Social, emotional, and mental health needs of pupils at school

A research-based model of assessment, identification of needs, and evaluation of interventions

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Department of Health (2009)
Healthy lives, brighter futures

“Mental health and psychological wellbeing are fundamental to broader health and wellbeing. Studies have shown that of those with mental health problems at age 26, half had first met criteria that identifies a psychiatric disorder by 15, and nearly 75% had done so by their late teens. In 2004, around 10% of 10 to 16-year-olds had a diagnosable mental health disorder ….and some have argued that the wider costs of mental health problems in the UK might be as high as £77 billion.”
Department of Health (2009)
*Healthy lives, brighter futures*

**Behavioural, Emotional, and Social Difficulties**

- In 2008, 149,040 pupils (on School Action Plus or with a statement) with BESD identified as primary need
- Second most common area of need after MLD
- SEN Code of Practice (2001):
  - withdrawn or isolated
  - disruptive and disturbing
  - hyperactive and lacking concentration
  - immature social skills
  - challenging behaviours arising from other complex social needs
  - learning difficulties can arise because the pupils’ BESDs can affect their ability to cope with school routines and relationships

### Prevalence of mental disorders by age and sex in Britain, 2004 (ONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorder</th>
<th>5 to 10-year-olds</th>
<th>11 to 16-year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any disorder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less common disorders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperkinetic disorders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct disorders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety disorders</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The chart shows the percentage of prevalence for each disorder.*
The trouble with behaviour...


- top five obstacles to secondary school teaching?
  - number one is “poor pupil behaviour”
    - regardless of years of experience

My biggest negative thing is behaviour management. You’ve gone in and prepared every last second of the lesson and you’ve gone in thinking, “It’s going to be fantastic”. Then somebody at break time, somebody has fallen out with someone else and there’s absolutely nothing you can do about it and your lesson falls to pieces. That’s soul destroying. It really is.

(Head of Science, 8 years’ experience)
If they've got a really disruptive pupil they have to be really stern to just to keep one bad behaving pupil in line but not all pupils need that level of stern (response) and then they suffer … and they get treated as if they’re the problem pupil.
(Girl, year 10)

There should be ways of looking at what happened and having a real discussion about it. Punishment isn’t always the right thing. … we do want to be able to talk about things and sort it out, but there isn’t time because teachers are under a lot of pressure.
(Girl, Year 11)

But what’s underneath the behaviour?

- Social environment
- Self
- Cognition and Motivation
- Emotion
- Beh.
Ecological approach (Urie Bronfenbrenner)

Sociocultural context (e.g., poverty/SES)

Parenting practices (e.g., emotional support, cognitive stimulation, discipline)

Child outcomes (e.g., conduct problems)

E.g., Dodge, Pettit, & Bates: Child Development Project

E.g., Dodge, Pettit, & Bates: Child Development Project
Social experiences (e.g., physical abuse, peer rejection)

Information-processing biases (e.g., encoding, attribution, response selection)

Externalising behaviour

e.g., Dodge, Pettit, & Bates: Child Development Project

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So can schools make a difference?

Background social experiences

Emotion
Cognition
Motivation

Peer relations
Meta-analysis of SEL programmes

- Durlak et al. (2011)
  - data from 288,211 pupils in 207 studies
  - significantly improved SEL skills, increased prosocial attitudes, reduced conduct problems and emotional distress, increased positive social behaviours, reduced emotional distress, and academic performance
  - importance of effective implementation
    - likely to be crucial in multi-component work

SEAL

- SEAL is in the majority of schools
  - Well-established in many primary schools
  - Emerging use of small-group SEAL and Family SEAL
  - Increasing uptake in secondary schools

- Recent evaluation of Secondary SEAL comparing ‘SEAL schools’ and ‘Non-SEAL schools’ not very encouraging

- Dramatic variations in implementation of SEAL
  - approach is not prescribed, but lessons and materials were always intended to be embedded in a whole-school approach
SEAL Tracker School Project

Preliminary work focusing on qualitative data from 2008/9
2010 data collection
- 53 schools visited by RAs
- 32 schools contributed pupil survey data (2537 entries)
- 23 schools contributed staff survey data (668 entries)

Wide range of schools (FSM, attainment, attendance, etc.)

- RA perspectives on SEAL implementation, based on school visits and discussions with staff/pupils
  - Exploratory factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole school universal approach</th>
<th>Contextual supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➤ Engagement of all staff across the school</td>
<td>➤ Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Universal learning opportunities for all pupils</td>
<td>➤ Data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Delegation of SEAL responsibilities across all staff</td>
<td>➤ Use of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➤ Integrated approach to SEAL, behaviour, and well-being</td>
<td>➤ Integration of SEAL with learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Engagement with parents and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➤ Staff well-being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RA perspectives on perceived impacts, based on school visits and discussions with staff/pupils

- correlated with implementation
- significant associations with:
  - superior Ofsted ratings of Behaviour
  - better attainment results at Key Stages 2 and 4
  - lower overall and persistent absence
  - better pupil ratings of social and emotional ethos

- highest impacts were reported for:
  - climate and pride
  - pupil relationships
  - staff-pupil relationships
  - well-being and safety
  - pupil liking and enjoyment of school
overall reports on social and emotional experiences generally positive

staff vs. pupil reports?
staff give higher ratings than pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Possible range</th>
<th>Overall mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil - Positive peer interactions</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>1.94 (.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil - Victimisation</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0.59 (.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil - Negative Emotion</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0.57 (.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil - Social and emotional ethos</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>1.83 (.58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil - Teacher attitudes and</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>2.02 (.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff - Social and emotional ethos</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>2.30 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff - Teacher attitudes and</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>2.65 (.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff - Behaviour in class</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>2.83 (.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff - Behaviour out of class</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>2.61 (.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff – Attitudes to learning</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>2.95 (.84)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual differences among pupils

Differences WITHIN schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and emotional ethos (P)</th>
<th>Peer victimisation (P)</th>
<th>Negative emotion (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Positive peer interactions (P)
Differences between schools?

- considerable variation between schools
- but remarkable consistency between pupils and staff regarding school differences
  - schools with relatively high ratings from staff had relatively high ratings from pupils

Predicting pupils’ social and emotional experiences
Predicting behaviour (staff perceptions)

Differences BETWEEN schools

Whole-school engagement: Parents and community (RA) \( \rightarrow \) Social and emotional ethos (S) \( \rightarrow \) Behaviour in class (S)

Predicting behaviour (Ofsted ratings)

Differences BETWEEN schools

Whole-School Universal approach (RA) \( \rightarrow \) Social and emotional ethos (P/S) \( \rightarrow \) Ofsted Behaviour lower score = better behaviour
Predicting persistence absence

Differences BETWEEN schools

Whole-School Universal approach (RA) → Social and emotional ethos (P/S) → Persistent Absence

Predicting attainment

Whole-school universal SEAL approach → Positive social and emotional ethos → Better Ofsted Behavior rating

Higher attainment results
Higher attainment results

Whole-school universal SEAL approach → Positive social and emotional ethos → Better Ofsted Behavior rating → Higher attainment results

Integration of SEAL into learning

Whole-school universal SEAL approach → Positive social and emotional ethos → Better Ofsted Behavior rating → Higher attainment results
Integration of SEAL into learning → Higher attainment results

Whole-school universal SEAL approach → Positive social and emotional ethos → Better Ofsted Behavior rating

Contextual Supports

Recommendations

- continued support to implement a ‘whole-school universal’ approach
- integrate with support for specific groups of pupils (and families) and with anti-bullying work
- need examples of effective practice
- understanding and meeting local needs of learners and communities in order to provide a foundation for whole-school approach
Illustrative examples

- Implementing a whole-school universal approach
  - universal learning opportunities
  - proactive involvement of all staff
  - integration into learning
  - leadership and delegation
  - integrated approach to behaviour and well-being

- Contextual supports for whole-school implementation
  - creating an environment for shared engagement
  - staff professional development
  - well-being of staff
  - working with data
  - partnership with families and community engagement
Some guiding questions

➢ What are you trying to achieve?
  • be specific about the intended outcomes

➢ What provisions/interventions/resources are available?
  • at your school and in your Local Authority
  • who? what? when?
  • universal, small-group, or individual?

➢ Connect the above!

➢ Using assessment data
  • identification of needs
  • priorities for whole-class, small-group, and individuals
  • consideration of provisions/interventions
  • planning and execution

➢ Keeping a record

➢ Follow-up assessment
Validation of online assessments

- Cross-validation (308 pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MY CLASS Scores</th>
<th>Links with MY FEELINGS scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher on...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High on Most-Like</td>
<td>Positive Exp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High on Least-Like</td>
<td>Negative Exp. Anger Anxiety Depressive Neg. at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High on Cooperative</td>
<td>Positive Exp. Self-Worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High on Starts Fights</td>
<td>Negative Exp. Anger Depressive Neg. at school Neg. at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### External validation (290 pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Feelings</th>
<th>Links with other standard youth measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depressive Symptoms</td>
<td>Children’s Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Symptoms (Birmaher et al., 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Beck Anger Inventory for Youth (Beck et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### External validation (170 pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Feelings</th>
<th>Links with teacher ratings on SDQ (Goodman &amp; Scott, 1999)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depressive Symptoms</td>
<td>Higher on Emotional Symptoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Social Experiences</td>
<td>Lower on Peer Problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Feelings measurement model (943 pupils)

So what needs to happen?

- identification of key priorities
  - social and emotional *skills*
  - social and emotional *environment*

- provision mapping

- cycle of assessment, intervention, and evaluation
Back to our example …

- My Class before and after intervention…

Before

After

Before
After

My Feelings before and after intervention

![Graph showing changes in feelings before and after intervention]
My Feelings before and after intervention

Year 1
Before
Some guiding questions

- What are you trying to achieve?
  - be specific about the intended outcomes

- What provisions/interventions/resources are available?
  - at your school and in your Local Authority
  - who? what? when?
  - universal, small-group, or individual?

- Connect the above!
- Using assessment data
  - identification of needs
  - priorities for whole-class, small-group, and individuals
  - consideration of provisions/interventions
  - planning and execution

- Keeping a record

- Follow-up assessment

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**Working with the SEPQ**

- reviewing current provision in relation to learning outcomes
- registering classes and creating class lists
- running the online surveys
- exporting the data
- creating the feedback
- interpreting the feedback
- planning interventions
- recording interventions
- monitoring and evaluating changes over time