroom and find some calm.

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**“The AAS programme provides innovative training coupled with an excellent support network which drives and enables you to provide inspiring, informative practice, tailored specifically for your school, families and children”**

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## 7. Furness Vale Primary School

Buxton Road, Furness Vale SK23 7PQ.

T: 01663 744103

**Name of Project Leads:** Carol Taylor, Ruth Parry

**Project Title:** Friendship Express

**Action Research Question:** How can we support vulnerable learners to have positive relationships with peers and co-create a space where building relationships is key?

**Project Description:** Through this project we have reflected on the good practice taking place in our nurture groups and how we can draw on this to create a safe space at lunch times for our most vulnerable children. In consultation with our children, we have designed and constructed a safe and inviting space with structured activities that focus on helping children build and sustain positive relationships.

## 8. Granville Sports College

Burton Road, Woodville, Swadlincote DE11 7JR.

T: 01283 216765

**Name of Project Leads:** Stephanie Smith, Julia Finney

**Project Title:** The PLC

**Action Research Question:** How can the development of a bespoke Personalised Learning Centre support our young people with unmet attachment needs?

**Project Description:** What a difference a room can make! By developing a bespoke Personalised Learning Centre we have generated an environment that has had a positive impact on most of our vulnerable learners. This has produced increased resilience and changed mindsets allowing pupils to make progress in a mainstream secondary.

## 9. Ladywood Primary School

Oliver Road, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston, DE7 4NH.

T: 0115 9320585

**Name of Project Leads:** Amy Nind, David Stevens

**Project Title:** A room with a view

**Action Research Question:** How can observation and reflection of learners with attachment needs affect whole school change?

**Project Description:** Our project focused on a group of learners with a range of complex needs, we named them our Busy Bees. Through ongoing reflection and consistent dialogue between staff and pupils, we adapted and changed provision for these children. Based on attachment aware practice and theory, we implemented social and emotional interventions with the aim of improving outcomes for these vulnerable learners. This has led to changes in teaching language, communication, timetables, the sensory and the physical environment.

## 10. Lons Infant School

Tavistock Avenue, Ripley DE5 3SE.

T: 01773 744319

**Name of Project Leads:** Callan Fowler, Amanda Lewis

**Project Title:** Spreading the Magic

**Action Research Question:** How can we learn from a pre-existing safe space in school to develop strategies that support specific attachment and emotional needs in the classroom?

**Project Description:** Through listening to and reflecting with our children we have been able to understand more fully how our existing safe space is used and valued. We have extended that learning to other areas in school, increasing joint ownership of the classroom space and valuing opinions of our children and staff.

## 11. Norbriggs Primary School

Norbriggs Road, Mastin Moor, Chesterfield S43 3BW.

T: 01246 473398

**Name of Project Leads:** Paul Scragg, Alison Hurst

**Project Title:** Letting In The Light

**Action Research Question:** How can we make changes to the Year 4 environment inside and outside of the classroom to support children's ability to manage transitions and unstructured time?

**Project Description:** We wanted children to better understand why they feel and behave the way they do and how they can make better informed choices. Through raising awareness with staff and children about current neuro-science and the brain, we re-modelled how teaching assistants can work 1-1 with targeted children. Alongside this we undertook a consultation with pupils and staff about where they felt safe in school and funded changes to the physical environment to create calmer classrooms. Our aim is to create safe spaces to support emotional engagement in learning and smoother transitions throughout the school day.

## 12. Overseal Primary School

Woodville Road, Overseal, Swadlincote DE12 6LU.

T: 01283 760398

**Name of Project Leads:** Jessica Lambert, Claire Edwards

**Project Title:** Chill Den

**Action Research Question:** How can a designated safe space impact on children's wellbeing?

**Project Description:** Our work has examined how the creation and development of an indoor safe space can have a positive impact upon children who are vulnerable learners - increasing their resilience and impacting positively on their progress.

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**“Our increased understanding of attachment needs has influenced policy, systems and more importantly support for our students at every level. The whole ethos of school has changed. We now have the resilience to take risks and support each other and to meet the challenges of our most vulnerable students”**

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## 13. St Luke's CE Controlled Primary School

Spire Hollin, Glossop SK13 7BS.

T: 01457 852602

**Name of Project Leads:**

Catherine Byron, Candida Clayton

**Project Title:** Stepping Back to Move Forwards

**Action Research Question:** What can we learn from observing children play?

**Project Description:** Our focus was to observe play in the curriculum, believing that children needed more unstructured play opportunities. We found, through giving ourselves permission to step back and truly observe the children, that some children prioritised the adult contact above the play opportunities themselves. We now understand that our children need key adults in school to help manage their attachment needs and have made innovative changes to support this.

## 14. Swanwick School and Sports College

Hayes Lane, Alfreton DE55 1AR.

T: 01773 602198

**Name of Project Leads:**

Charlotte McKee, Chris Greenhough

**Project Title:** Sensory Overload

**Action Research Question:** How can we support vulnerable pupils to better manage their sensory needs?

**Project Description:** In order to support our pupils with sensory processing difficulties we have made long term changes to our school environment and adapted curriculum delivery. This has developed a closer match between our sensory provision and their sensory needs and is having a very positive impact across the whole school.

## Inquiry Area Staff and Pedagogy Development

### 15. Brackenfield School

Bracken Lane, Long Eaton NG10 4DA.  
T: 0115 9733710

**Name of Project Leads:** Hannah Longley, Trish Turner

**Project Title:** A Framework for All

**Action Research Question:** How can we develop a needs based analysis tool that supports genuine personalised learning?

**Project Description:** We have developed a new matrix tool that provides us with a needs analysis methodology for all of our pupils. This has enabled us to establish personalised learning that is based on a holistic approach to education. This has now embedded into the whole school ethos and classroom pedagogy.

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**“As professionals within the school, all of the staff are not always aware of the problems a students may be having “outside” of school hours and therefore affecting behavior’s within school hours. The AAS programme has made everyone more aware of possible underlying concerns which can affect students behaviour”**

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### 16. Brockley Primary and Nursery School

Clowne Road, Shuttlewood, Chesterfield S44 6AF.  
T: 01246 823344

**Name of Project Leads:** Julie Shirley, Caroline Rodgers

**Project Title:** Attachment from the Inside Out

**Action Research Question:** How can a designated child led safe space support vulnerable children to self-regulate leading to personal success?

**Project Description:** Our school has developed an attachment aware school approach which pervades our whole school ethos and school community. This has truly transformed our relationships and has had significant impacts on practice in many areas of school life. This has included improvements in children’s emotional regulation, increased parental involvement and reductions in incidents and sanctions.

### 17. Brookfield Primary School

Burlington Ave, Langwith Jct, Notts NG20 9AD.  
T: 01623 742285

**Name of Project Leads:**

Lynne Greenhough, Louise Schofield

**Project Title:** Respond, Play, Talk, Teach

**Action Research Question:** How can our growing understanding of attachment awareness support resilience in our staff team?

**Project Description:** Using a model taken from attachment theory, our project explored the development of a deeper understanding of attachment, to enable us to better support all of the children in our school. We focussed upon wellbeing and increasing the resilience of our whole staff team to ensure that we have the capacity and understanding to meet the needs of every pupil. We want all of our children to be recognised and responded to in a way that helps them to stay safe, have fun and make progress.

### 18. Buxton Community School

**AAS Lead Secondary school**

Temple Road SK17 9EA.  
T: 01298 212154

**Name of Project Leads:** Jan Heron, Sue Newsome

**Project Title:** “I want to learn too!”

**Action Research Question:** By embracing the pedagogy style that can better support attachment needs, how can we develop a culture of self belief in our whole school community which leads to successful learning for all our students?

**Project Description:** Through consultation with some of our most vulnerable young people we developed an inspiring, safe environment - ‘Aspire’. We have put into place a programme of bespoke interventions both within this space and throughout the school and cascaded an understanding of attachment needs to the whole staff so that the theory underpins everyday values, attitudes and teaching approaches.

### 19. Chapel-en-le-Frith High School

Long Lane, Chapel en le Frith, High Peak SK23 0TQ.  
T: 01298 813118

**Name of Project Leads:** Paula Griffiths, Julie Kawalek

**Project Title:** ‘Help!’ to ‘Second Nature’

**Action Research Question:** How can the school community’s growing awareness of attachment needs affect changes in classroom management and behaviour?

**Project Description:** Many of the skills, knowledge and competences we use as teachers will become, like driving a car, second nature. However, we must ensure that 'second nature' doesn't become complacency or 'stuck in a rut'. As a result we used Attachment Theory to take our school staff out of their comfort zone to start to challenge and develop our current practices in school and extend strategies to deal with the ever-changing nature of education. By understanding attachment theory and affording time for individuals to reflect and review their work, we have started to develop an enhanced focus within school.

## 20. Charlesworth School (Voluntary Controlled Primary)

Long Lane, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 5ET.

T: 01457 853475

**Name of Project Leads:** Neil Flint, Kathryn Barton

**Project Title:** Why... what... so what?

**Action Research Question:** How does a consistent approach to attachment theory through strategic whole school learning challenge and develop accepted ethos, practice and perceptions?

**Project Description:** Through this project we have created a whole school training and development strategy to challenge staff perceptions about the impact of attachment needs on emotional well-being and how this affects learning potential. As a result, all staff now have a shared understanding and vision and are enthusiastic to implement this new learning into classroom practice. This has given us a solid foundation on which to build a truly therapeutic school.

## 21. Chaucer Infant and Nursery School

Cantelupe Road, Ilkeston DE7 5LN.

T: 0115 9325629

**Name of Project Leads:** Catherine Beattie, Lisa Nappin

**Project Title:** Speak Easy

**Action Research Question:** How can specific personalised interventions focusing on staff's language affect vulnerable pupils' emotional wellbeing and ability to self-regulate?

**Project Description:** In this project we focused on raising staff awareness and knowledge of attachment & trauma. We explored the impact that staff awareness and understanding can have on children's wellbeing and readiness to learn. We implemented a phased roll-out across school focusing on an individual pupil in each class, to explore how the use of language used by adult and child, can help self-regulation and improve children's overall emotional well-being. This also involved the use of individualised strategies and tailor-made resources.

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**“The staff from the VS were both supportive and understanding of the pressures schools are under and structured the research project in a supportive way. Having input from a range of people, along with the opportunity to share and discuss with colleagues from other schools was a very useful and important part.”**

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## 22. David Nieper Academy

Grange Street, Alfreton DE55 7JA.

T: 01773 832331

**Name of Project Leads:** Emma Merchant and Anna West

**Project Title:** Our journey to togetherness

**Action Research Question:** How does our increased understanding of attachment awareness empower staff to support the social and emotional needs of key students through positive relationships and classroom interventions?

**Project Description:** We have developed a stronger support network for our students by empowering and training staff on attachment theory and emotion coaching. We have improved resilience, self-esteem and supported self-regulation of students through the use of a new emotional wellbeing referral process and developed personalised provision for identified students. We also developed a team of 'Attachment Ambassadors' who have contributed towards the training, delivery and promotion of Attachment Awareness across the whole academy.

## 23. Duckmanton Primary School

West Crescent, Duckmanton, Chesterfield S44 5HD.

T: 01246 825650

**Name of Project Leads:**

Sarah Chadwick and Janine Collins

**Project Title:** Love, laughter, lunch & learning

**Action Research Question:** How can we support the building of resilience of pupils at lunch time?

**Project Description:** Our project involved taking a close look at our lunchtime experience for pupils in our school – particularly those who found this unstructured time difficult. We involved all of our staff (including our mid-day supervisors) in attachment awareness training so that we could offer more calming and soothing lunchtime experiences. This has led to better use of circle time practice to include mindfulness, resilience and emotion coaching.

## 24. Frederick Gent School

Mansfield Road, South Normanton, Mansfield DE55 2ER.  
T: 01773 811737

**Name of Project Leads:** Rachael Skelton, Dawn Steel

**Project Title:** A 'PHASE' in time

**Action Research Question:** How can building relationships with a specific cohort of KS3 students inform the practices of the key staff around them?

**Project Description:** Central to our journey towards becoming a more attachment aware school has been the development of an alternative provision within school. Students and their families have benefitted from a more co-ordinated and personalised approach to multi-agency support and provision with the school and its staff at the heart. The provision facilitates more in-depth understanding of individual students' needs which has led to improved relationships, classroom practice and a reduction in exclusions.

## 25. Hope Valley College

Castleton Road, Hope, Hope Valley S33 6SD.  
T: 01433 620555

**Name of Project Leads:**

Alison Scorer, Debbie Whitehall

**Project Title:** The only way is up!

**Action Research Question:** How can working with a small group of students improve our understanding of the challenges of transitions for all students?

**Project Description:** By allowing students to lead our thinking, staff have gained a more insightful understanding of the challenges of all aspects of transitions throughout the college. Using creative processes, students have shared their experiences with staff and their peers and this has driven forward the building of new relationships and better approaches in college. The language of attachment awareness throughout school has developed alongside this; leading to a greater understanding of presented behaviours.

## 26. Kirk Hallam Community Academy

Godfrey Drive, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston DE7 4HH.  
T: 0115 9301522

**Name of Project Leads:**

Jenna Hibbert, Nuala Attwood

**Project Title:** Developing Practice; Impacting the Community

**Action Research Question:** How can our growing understanding of attachment theory impact upon pedagogical practice - with specific focus on Key Stage 3 students?

**Project Description:** Our project has involved whole school staff training to improve understanding and make practical changes to the way staff work with vulnerable students. We have paid particular attention to developing attachment aware practice in our pastoral staff, helping them to take the lead in a changing approach to teaching and learning, beginning in key stage 3 with a view to changes across school.

## 27. Kirk Hallam Support Centre

Windsor Crescent, Ilkeston DE7 4HD.  
T: 0115 9326445

**Name of Project Leads:** Sarah Hennessey

**Project Title:** From the Outside - In

**Action Research Question:** What strategies and positive impacts from learning in an outdoor environment can we bring indoors to support our young people?

**Project Description:** We have been employing creative strategies that support emotional literacy, resilience and self-regulation in the outdoor setting. We have reflected upon how such strategies and practice can support the learning of pupils with attachment needs within all learning environments.

## 28. Lady Manners School

Shutts Lane, Bakewell DE45 1JA.  
T: 01629 812671

**Name of Project Leads:**

Tanya Thomas, Angela Bent, Joy Ellis

**Project Title:** Learning Time Lost, Learning Time Found

**Action Research Question:** How does a greater understanding of attachment awareness support our staff to understand the needs of our most vulnerable children more fully?

**Project Description:** During this project we developed a new style 'One Page Profile' to improve staff communication and our understanding of our most vulnerable students. Alongside this, we re-evaluated timetables for identified students and conducted a programme of staff development which has led to the creation of 'Attachment Champions' and Positive Psychology sessions.

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**“A truly inspiring year!! - The Virtual School has given me the knowledge and confidence to understand and embrace attachment within our school community and to give our children the opportunity to thrive in a nurturing and reflective environment”**

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## 29. New Bolsover Primary School

New Station Road, Bolsover, Chesterfield S44 6PY.

T: 01246 823240

**Name of Project Leads:** Gillian Clubbs, Samantha Spyve

**Project Title:** Safer, Stronger, Resilient for Longer

**Action Research Question:** How can we work with key vulnerable children and their significant adults in school to better understand how they can be most appropriately supported?

**Project Description:** We focused upon a whole school approach, using attachment theory as our guiding principle. We are enabling children to achieve and enjoy their life and relationships in school: by listening to children, increasing awareness, responding appropriately to behaviour, managing change sensitively and understanding emotions to ensure best practice in school.

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**“Our brains work best when we feel safe. Since beginning the programme we have identified that attachment is the key to improved outcomes for children. Feeling safe is key to optimal brain function. Since introducing the programme we have identified that when staff feel safe, pupils feel safe. When pupils feel safe, behaviour improves - we are beginning to collate data to prove this. And when behaviour improves, all our pupils are better able to reach their full potential - we are beginning to demonstrate this in our improving results across the school”**

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## 30. New Mills School Business & Enterprise College

Church Lane, New Mills, High Peak SK22 4NR.

T: 01663 743284

**Name of Project Leads:** Jo Winterbottom and Ian Withers

**Project Title:** What about me?

**Action Research Question:** How can emotion coaching support and develop our practice and help us to better understand the needs of our most vulnerable students?

**Project Description:** We are transforming teaching and learning for a group of students for whom the traditional behaviourist approach leaves them outside of learning. Using our growing knowledge of attachment we have developed this new awareness into an underpinning theory for those staff working with our most vulnerable students. We are supporting vulnerable students and staff, via peer and staff mentoring and embedding practice that is changing our approach to school policies, expectations and professional development.

## 31. Newton Primary School

Hall Lane, Newton, Alfreton DE55 5TL.

T: 01773 872384

**Name of Project Leads:** Linda Shepherd, Heidi Spencer

**Project Title:** The Road to Resilience

**Action Research Question:** How can we develop our understanding of resilience by empowering our most vulnerable learners?

**Project Description:** In order to empower our most vulnerable children we recognised that all adults working with children in our school community must first have an understanding of issues relating to attachment awareness. Through training and sharing of good practice we have developed a mindful approach throughout the whole school day that allows adults to respond to challenging situations with a greater understanding of the complex and individual needs of the child. We have developed an environment where pupils are better able to manage their own sense of wellbeing and resilience.

## 32. Ormiston Ilkeston Enterprise Academy

King George Avenue, Ilkeston DE7 5HS.

T: 0115 9303724

**Name of Project Leads:** Jo Watkinson, Claire McManus

**Project Title:** You've found me

**Action Research Question:** Does an increased awareness of attachment needs reduce the number and escalation of incidents with vulnerable students?

**Project Description:** Our project has introduced attachment awareness to all staff with a particular focus on emotion “coaching”. Through our working party we have a core group of committed staff who are working on emotional recovery with our vulnerable and traumatised students. We have introduced co-regulation and self-regulation practice for staff and students. A revised behaviour policy is now underpinned by our improved understanding of the behaviours vulnerable students present.

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**“The AAS programme has had a significant impact on awareness and attitudes in school. We are now, as a whole staff, much more proactive and less reactive towards meeting the needs of children. Provision is much stronger in terms of both resources and time made available for supporting pupils.”**

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### 33. The Ripley Academy

Peasehill, Ripley DE5 3JQ.  
T: 01773 746334

**Name of Project Leads:** Jayne Scattergood, Toni Barson

**Project Title:** Changing Perceptions : Changing Practice

**Action Research Question:** How do we enable the adults in our school community to understand more fully the significance of their actions upon students' emotional responses?

**Project Description:** We have developed a stronger collaboration across the entire school through the development of a working party of interested staff who have contributed towards the delivery of training and promotion of attachment awareness needs across the school. Complementary to this has been the introduction of a personalised programme of 'positive support' for students with emerging issues that has utilised the Learning and Student Support teams to even greater effect.

### 34. St John's C of E Primary School

Dannah Street, Ripley DE5 3BD.  
T: 01773 742457

**Name of Project Leads:** Rachael Warner, Caroline Crowder

**Project Title:** How to get two puddings!

**Action Research Question:** How can we have a positive impact on the stress levels of vulnerable pupils and staff, reducing escalation of negative incidents during lunchtimes?

**Project Description:** Through consultation with a selection of our vulnerable pupils and work with our Midday Supervisors, we have totally restructured our lunchtime provision, to provide a more engaging, stimulating and safer environment for all pupils. Through structured activities and focussed training, we have seen a significant change in practice, which has resulted in a reduction in lunchtime incidents, a more positive start to afternoons and calmer pupils. This has helped to reduce stress levels amongst all pupils and staff.

### 35. Stenson Fields Primary Community School

Heather Close, Stenson Fields DE24 3BW.  
T: 01332 772452

**Name of Project Leads:**

Jo Sadler, Alison Middleton-Rees

**Project Title:** You're Not Listening to Me!

**Action Research Question:** How can a greater understanding of brain function impact positively on practice in school to support vulnerable children?

**Project Description:** Having a much greater understanding of the theory behind human attachment theory and in particular how the brain develops, was central to the shaping of our action research project with all our staff. This deeper understanding has enabled us to develop a series of focussed interventions and re-evaluate our use of nurture group and positive play. We have enhanced our support to our most vulnerable children and have empowered our staff, most specifically through the use of emotion coaching.

### 36. The Long Eaton School

Thoresby Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 3NP.  
T: 0115 9732438

**Name of Project Leads:**

Jo Hulse & Nicola Thornhill

**Project Title:** Cascading Outwards not Downwards

**Action Research Question:** How does using Emotion Coaching practice impact upon the learning and wellbeing of students?

**Project Description:** Our school has created a team of 'Attachment Champions' within each area of the curriculum. Through developing new feedback styles and improved observation, our champions are better equipped to recognise need and support key students throughout their learning and time in school. Working actively and consciously with the help of Emotion Coaching, our staff are more reflective in their interactions with students and more adaptive in the way they communicate. The Champions are now sharing this new knowledge and practice within their curriculum teams - cascading Attachment Awareness throughout the whole school.

### 37. The Pingle School

Coronation Street, Swadlincote DE11 0QA.  
T: 01283 216837

**Name of Project Leads:**

Simon Waller, Charlotte O'Mahony

**Project Title:** Developing staff practice so the children can flourish

**Action Research Question:** How can creating time and space to listen more to children with attachment needs help support teaching and learning?

**Project Description:** We have developed a new team of family support workers and a safe lounge area to enable children to seek support from key members of staff who are able to listen and better advise children. Through a process of interviewing staff and students we have been able to develop an improved understanding of the difficulties both the adults and the children may face in school. A voluntary staff working party has been established to share what we have been learning on the AAS programme.

### 38. Tibshelf Community School

Doe Hill Lane, Derbyshire DE55 5LZ.

T: 01773 872391

**Name of Project Leads:**

Lucie Hartland, Martin Lloyd

**Project Title:** Tell us a story?

**Action Research Question:** How can we use reading to develop the aspirations of children in care in our setting?

**Project Description:** Building upon our whole school literacy drive our project has developed the emotional literacy of children in care through a one to one reading programme led by staff within the existing Aspire Team.

We have seen significant progress in their measurable reading levels and have built even stronger relationships between our children in care and staff.

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**“The Attachment Aware Schools Programme has been invaluable in helping me develop as a more effective practitioner in school, to support some of our most vulnerable students. The training received, delivered by inspirational individuals, provided the springboard to enable us to reflect on our current practice within school and the drive to make things happen.”**

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### 39. Walton-on-Trent C E Voluntary Controlled Primary and Nursery School

Coton Road, Walton on Trent, Swawlincote DE12 8NL.

T: 01283 716151

**Name of Project Leads:**

Sarah Rowe, Julie Bollington

**Project Title:** We were going to build a den!

**Action Research Question:** How can we use attachment theory to influence everyday practice?

**Project Description:** Our Attachment Aware journey focused on ethos change across the school. By gradually encouraging everyone on to the ‘Walton bus’ we were able to introduce structured nurture sessions, enhance our Forest school work and extended it for all children. We introduced the metaphor of a meerkat, elephant and monkey to enable the understanding of the neuroscience behind behaviour.

We:

1. Challenged staff perceptions of behaviour ‘management’
2. Created a shared understanding of attachment needs
3. Focused more on our most vulnerable learners
4. Enhanced the school environment both indoors and out
5. Gave children a real voice

### 40. William Rhodes Primary and Nursery School

Hunloke Avenue, Boythorpe, Chesterfield S40 2NR.

T: 01246 234626

**Name of Project Leads:**

Rachel Purvis

**Project Title:** Can we fix it? Yes we can!

**Action Research Question:** How can we use reflective practice and our growing awareness of attachment to best support our most vulnerable children?

**Project Description:** We have begun a journey of pedagogical development that focusses on attachment theory and understanding trauma as a basis for all our staff. Through a process of peer observation and coaching, we are reflecting on our whole learning environment and practice within school. We are examining our own behaviours and responses to better understand our support to children, to improve the outcomes for all –with a keen focus on our most vulnerable children.

## Inquiry Area Enabling Transition

### 41. Highfields School

Matlock DE4 5NA.

T: 01629 581888

**Name of Project Leads:**

Claire Rifkin, Tina Green

**Project Title:**

Welcome to Lumsdale

**Action Research Question:** How do we support vulnerable students, including those with attachment needs, during the transition from lower to upper school?

**Project Description:** Our project has developed new approaches to improve the support we give to students in their transition between year 8 and 9 at our split site school. Through reflection with staff and students we have developed a more sensitive and supportive process for all our young people and in particular those who feel most vulnerable and whose learning is negatively affected through transition.

### 42. Riddings School

**Joint Project**

Infant and Nursery School:

West Street, Alfreton DE55 4EW

T: 01773 602767

Junior School:

Church Street, Alfreton DE55 4BW

T: 01773 528492

**Name of Project Leads:**

Kim Walker, Kerry Bartlett, Andrew Valance

**Project Title:**

Journey to Success

**Action Research Question:** How can we use our developing understanding of attachment awareness to support our most vulnerable children in transition from infant to junior school?

**Project Description:** Through improving staff understanding of attachment awareness we have embedded practices that have hugely benefitted communication between our two schools. This has had a direct impact upon ensuring a safer and happier transition for our children between our schools; especially our most vulnerable pupils.

## Inquiry Area Improving Communication

### 43. Bolsover Infant & Nursery School

Welbeck Road, Bolsover, Chesterfield S44 6DE.

T: 01246 823181

**Name of Project Leads:**

Tracey Fieldsend and Charlotte Chapman

**Project Title:**

Collaboration, Communication, Community

**Action Research Question:** How can a growing understanding of attachment awareness support our Communication and Collaboration as a staff team?

**Project Description:** Using a model taken from attachment theory, our project explored the development of a deeper understanding of attachment across the whole school community. We focussed on our staff team leaders drawing upon their expertise. We used a previous pupil case study and mapped the skills of our core staff. We want all our staff to nurture a deeper level of communication and collaboration to bring attachment theories to the forefront of the minds and families of our community so that all our children make progress.

Impact of the AAS programme in School:

We focussed upon wellbeing and increasing the resilience of our whole staff team to ensure that we have the capacity and understanding to meet the needs of every pupil. We want all of our children to be recognised and responded to in a way that helps them to stay safe, have fun and make progress.

### 44. Hilton Primary School

#### AAS Lead Primary school

Peacroft Lane, Hilton DE65 5GH.

T: 01283 732334

**Name of Project Leads:** Jessica Deas, Julia Hart

**Project Title:** Happy, Positive, Successful lunchtimes

**Action Research Question:** How can we work with a small group of vulnerable children to support the development of lunchtimes?

**Project Description:** Our vulnerable pupils, who have previously struggled during lunchtimes, now enjoy a variety of experiences available to them each day. Adults have a good understanding of how attachment and trauma has impacted on our more vulnerable children and, as a result, support resilience and self-regulation at unstructured times. This is the first stepping stone to creating a holistic approach to fully knowing and meeting the needs of our children.

## 45. Holmgate Primary School and Nursery

Holmgate Road, Clay Cross, Chesterfield S45 9QD.  
T: 01246 862270

**Name of Project Leads:**

Kelly Guy and Elizabeth Horridge

**Project Title:**

Finer Diners

**Action Research Question:** How can we better support our most vulnerable children at lunchtimes?

**Project Description:** Our project has focussed upon supporting both our staff and children at lunchtimes. Previously a time of high emotion and tension, we have now created a safe space in school, shared by adults and children to enable better listening and positive interactions with one another. As we eat together, and share our stories of the day so far, we have been able to create an environment that is more nurturing and inclusive. Whole school training on attachment has aided better conflict resolution and supported emotional regulation, and resilience.

## 46. Wilsthorpe Community School

Derby Road, Long Eaton NG10 4WT.  
T: 0115 972 9421

**Name of Project Leads:**

Helen Scott, Kylie Devlin

**Project Title:**

My Safety Net

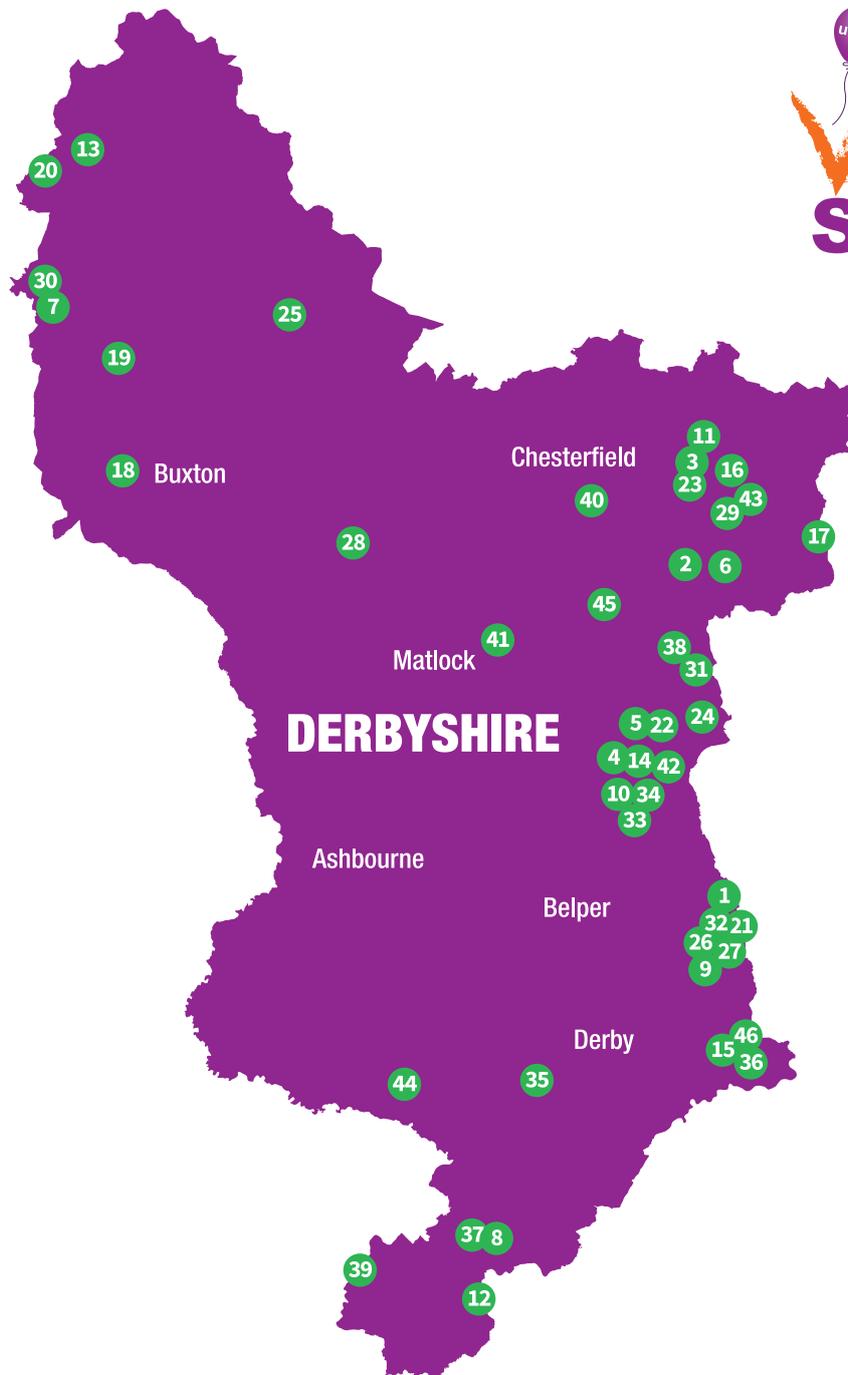
**Action Research Question:** How does having Attachment Aware staff impact on vulnerable students to ensure progress socially, emotionally and academically?

**Project Description:** Our focus has been to further develop practice in our support to vulnerable students. On this journey we have deepened staff knowledge on attachment awareness and the strategies needed to support vulnerable students with attachment needs. Students and staff are undertaking intensive training and developing a team of staff and student mentors. All staff as well as students will have a one page profile, to share who we are in a more personal way across the whole school community. We are working towards improved practice in the classroom and on a 1:1 basis, leading to improved self-regulation within our school.

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**“Being part of the Attachment Awareness Programme has been a real privilege. Meeting people who are passionate about the lives of young people and supporting them to be the best they can be has been refreshing in an educational climate that feels like it is only about results. Gaining the theory which supports our instincts has been a powerful tool which both staff and students have benefitted from throughout the year”**

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## Derbyshire Attachment Aware Schools

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|--|--|---|
| 1. Bennerley Fields Specialist Speech and Language College | 17. Brookfield Primary School                          | 33. The Ripley Academy  |
| 2. Heath Primary School                                    | 18. Buxton Community School                            | 34. St John's C of E Primary School                                     |
| 3. Poolsbrook Primary School                               | 19. Chapel-en-le-Frith High School                     | 35. Stenson Fields Primary Community School                             |
| 4. Swanwick Primary School                                 | 20. Charlesworth School (Voluntary Controlled Primary) | 36. The Long Eaton School   |
| 5. Woodbridge Junior School                                | 21. Chaucer Infant and Nursery School                  | 37. The Pingle School   |
| 6. Bramley Vale Primary School                             | 22. David Nieper Academy                               | 38. Tibshelf Community School   |
| 7. Furness Vale Primary School                             | 23. Duckmanton Primary School                          | 39. Walton-on-Trent C E Voluntary Controlled Primary and Nursery School |
| 8. Granville Sports College                                | 24. Frederick Gent School                              | 40. William Rhodes Primary and Nursery School                           |
| 9. Ladywood Primary School                                 | 25. Hope Valley College                                | 41. Highfields School   |
| 10. Lons Infant School                                     | 26. Kirk Hallam Community Academy                      | 42. Riddings Infant and Nursery School Riddings Junior School           |
| 11. Norbriggs Primary School                               | 27. Kirk Hallam Support Centre                         | 43. Bolsover Infant & Nursery School                                    |
| 12. Overseal Primary School                                | 28. Lady Manners School                                | 44. Hilton Primary School   |
| 13. St Luke's CE Controlled Primary School                 | 29. New Bolsover Primary School                        | 45. Holmgate Primary School and Nursery                                 |
| 14. Swanwick School and Sports College                     | 30. New Mills School Business & Enterprise College     | 46. Wilsthorpe Community School   |
| 15. Brackenfield School                                    | 31. Newton Primary School                              |   |
| 16. Brockley Primary and Nursery School                    | 32. Ormiston Ilkeston Enterprise Academy               |   |