

Case studies to support the systematic review of the effectiveness of universal interventions which aim to promote emotional and social wellbeing in secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of these case studies is to identify and describe examples of interventions in English schools in areas where largely non-UK effectiveness literature was identified in the accompanying systematic review. The case studies presented here are considered in the light of the effectiveness review and key UK policy identified during the mapping review.

The effectiveness review demonstrated that the literature to support whole school interventions which aim to promote emotional and social wellbeing in secondary schools is not well developed, especially in terms of good quality effectiveness studies. Although the evidence relating to prosocial behaviours and skills in particular was sparse, it does suggest that conflict resolution training is successful in promoting prosocial behaviours in the short term and that the use of peer mediators may be effective for longer term outcomes. The evidence relating to preventing bullying and disruptive behaviour at the level of universal interventions is more varied with mixed evidence being identified for the roles of the community, teachers, young people, external agencies and parents. However this may reflect that fact that a greater volume of evidence relating to bullying and disruptive behaviour was identified.

The main programme being introduced in English schools is Secondary SEAL. The Secondary SEAL programme is a "comprehensive approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, including positive behaviour, regular attendance, and effective teaching" (DFES, 2007). The case studies described here refer to work undertaken prior to implementation of the Secondary SEAL programme. No case studies have been taken from this programme as the current evaluation being conducted by the Department of Education at the University of Manchester is currently in its first year, and therefore there no data is yet available.

In terms of the UK policy context it is interesting to note that the vast majority of interventions identified in the effectiveness review are based in the classroom and take a curriculum approach. The approach of Secondary SEAL however is not primarily curriculum based. This reflects its strong grounding in

the theoretical literature and the paucity of empirical evidence to address the effectiveness of similar programmes. The current evaluation of SEAL should provide a more robust empirical evidence base for the future.

The evaluation, funded by the DCSF will run from 2007 to 2010. Its aim is to assess the impact of secondary SEAL on children's social and emotional skills, whole school climate, organisation and processes. A mixed-methods design incorporating a quasi-experimental longitudinal evaluation and in-depth longitudinal case studies is currently underway in 26 SEAL and 23 non-SEAL schools (n=7500 year 7 pupils) across England (Manchester University 2008).

Secondary SEAL advocates using a whole-school approach to create the climate and conditions that implicitly promote social and emotional skills. The guidance highlights that there should be opportunities for these skills to be practised and consolidated not only within direct and focused learning opportunities for whole classes or group work, but also during tutor time, across the curriculum and outside formal lessons. There is an emphasis on using learning and teaching approaches which stimulate the learning of social and emotional skills and consolidate those already learnt, with continuing professional development for the whole staff of a school to support this. The SEAL approach advocating broad intervention strategies contrasts with many of the interventions identified in the effectiveness review which are based in the classroom and take a curriculum approach.

The SEAL programme documentation emphasises that approaches to behaviour management can be seen as either positive to encourage social and emotional learning, or negative, to discourage undesirable behaviours. The interventions identified in the effectiveness review have similarly been identified as having a primary aim of either encouraging prosocial behaviour and skills or alternatively having a focus on preventing bullying and disruptive behaviour. The SEAL approach emphasises that interventions should not be purely based upon a mechanical system of rules, rewards and sanctions, and instead should aim to help pupils learn the skills they need in order to behave well, rather than simply correcting poor behaviour. In the light of this, some of

the US interventions identified in the review which target aggressive behaviours in particular, may not be compatible with a SEAL philosophy.

Another UK government initiative which forms an important policy background to these case studies is the National Healthy School Initiative (DCFS 2006). Healthy Schools policy guidance links with this review in associating healthy schools with positive behaviours such as diminished fear of bullying, and also in its emphasis on the personal, social and health education (PSHE) aspects of curricula. The Healthy schools initiative emphasises the need to create and manage a positive environment which enhances emotional health and wellbeing in schools. SEAL is designed to assist schools in the planning and delivery of this PSHE curriculum.

METHODS

Potential case study sites were initially identified through the mapping phase of the effectiveness review (see attached documents). Searching for the mapping review of current English policy, practice and evaluation was undertaken using Internet based sources and developed using mind mapping software (Free Mind). This classified the documents retrieved by a search of Google in terms of whether they were policy related or related to practice and the evaluation of practice. The content of the mapping review of current policy, practice and evaluation was based on the scope document for the intervention guidance. Due to the need for a search specific to English policy, practice and evaluation relating to emotional and social wellbeing in secondary education, searches were undertaken using Google. Due to the extensive nature of the search engine, search results were examined for relevance by the information specialist.

Once potential case studies had been identified, criteria were imposed in order to select case studies of interventions:

1. Whose objectives address policy priorities
2. For which there is evidence of effectiveness
3. Where both process and outcome evaluation information is available

The case studies include information on:

- The theory and evidence underpinning the intervention/programme
- The context in which the intervention was delivered
- Details of the content of intervention (including scale and intensity, who delivered by, training elements);
- Details of any evaluation undertaken (and the results of the evaluation if this was available).

Taking these considerations into account, three case study sites were selected:

- George Mitchell Community School, Leyton, East London: Fighting Against Bullying group
- Meadows School, Durham, North East: Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- Q3 Academy/Dartmouth High School, Sandwell, West Midlands: A whole school approach to improve out of class behaviour

The data collection for this report was limited by the available time and resources. Despite many attempts to contact the schools via telephone and email only preliminary discussions with the schools themselves has been possible to date, and no one was available to comment individually on the publicly available data. Therefore all the data presented here has been obtained from secondary sources (primarily websites) and has not been validated. It is important to make it clear that all quotes presented here are also secondary and taken from web sources. It is also important to note that the type of data sources used here are likely to have a substantial positive bias (as is the case with all grey literature), both in terms of the case studies selected and in their method of reporting. The case studies were taken from websites which select particularly successful examples to publish (as this was the only available data), and therefore comparison with, or commentary on the type of interventions which have been implemented but were unsuccessful is not possible.

Each of the interventions presented here was identified as an example case study on the following websites:

George Mitchell School - Participation for Schools

Meadows School - TeacherNET

Q3 - Department for Education and Skills "Raising Standards" website

RESULTS

Potential case study sites were initially identified through the mapping review phase, along with additional web searching (for case studies of wellbeing interventions in secondary school). Case studies were identified which focused on both promoting prosocial behaviour and skills and on preventing bullying and disruptive behaviour. The following number of potential case studies were identified:

- Mapping review: nine individual case studies and eight websites with details of several cases studies.
- Additional searching: a further eight potential case studies.

Of these potential case studies it was possible to identify sufficient information on seven of them to potentially consider their inclusion in this report. The case studies included in this short list were:

- George Mitchell Community School, Leyton: Fighting Against Bullying group
- Meadows School, Durham: Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- Q3 Academy/Dartmouth High School, Sandwell: A whole school approach to improve out of class behaviour
- John Hanson Community School, Andover: Peer listening initiative
- Hugh Mydelton Primary School, Islington: Transition to secondary school project.
- Stoke Newington School, Hackney: Health Hut
- Anonymous secondary school: Peer helper scheme to reduce bullying.

The final three case studies were selected from this short list in order to present varied cases, match the inclusion criteria, and to support specific evidence statements.

CASE STUDY 1:

GEORGE MITCHELL COMMUNITY SCHOOL, LEYTON, EAST LONDON FIGHTING AGAINST BULLYING GROUP

Theory and evidence

The effectiveness review identified a substantial evidence of mixed quality in relation to interventions to address bullying and disruptive behaviour. However only some of this evidence was of effective interventions and the literature had a substantial bias towards interventions conducted in the USA with a focus on preventing violent behaviour (sometimes in association with reducing drugs misuse, knife crime and gang membership). This case study focuses on bullying rather than violence per-se in the UK context and validates some of the bullying related findings identified in the effectiveness literature. This case study particularly supports evidence statement 2 (the role of teachers) and evidence statement 3b (the role of young people as peer mediators) in interventions to address bullying and disruptive behaviour.

This initiative fits well with the aims of the SEAL programme which emphasises the need for children to acquire social and emotional skills underpinning the forming of positive relationships and friendships, and the importance of learning to understand and managing emotions, thoughts, and behaviours underpinning the ability to solve problems and resolve conflicts effectively. SEAL also emphasises the need for a consistent and positive response to behaviour in order to create an environment where social and emotional skills can flourish using an inclusive strategy to develop behaviour policy with all members of the school community.

Intervention context

George Mitchell School is a mixed comprehensive school in Leyton (11 to 16 years old), East London, with a pupil population drawn from a diversity of

ethnic groups. In fact the area is one of the most multi-cultural parts of London and Britain. The 2001 Census revealed a very mixed population; approximately 50 per cent White, 23 per cent Black and 21 per cent South Asian (Waltham Forest 2001).

Intervention details

This case study, taken primarily from the Participation for Schools website (Participation for Schools 2008) highlights pupil participation in the pastoral aspects of the school through a Fighting Against Bullying group (FAB). The group has been running for over nine years and is said to work to tackle bullying and raise awareness of the effects of bullying amongst pupils, and staff. The FAB group is made up of around 40 pupils from years 9, 10, and 11. The group includes pupils who have supported friends to deal with bullying as well as some who have themselves been previously bullied and/or bullied others.

The intention is that the direction of FAB is controlled by the pupils (with some staff guidance) and the group is encouraged to work together in order to negotiate activities and agendas. Group members have the responsibility of agreeing and refining their roles in reaction to the changing issues of the pupils within the school. There are boundaries which relate to how much the group can and should get involved in individual cases of bullying and these are discussed and kept up to date regularly.

There are a number of FAB initiatives which have contributed to bringing and keeping issues related to bullying to the forefront of the school agenda. They have:

- conducted research in school on experiences of bullying.
- designed and delivered training for teachers and pupils
- contributed to the school's anti-bullying policy
- promoted the work of FAB so that it is valued and understood by staff and pupils.

- designed and delivered training and workshops on recognising and tackling bullying.

In all these undertakings the group negotiates the aims to be achieved and activities to be undertaken. They also recognise that not all pupils are comfortable with talking to groups of people so they mutually agree roles. Members have also written and performed plays about bullying to audiences of pupils and teachers in the school and at local primary schools. Perhaps most notably members recently ran a training session for teachers at an anti-bullying conference. Ongoing work ensures that the visibility of FAB is retained throughout the school. Pupils are informed about FAB through presentations in school assemblies and through posters designed by the group members and displayed throughout the school.

How it works: If a pupils wishes to talk about a bullying related issue that they or somebody else may be facing, they can approach any FAB member at anytime, or visit the FAB office during break-time drop-ins run by the group. FAB members support the pupils in dealing with situations, and talk through their options. Members are trained in mediation skills and facilitate mediation meetings with the bully and the victim to resolve issues. FAB members also offer peer support through Studentlisteners.com which offers confidential online counselling to pupils in the school (www.studentlisteners.com). Pupils can log on to the site and communicate with FAB member about bullying that they may be experiencing. FAB members receive training in recognising the boundaries of confidentiality and in how to respond sensitively to feelings expressed online.

Recruiting new members to the group: Prospective new members of the FAB group under go a recruitment process which is conducted by current members (with guidance from staff members when required). The FAB members decide on the selection criteria for recruitment as the staff Co-ordinator of FAB, explains:

“The group are committed to finding new members that will improve the group, they’re looking for qualities that people can bring to develop the group further”.

As part of the selection process candidates watch a role-play performed by current FAB members to demonstrate a bullying situation which they could potentially be faced with. Members facilitate a discussion on the role play situation and observe the potential candidates responses. They then discuss the positive qualities of the candidates and elect new members. It is made clear that it is important to the group that decisions are not always based on those that are more confident or articulate; the group is encouraged to recognise the qualities that pupils that have been victims of bullying, or have bullied, can bring to the role.

The intervention and the local system

The FAB group is just part of the school's initiatives to involve their students in all aspects of the school. The school involves pupils at a variety of levels from school management to peer support. One example of pupils' involvement in management, curriculum, and teaching is the school's 'Making Learning Better' strategy through which pupils attend departmental meetings, observe lessons, and support the recruitment of teachers. Pupils have also been involved in the recruitment and selection of a member of staff. In a typical staff recruitment day, three groups of students from all year groups are involved in showing candidates around the school, interviewing candidates, and observing them teaching a lesson.

Evaluation

Each incident which is dealt with by the FAB group is recorded - including whether the outcome is positive or negative. For example, a complaint of lunchtime bullying was made to a teacher who referred the complaint to two year 9 FAB members. They were released from their lessons and worked with the pupils that had made the complaint to agree on a strategy. The two FAB members spoke to the pupils accused of the bullying and listened to their

perspective, but also put across the effect on other pupils. This lunchtime bullying has now ceased.

The group have also been involved in a more formal evaluation on the experiences of bullying within the school. The FAB group conducted a student survey which asks questions about what the school experience should be like and how pupils need to be supported by other pupils and staff in order to feel safe and confident about coming to school. They then used the results of this survey to look at how best to achieve the group's vision.

This led to FAB members' involvement in discussing the school's prevention of bullying policy. Members used their continuing discussions and experiences of bullying to agree on definitions and procedures for supporting pupils.

The prevention of bullying policy outlines that "we want every member of our school community to":

- Feel safe
- Build friendships
- Enjoy school life
- Achieve to the best of their ability

FAB members were recently asked to support the recruitment of staff for Childline in Partnerships' (CHIPS) London organiser. Members formed a student panel and candidates had to deliver a training session to the panel. Pupils then gave feedback to the interviewing panel of adults. It is the view of the school that through the FAB group's activities the school has become a safer place in which pupils feel that they are listened to and taken seriously. In an interview on the Participation for Schools website (Participation for Schools 2008) FAB members are described as "resourceful individuals who have gained valuable skills in communicating with people at different levels, facilitating training, workshops, and discussions, and conflict resolution and mediation".

CASE STUDY 2.

MEADOWS SCHOOL, NORTH EAST

CITIZENSHIP AND PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

Theory and evidence

The effectiveness review identified a number of interventions where agendas to improve wellbeing were incorporated into the general school curriculum. However, it was not clear which particular aspects of these interventions lead to effectiveness and again there was a strong bias towards studies conducted in the USA. Many of the most effective curriculum based interventions included some element of community involvement, rather than an entirely school based intervention. This case study focuses on the adaptation of a citizenship, personal and social health education curriculum (PSHE), forming an important strand of the Healthy Schools Status initiative. The case study describes a programme in a UK secondary school which involves a substantial element of community involvement, in order to incorporate wellbeing outcomes into the curriculum. Also as this case study is based in a school which specialises in pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, it provides an opportunity to consider whether universal interventions are appropriate in this setting. This case study particularly supports evidence statement 1a (the role of curriculum approaches to whole school interventions) and evidence statement 4 (the role of external agencies) in interventions to promote prosocial behaviours and skills.

Intervention context

The Meadows School teaches pupils aged 11 to 16 who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is a newly established maintained secondary school, which supports and educates girls and boys with a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the children have spent prolonged periods out of education, and initial assessment suggests that most of them are of average to low ability when they arrive. Based in a Victorian mansion on the outskirts of Spennymoor, the school welcomes youngsters

aged 11 to 16 years from right across County Durham. The majority of the 50 pupils are boys, and the staff/pupil ratio is high with 18 staff.

Intervention details

This case study, as described on the TeacherNET website (TeacherNET 2008) describes an approach to Citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). A focus on PSHE was built into the curriculum from the start of this new school. PSHE is seen as a key strand to improving school standards and plays a vital role in supporting young people to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives. The school uses the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) Key Steps certificate in their framework for personal development. Young people in every year group undertake PSHE challenges which include those developed in the ASDAN/NCB resource materials. The manager of ASDAN awards for the Meadows School is quoted as sayings:

"Key Steps is ideal for our children. It's fantastic. It's so easy for the staff and the children. We work through it nice and steadily. It doesn't feel pressurised at all."

The Key Steps Award is a comprehensive programme of activities in a range of topic areas covering Citizenship, PSHE, Environment Education, Personal Finance Education, Enterprise and Internationalism (ASDAN 2008). The activities are aimed at the 10-14 age group - in schools, youth or training centres and alternative education. They are presented in the form of Personal Challenges and encourage students to develop their personal skills and take responsibility for their own learning. The Key Steps Award comprises 9 modules: Identity, Community, Health, Citizenship, Environment, Personal Finance, Enterprise, Values.

The website information includes an interview with the school's Learning Support Assistant who has taken a key role in this intervention. It states that it is important to her that the pupils can work at their own speeds. She works alongside the ASDAN manager when the SRE modules are carried out in the Summer Term, a time chosen because it fits well with a visit from the County's

Sex Ed Roadshow. However her role doesn't stop in the classroom as the relationships she has established with the children mean that she can field questions about growing up whenever and wherever they arise. She is quoted as saying:

"I make myself open to whatever topic comes up, for these children, it is also important that they learn that there are some inappropriate times to talk about sex. "If it's inappropriate we'll tell them, 'that's inappropriate, we shouldn't be talking about that now.'"

It's part of the school policy that others in the community are involved in the PSHE teaching within the school. There is help from the local School Nurse who comes into The Meadows regularly to give advice privately to any pupil who has any issue regarding their wellbeing or health. The local GP also comes in to talk to the pupils. Another person who has become part of the team is a gay man working for the local authority in PSHE issues.

Evaluation

Every lesson is evaluated by staff. What works well and how the children responded to different activities is noted day by day. A monthly PSHE meeting takes an overview of the whole programme, and the team feels that the programme is working well as it stands. Both members of staff see profound change in the young people they teach over the long term. During PSHE lessons the children pay close attention, and behave responsibly. By the time the pupils leave the school the opinion of the Learning Support Assistant is that:

"they go out being better citizens. The improvement in those children is phenomenal."

However, again according to the website, the Deputy Head feels that assessment is an area where they still need to do some more work:

"We obviously have to assess their knowledge, the skills they have gained and their understanding. It's probably the understanding that is the difficult one. The school will be drawing on the experience of their local curriculum advisor to address this issue".

CASE STUDY 3

Q3 ACADEMY/DARTMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL, SANDWELL

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO IMPROVE OUT OF CLASS BEHAVIOUR

Theory and evidence

The SEAL programme emphasises the need for school initiatives to address the social and emotional climate and conditions for learning, to ensure pupils can learn, practise and consolidate skills across the school. The effectiveness review identified a few environmental initiatives to improve the whole school environment and ethos but none of these were interventions conducted in a U.K. context. This case study focuses on an intense three week intervention designed to improve out of class behaviour and as a result increase wellbeing in a UK secondary school.

The effectiveness review identified a few environmental initiatives to improve the whole school environment and ethos but none of these were interventions conducted in a U.K. context. This case study focuses on an intense three week intervention designed to improve out of class behaviour and as a result increase wellbeing in a UK secondary school. This case study particularly supports evidence statements 1b (the role of curriculum approaches to whole school interventions) in interventions to address bullying and disruptive behaviour.

Intervention context

Dartmouth High School was a mixed comprehensive (11-18) with 1100 pupils 19% of which have English as an additional language. The school at which this intervention was initiated has now become the Q3 Academy specialising in Design and Enterprise.

At the developmental stage there were a number of key factors that motivated the intervention:

- The behaviour and attendance audit indicated concerns regarding out of class behaviour

- Relatively high numbers of fixed term exclusions
- Increasing number of incidents of poor punctuality to lessons
- Concerning incidents of post-registration truancy
- The negative impact of out of class behaviour on teaching and learning

The expected outcome of this intervention was the Implementation of a new whole school referral system designed to inform strategic planning to develop and encourage behaviour for learning skills both in and out of class.

Intervention details

This case study is described on the Department for Education and Skills "Raising Standards" website (DfES 2008). Three weeks in the summer term were identified and a detailed log of every out of class behaviour incident was recorded. All staff, including support staff and administrators, met to discuss out of class behaviour. The audit formed the basis of the discussions where key issues were prioritised and potential solutions agreed.

As a result of these discussion a number of 'quick wins' were implemented immediately. For example:

- Staff were consulted on the location of behaviour 'hot-spots' and this was used to inform the redirection of break/lunch/senior staff duties
- Bells were reduced to a minimum number as it was felt that this would give staff greater control over the class.

Following on from this a whole staff INSET day on effective lesson starters was undertaken as these were seen as key areas impacting on out of class behaviour. The school's inclusion centre was redefined as the LINC – Learning and Inclusion Centre – focussing on all issues of inclusion, including an understanding of behaviour for learning and provision for pupils as an alternative to exclusion. Pupils exhibiting poor behaviour were targeted early and given appropriate support and guidance on site before reintegration – one major focus area for this support is out of class behaviour. More effective use was made of the Behaviour Education Support Team and the development of

links with additional outside agencies to address training issues and incidents of poor behaviour. These initiatives all lead to the implementation of a new whole school referral system designed to inform strategic planning to develop and encourage behaviour for learning skills both in and out of class.

Evaluation

There were a number of key points identified by an evaluation of intervention presented on the website (however, no information regarding how the evaluation was conducted or by whom was available):

- There was a significant improvement in punctuality to lessons
- There were fewer incidents of truancy after morning registration
- There were no exclusions in the first half of the autumn term (compared with 18 in the same period during the previous year)
- There was a reduction in the number of referrals for misbehaviour during lessons
- Staff recognised that all colleagues had a role to play and consistency was the critical element
- It was acknowledgement by staff, pupils and visitors that the school has a calmer atmosphere
- After 4 weeks the bells were reinstated because it has shown minimal impact and staff clearly wanted to return to the old system

Recommendations for future initiatives were made as a result of the evaluation:

- Continue to monitor and improve the referral system and the impact of the inclusion centre (LINC)
- Develop the resources in the LINC and continue to develop partnerships with outside agencies
- Repeat the survey of logging all out of class behaviour incidents in a fixed period and compare with the first log.
- Continue to include all staff and pupil feedback in planning the next steps and ensure full consultation in areas such as rewards for attendance and behaviour. This is via school council, parent

questionnaires, department meetings and weekly one-to-one head of department meetings with a member of the senior leadership team

- Fully embed electronic recording of behaviour incidents in whole school planning to inform decision making

Due to the changes that have taken place at this school since this initiative was developed it was not possible to obtain any further information as to whether these recommendations had been followed through.

In the context of this intervention and other initiatives ongoing in the school , an increase in both level 5+ at KS3 in English, Maths and Science and in % 5+ A* - C at GCSE was seen (from 27% 2003 to 31% in 2004) (Table 1). Obviously it is not possible to attribute any part of this directly to the out of class behaviour intervention but it does highlight the point that it may be beneficial to consider all aspects of the school environment and curriculum in order to get maximum benefit from any intervention.

Table 1. Key stage three pass rates in 2003 and 2004.

KS3 SATS	2003	2004
English	57%	60%
Mathematics	61%	64%
Science	56%	65%

DISCUSSION

These case studies are restricted by the fact that in the timescale available it has not been possible to date, to speak directly to any of the members of staff (or pupils) directly involved in the interventions. Data is therefore from secondary sources (mainly websites) and its validity may be questioned in some cases.

There is limited availability of independent, qualitative or extensive evaluation of these or similar interventions and the presentation of these case studies on

the websites we identified is likely to take a very positive stance towards their achievements. The lack of evaluation reflects to some extent the findings of the international literature identified in the effectiveness review which also suffered from a lack of both intervention detail and thorough, meaningful evaluation. However these case studies do provide some information in the U.K. context to support the international examples identified in the effectiveness review and provide some evidence to show that interventions similar to those conducted outside the UK would be likely to be acceptable and feasible in English schools. The case studies also illustrate how policies such as the PSHE curriculum and SEAL guidance may be interpreted and implemented by schools.

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