

Lenny our Dog Mentor

A child's relationship with an animal can play an important role in their lives. Children frequently draw animals, talk about animals and even dream about them.

Studies have found that children with companion animals have higher self-esteem, greater empathy, more engagement with peers and other prosocial behaviour.

Research on the bond between child-animals has shown that it promotes healthy connections in the brain and helps to strengthen intellectual, physical, emotional and creative processes.

The dog mentor programme has built on the benefits of the human-animal bond by providing children positive experiences with dogs that can help them educationally, developmentally, emotionally and socially.

Just like a 2 year old child, Lenny clearly has emotions, but fewer kinds of emotions than that found in an adult human. Dogs go through their developmental stage quicker than humans do and have all their emotional range by the time they are four to six months of age - depending on the rate of maturation for their breed.

The range of emotions does not exceed that of a 2½ year old child, but this does mean Lenny has developed the basic emotions of excitement, contentment, distress, disgust, fear, anger, joy, suspicion and love. Dogs do not develop the more complex emotions of shame, guilt, pride and contempt.

Lenny began working with some pupils last year and will continue to work identified pupils who need his support during this academic year. He worked on aspects of developing children's self-esteem, behaviour, peer relationships and better engagement skills.

Lenny provides can be found on the school twitter feed where he updates us all with his recent activities and future events. He greets the children every morning on their way into school and can be found in the corridors of school with Mr Newman-Smith during the school day.

Lenny looks forward to working with many children during his school career and meeting many of you as you come into our school and visit.