Birkbeck’s Dept of Psychological Sciences ranked in the top five IN THE WORLD!
within the annual ranking of ‘Psychiatry/Psychology’ category of the Best Global Universities Ranking. Comprising the total number of citations per research paper, NCI (Normalized Citation Impact) represents the overall impact of a university’s research and is independent of the institution’s size or age. Head of Dept, Prof. Mike Oaksford, said: “It is an amazing achievement for a small University of London College to be ranked fifth in the world (alongside MIT, Princeton, Stanford and Kings College London, and well ahead of other large UK universities) for such an important and influential index of research quality. Together with our excellent fifth place in the recent UK REF2014 together with the Psychology, Psychiatry & Neuroscience research for which we achieved 100% - the highest rating for impact. I’m immensely proud of the hard work and dedication of all our staff who contributed to these outstanding results.”
CONGRATULATIONS TO SIX MEMBERS OF STAFF

Promotions to Reader
Anne Miles  Fiona Tasker  Tim Smith & Alex Shepherd

Promotions to Senior Lecturer
Emma Meaburn  &  Clare Press
Michael Thomas acted as a scientific consultant for a theatre production entitled 'We're Stuck', which had a run at Shoreditch Town Hall in March. The play, directed by Sarah Punshon, is part-funded by a Wellcome Trust Arts award, and is 'a brand new show for 8-11 year olds, inspired by the extraordinary abilities and limitations of our brains when it comes to maths'. There are, in addition, some robots that might be seeking to take over the world... Along with Prof. Emily Farran at the UCL Institute of Education, he provided Q&A sessions for the audience after performances to talk about the science behind the play.

Tim Smith’s paper on film comprehension will be featured on the US WAMC radio program The Academic Minute and the website InsideHigherEd.com: https://www.insidehighered.com/academic-minute

On Monday 21 March 2016
Sci/Film screened The Eighth Day in celebration of World Down Syndrome Day
After the movie, Dr. Teea Gliga and Prof. Annette Karmiloff-Smith discussed the portrayal of Down syndrome in the movie as well as the research Annette carries out as part of LonDownS. The audience (of researchers, parents and students) greatly enjoyed the movie (sobbing was heard…)

Listen to the discussion here
https://www.facebook.com/BIMI01SciFilmSeries/?fref=ts

Organized by Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image & London Down Syndrome Consortium
(next Sci/Film screening: The Prestige & the science of magic, 10th of June 2016)
Livia Freier was awarded her PhD for a thesis entitled:
*The development of bottom-up and top-down interaction in the planning of goal-directed action* supervised by Denis Mareschal and Richard Cooper.

Phd Awarded. Roni Mermelshtine. *The relevance of maternal scaffolding behaviours in infancy to child cognitive abilities and academic achievement: A bioecological study* Examiners: Prof Claire Hughes University of Cambridge, Prof Eirini Flouri UCL IOE.
Supervisors: Jacqueline Barnes, Ted Melhuish.

Chris Brand was awarded his PhD entitled *The effect of probability anchors on moral decision making* Examiners: David Lagnado (UCL) and Shira Eqayam (de Monfort)

Jacqueline Barnes examined PhD examined the thesis of Lesley Jones entitled: *Investigating educators’ perspectives of their capacity to teach towards social competence in young children* Australian Catholic University, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Michael Thomas is to examine a thesis by Julia Ouzia entitled *Beyond the bilingual executive control advantage: A multi-dimensional investigation*, at Anglia Ruskin University.

Tim Smith examined the successful PhD thesis of Christian Valuch at the University of Vienna.
GRANTS, AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Marie Smith (PI), Annette Karmiloff-Smith (co-PI), and Emily Farran (IoE, co-PI) were awarded a Leverhulme Trust grant for *The Social side of face perception: insights from atypical development*. £177,298. October 2016-October 2019.

Denis Mareschal was elected to the Executive Committee of the International Congress on Infant Studies for a 6-year term.

Clare Press was awarded a Leverhulme Project Grant, entitled: *The paradoxical influences of prediction on perception: Do actions silence perception?* Amount: £205,756.

PI: Clare Press, Co-I: Floris de Lange, Donders Institute in Nijmegen.


Teea also received a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award for *Neuroscience in the playground: bringing together psychology, education and technology to investigate human curiosity*.

Rachael Davis, a PhD student of Michael Thomas, was awarded a 6-month fellowship by the Birkbeck Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund, which she started in March following submission of her PhD. The project is entitled 'Early behavioural predictors of autism'
Iroise Dumontheil and a team of PhD students (including Georgina Donati, Annie Brookman and Rosy Edey from Birkbeck) have been involved in the META project, led by Cardboard Citizens and funded by a Wellcome Trust Large Arts Awards. A piece of forum theatre about the teenage brain and teenage behaviour was written by playwright Sarah Woods, in collaboration with Iroise. The play was performed in front of 2,500 pupils in schools in Tower Hamlets, as well as in four performances to adult audiences. See a presentation by the actors here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0keo-CJPPU and a review of the play here: http://everything-theatre.co.uk/2016/03/meta-canada-water-culture-space-review.html
Belinda Brooks-Gordon organized a talk and Q&A with Baroness Lynne Featherstone on her book *Equal Ever After, detailing her governmental fight in favour of same sex marriage in the UK*

![Image of Belinda Brooks-Gordon and Baroness Lynne Featherstone at a talk]

Belinda Brooks-Gordon was BBC Radio 4 Woman’s Hour interviewed by Jenni Murray on Women’s Hour on safety zones for sex workers [https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/womans-hour/id130950322?mt=2](https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/womans-hour/id130950322?mt=2). She was also interviewed on BBC Radio 4’s Today Programme on sex research and policy.

The Centre for Educational Neuroscience, directed by Michael Thomas, went live with a new resource on its website entitled 'Neuro-hit or neuro-myth?', explaining the science (or lack thereof) behind some widespread misconceptions about the brain which have been adopted within educational contexts. The resource can be found here: [http://tinyurl.com/z5pk9qe](http://tinyurl.com/z5pk9qe)

In March, Annette Karmiloff-Smith gave a series of non-academic talks entitled: *What affects the developing toddler’s brain: the role of sleep, TV and tablets*, at the London Borough of Camden’s Integrated Early Years Service conference, at the Nursery World Fair, Islington conference centre, debating afterwards with Early Years’ practitioners, as well as at Twickenham’s Early Years conference. In particular, she discussed the new research on toddlers’ use of tablets that she is pursuing with Dr. Tim Smith at Birkbeck.
PUBLICATIONS


Melhuish, E. (2016). Parents have the biggest influence over their child's language and emotional development. The Conversation, Manuscript accepted for publication March 8th, 2016.


Tomalski, P., Derek G. Moore, Haiko Ballieux, Elena V. Kushnerenko , Mark H. Johnson, Annette Karmiloff-Smith (2016). Separating the effects of ethnicity and socio-economic status on sleep practices of 6- to 7-month-old infants. *Learning and Individual differences*

INIVITED TALKS

Denis Mareschal gave a talk entitled: *Combining Multiple Perceptual Spatial Cues for Action* at iCOG 2016 in London.

Mike Oaksford gave an invited seminar talk entitled *On the source of human irrationality* at City, University of London, 3rd February 2016.

Claire Press gave a departmental seminar at City University, London, on *Mapping between action and perception: Domain-specificity of mechanisms and implications for autism*.


Jonathan A Smith gave invited presentations on interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to faculty and doctoral students in Stockholm University and University of Verona (March 2016).

Annette Karmiloff-Smith gave a talk in Spanish on children’s notational systems at the Festschrift in honour of Professor L. Tolchinsky-Landsmann at the University of Barcelona, Spain. She also gave an invited talk on *Regression in typical development and in autism spectrum disorders*, at the NIMH, Bethesda, Washington, USA.

Jacqueline Barnes gave an invited talk on February 24th 2016 on *Child care: Use, outcomes and issues with a particular focus on the UK Families, Children and Child Care study*. Mayer-Brown International LLB Family Network lunchtime seminar, London. She also gave a talk on March 15th 2016. on *UK Early Childhood Education and Care; research and policy*” to PhD programme in Educational Sciences for Teacher Education, Faculty of Education and International Studies Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA), Oslo, Norway.
Ted Melhuish presented invited evidence on Early Years Indicators of School Readiness to an Inquiry convened by The Children’s Commissioner on February 25th, 2016.

Ted Melhuish gave evidence to a ministerial briefing with Minister for Children, Sam Gyimah, on March 1st, 2016.

Ted Melhuish gave a keynote address on The Development of Literacy, and long-term consequences to the National Summit on Early Literacy, March 7th, 2016, Canberra, Australia.

Mark Johnson delivered a lecture "Early life interventions with e-technology" at the Wellcome Trust/MQ meeting on Improving children and young people’s mental health through research and policy, London, on the Feb 4th; he also talked on "Attentional control training for infants at risk of ADHD" at the MQ Mental Health conference, London, Feb 5th; and gave the Zangwill Club seminar in Cambridge UK on March 4th on: "The typical and atypical development of the social brain”.

Tim Smith presented at the Developmental Lunch, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, USA (30/03/16), workshop on Autism at McGill University, Montreal, Canada (10/02/16), and Institute of Education, UK (21/01/16).
On 3rd March, the department hosted the first of the WIPS Lecture Series - Women in Psychological Sciences - to showcase women as role models and to discuss diversity/equality issues. Virginia Valian from New York gave a truly inspiring lecture “Why still so slow?” Based on her book “Why So Slow – the advancement of women”.

While the talk attracted a good female turnout from several Birkbeck departments, very few males attended…perhaps because of the series title. So the series will be renamed: The TIPS Lecture Series Trailblazers in Psychological Sciences, still mainly showcasing women scientists, but also with the occasional male trailblazer…

The next two TIPS Lectures will be given by Prof. Dorothy Bishop, Oxford (8/11/16) & by Prof. Uta Frith, UCL (7/3/17).

Belinda Brooks-Gordon hosted Professor Dame Athene Donald For the UN International Womens’ Day, who spoke on ‘Facilitating Successful Women’
You are warmly invited to attend the New Frontiers of Family seminar at Birkbeck’s Clore Management Centre on 20th April 2016 (10:30-5pm) entitled “Beyond the nuclear family: Conceiving of a non-nuclear family”. This free event has been organized by Birkbeck’s Dr. Fiona Tasker (Department of Psychological Sciences) and is part of a nationwide series of seminars sponsored by the British Psychological Society, on the psychological implications of new family forms (organized by Dr. Naomi Moller (OU) Prof. Victoria Clarke (UWE), Dr. Nikki Hayfield (UWE) and Dr. Fiona Tasker).

At the Birkbeck event on the 20th April four invited speakers will be looking at how family possibilities are widened by new reproductive technologies (such as surrogacy and gamete donation), adoption, LGBTQ-parenting, the creation of families of choice, and media representations of family. Dr Pedro Costa (Honorary Research Associate at Birkbeck, University of London/ ISPA Lisbon, Portugal) will be speaking on “Risk and resilience in planned lesbian and gay families”. For further details and to register a place at the seminar, please see: http://www.open.ac.uk/ccig/events/beyond-the-non-nuclear-family-non-nuclear-family-planning
UPCOMING TALKS/COLLOQUIA

CBCD COLLOQUIA SERIES
APRIL 5TH, 4-5 p.m,
DR. MARIEKE JEPMA
University of Groningen, Netherlands
Noradrenergic regulation of exploration and learning in dynamic environments

APRIL 27th 1-2 p.m. PROFESSOR GISELA KAPLAN,
University of New England and Queensland Brain Institute, Australia.
Babbling in birds - a case of convergent evolution? A comparative approach.

MAY 3RD 4-5 p.m. PROFESSOR MARY RUTHERFORD
St. Thomas Hospital, London
Imaging the foetal brain in Down syndrome

COGNITIVE COLLOQUIA SERIES
These will resume in the Autumn

NEW ON-LINE RESEARCH
Perception lab on-line study: Tracking the migraine cycle:
Everyone is welcome to participate whether you do, or do not, get migraine
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/psychology/e/xp/88/1

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Social News

The Dept. of Psych Sciences isn’t just about brain imaging, Reaction Time, and questionnaires. We have lots of fun too!

Declan Clear & Jenny Glennon, both from Ireland, helped CBCD to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day, 17th March:

Natasha Kirkham, Denis Mareschal & Mark Johnson getting in the mood…