



Action Research Project by the Pen-Y-Dre Cluster

# A Guide to Good Practice in reducing barriers to learning through emotional intelligence and self-esteem initiatives



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

## Participating Schools

Gellifaelog Primary School

Pen-Y-Dre High School

Pantysgallog Primary School

Goetre Infant & Junior School - *Lead School*

Dowlais Primary School

Gurnos Nursery

## 1. Introduction

**The purpose of this booklet is to share the findings and good practice of the schools in the Pen-Y-Dre cluster taking part in the RAISE Program 2009-2010, focusing on the improvement of Emotional Wellbeing.**

All of the schools involved can be described as having high levels of socio-economic deprivation, where a large proportion of children begin their formal education with a significant language delay. The percentage of children on free schools meals and those receiving additional learning under the category of Special Educational Needs Code of Practice is high. In light of the problems that we face as a cluster, we felt the need to build upon the good work on literacy covered in the previous RAISE projects. In order to make progress in this area and having researched other programs all of the schools involved bought into the SEAL Scheme of Work.

The SEAL programme is based on curriculum materials which aim to develop the underpinning qualities and skills that help promote positive behaviour and effective learning.

The project aimed to use the SEAL programme to

- improve emotional well-being, self-esteem of children and young people so that they can engage in learning and improve their language development
- provide opportunity in the curriculum to compensate for pupils' inexperience by addressing pupils' social and emotional issues through speaking and listening, drama, PSHE, development of thinking skills.
- RAISE standards in reading and writing.
- track pupil progress and intervene promptly if pupils fall behind in their learning.
- link with current work on Values Education
- draw on partner schools to support the project
- share and disseminate best practice in terms of outcomes.

### Emotional intelligence is defined as

"the ability of people to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their own emotions and to recognise, understand and respond appropriately to the expressed emotions of others"

The cluster of schools has been involved in the Think2Learn Professional Development Training Programme on Emotional Intelligence operated by ESIS.

The key objectives of this training were to

- enable teachers to gain a better understanding of EI.
- enable teachers to gain an understanding of the 5 key competences of EI and how these are linked to learning.
- explore ways in which emotional intelligence can be promoted at individual, class and whole school level.

This INSET supported our RAISE Action Research Project.

## What is SEAL?

Since it is the job of a school to help a child to reach his or her full potential, then it is of great interest for a school to understand how to enable a child to acquire the necessary thinking and learning skills to help its pupils onto a pathway of life time learning, which is why we have adopted the SEAL approach. Psychological research has emphasised the role of self-esteem, self-awareness and our sense of self-competence as being a key determining factor in who achieves greatest success. For years now schools have been involved in numerous initiatives to raise standards, but in order for any of them to have maximum impact the child involved needs to be emotionally literate. To be emotionally literate means to be self-aware, motivated and to have a positive self-regard. Nobody is going to be able to achieve their full potential, if they are not of a positive mindset and in control of their emotions. The neurobiologist Joseph LeDoux said that

“Minds without emotions are not really minds at all... They are souls on ice... lifeless, devoid of any desires, fears, sorrow, pains or pleasures.” (LeDoux, J. 1998)

The SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning) scheme of work is broken into seven themes and they are

1. New Beginnings
2. Getting On and Falling Out
3. Say No to Bullying
4. Going For Goals!
5. Good To Be Me
6. Relationships
7. Changes

Within these themes such skills as dealing with feelings like anger and frustration, getting on with others, sorting out arguments fairly, feeling confident, taking responsibility and achieving success are covered.

This booklet offers the reader:

- An outline of what SEAL has to offer and how it can be amalgamated into the curriculum
- An account of the benefits of using the multi-agency system around us
- With ideas for engaging the community
- A catalogue of reasons of why emotional literacy is the lynch pin to achieving personal success

## 2. RAISE Programme 2009-2010

### Final Report - Project Title-Improving Emotional Well Being

“I am still learning.” (Michaelangelo)

#### Participating Schools:

Goetre Infant School – Lead School  
Goetre Junior School  
Gurnos Nursery  
Dowlais Primary School  
Gellifaelog Primary School  
Pantyscallog Primary School  
Pen-Y-Dre High School

Each school has used the SEAL curriculum resource to try to develop pupils' social, emotional and behaviour skills. They have done so by developing a programme of learning that is individual and specific to the needs of the pupils in their school.

#### Other Agencies Involved:

Working within a context such as ours we recognised the need to develop strong links by working in partnership with other agencies to secure whole school improvement and thereby maximise the opportunities for children to achieve success across our school communities.

A continuous commitment across all schools to tackle underachievement and ultimately to raise standards is the driving force behind the RAISE project.

All of the schools have run the SEAL programme by effectively utilising the established Multi Agency Partnership within the Pen-Y-Dre Cluster.

1. Family Programmes Team-Adult Tutors and Support Staff trained LSAs in using SEAL Parent Packs
2. Glamorgan University-Action Research provided Training
3. Behaviour Support Team
4. Taith Cymru
5. Barnardos
6. ESIS
7. Health Professionals
8. Educational Welfare Officers

All of the schools have tried to set up a parent group, to be run by a tutor from the Family Programmes Team. However, these have been more successful in some places than others. Added to which enthusiasm for such groups is different with each year group, so it shall continue to be an ongoing initiative with each new intake at the beginning of the academic year.

## Links with RAISE Initiatives

The project has targeted disadvantaged pupils through the groups of children identified in schools and their families through parent workshops. This project links very clearly with the other RAISE themes and builds on other RAISE activities across the schools, such as;

- developing early language skills through the expertise of a Speech and Language Therapist ie, Teaching Talking, Behaviour Support
- a whole child, whole family and community approach to language development
- the training of LSAs in Catch Up
- Consortium Action Research Training with Alama Harris
- Southampton University input of materials and training by Katherine Weare

## Links with Other Initiatives

It has been a key aim of this project to nurture the links with other initiatives already in place, such as the Family Support Agency, Inclusion and Welfare Services, health professionals, religious leaders, governors and parents, here by ensuring a network of professional practice, intervention and support. Since schools from across the key stages are involved it has helped to ensure the continuity of support between the key phases of education; most notably that from home to Nursery/Reception, Foundation Phase to Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. It also aims to make links with other ongoing initiatives such as Parenting Programmes, SAP training, Spot Light, Flying Start, CYPP Plan (Children and Young Peoples Plan) and Catch Up. Catch Up ties in with the literacy theme of the RAISE project in Afontaf. As a result this project would provide parents with a range of interventions to support pupils in the home environment. In the classroom it has reinforced the THINKING SKILLS, Listening to Learners, Healthy Schools Scheme, Language and Play, School Gates and AFL (assessment for Learning) programs that schools have been asked to follow.

## Description of Dissemination Activities

Our RAISE bid was confirmed in November and SEAL was not launched throughout the borough until January, which did mean that this project was out of sink with the school year; however, we have now been able to start a more thorough approach in September.

Each school has been encouraged to time table opportunities for sharing experiences amongst each other. These have usually taken the form of staff meetings. As a cluster however, the head teachers and various members of staff involved in the piloting of SEAL have set up a steering group and appointed a coordinator. All of the personnel involved have met on a regular basis to discuss the benefits and the short comings of the project. The coordinator has had the opportunity to visit all of the schools to observe and monitor lessons and to talk with staff about any queries. Above all, the role of the coordinator has been to liaise and share findings between the schools. We have also had cluster training on SEAL in twilight sessions conducted by Professor Katherine Weare from Southampton University. We have had the opportunity for dissemination sessions with the other consortiums that are covering similar topics and learn from their experiences. We have a conference booked for the first half of November, where we plan to launch our collection of case studies in a printed and electronic form for all to use. At this event Val Jones will be present to launch the recently published Wellbeing Tool Kit. We were hoping to share this event with the Afontaf cluster; but this is no longer possible. We will be inviting all of the heads from the schools in Merthyr; agency and community members who have been involved, along with delegates from the LEA, RAISE and Welsh Assembly Government in order to work and learn collaboratively. In so doing we hope to have a wider impact on our understanding of socio-economic disadvantage in education.

## Main Findings of the Evaluation

- emotional literacy plays a key role in personal achievement
- there is a strong link between poverty and underachievement
- for its continued success there needs to be a whole family approach
- the need for the continuity of teaching emotional literacy between the key stages and in the community as a whole to make for an easier transition
- the lack of language/vocabulary is a barrier to understanding ones feelings
- a more emotional literate child is a more independent learner
- aspects of emotional literacy need to be in the mission statement and evident in the whole ethos of the school
- emotional literacy needs to be inter woven throughout the curriculum and not viewed as an extra subject
- improvement in standards is not going to happen over night, but will take time
- the need for a clear comprehensive initial assessment from which to use as a baseline
- good behaviour does not necessarily make for a good learner

## Evaluation of the Initiative as a Whole

This has been a good example of a professional learning community, an inclusive group of people motivated by a shared learning vision who have supported and worked with each other finding ways inside and outside their immediate community to enquire on their practice and together learn new and better approaches that will enhance all pupils learning.

Having carried out the initial questionnaires as part of the SEAL program each school commented on the fact that the language used was too difficult for the most vulnerable of children for which it was intended. As a result, more work is going to be done on providing the children with the necessary vocabulary to enable them to talk about themselves and how they are feeling more clearly. Each school will endeavour to create a workable learning program to enhance the teaching of Emotional Literacy. For these, all of the schools plan to use the resources given by ESIS on Emotional Literacy and the training provided at the Well Being seminar. Furthermore, as from Sept 2010 all of the classes from year 1 upwards, in the Pen-Y-Dre cluster, will be using the PASS Survey as their baseline when they are assessing. This will be able to compare the results of gender, year group and ethnic groups with those of other children nationally. This data is formed using a bench mark based upon a quarter of a million children nationally. The assessment for the Early Years will be done using the new baseline guide lines of 2010.

It is apparent that it is in the interest of any school to nurture the cognitive with the emotional. This has been recognised by the government in England and Wales. In the School Effectiveness Framework in Wales it acknowledges that children "learn better if they have well-developed emotional intelligence" (SEF, p23) and goes on to promote those programmes that help child with this intelligence as this is the "key factor in effective learning." (SEF, p23)

The fact that there is a link between poverty and underachievement is nothing new, but in carrying out this project we have been able to find out where these children need most help and we are now able to put procedures into place to help them achieve further success.

Consequently, emotional literacy needs to permeate out into the wider community. What goes on in school needs to be modelled in the home environment as well, in order to have the utmost effect. For this reason all of the schools have attempted to establish parent groups which have received a mixed level of success, but this is something that we will continue to try.

Added to which, the value of teaching emotional literacy, needs to be given time to work its way through the system, as this is more about a lifestyle change and this inevitably will take time before any true improvement is visible.

The opportunity to work together in such a manner has benefited both pupils and staff. Although, it is too early to show any real outcomes, as it has not been embedded for a long enough time, the initial signs are promising. The children who have taken part so far appear more confident and more aware of their feelings and responsibilities. Furthermore, all of the mechanics are in place to embark on a more comprehensive teaching of EI and assessment of the pupil's needs.

All schools recognise that in order for this to have maximum effect, emotional literacy must not be viewed as an extra subject to the existing curriculum, but as an integral part to all areas of the school life. Above all it needs to be in the school vision and obvious in the whole ethos of the school. Emotional literacy will make time in the curriculum as it will impact on the children's ability to work independently, and to therefore be more responsible for their own learning.

"They are likely to start working more effectively together..." and "they are better placed to communicate information and develop ideas." (The Emotional Literacy Handbook, David Fulton Publishers Ltd, 2003)

To ensure the sustainability of the teaching of EI it needs to be built into the School Development Plan. Ultimately, it is not only the children who have benefited from this project, but it is the schools involved as well. Working together on SEAL has created a more effective cluster who is sharing its findings and constantly learning from each other.

### The Way Forward

- continue to share and work together as a cluster
- use PASS to highlight those children who are lacking in Emotional Intelligence
- build the teaching of emotional intelligence into the School Development Plan

### Contributions Made to Other National and Local Priorities and Initiatives

- LEA Strategic Plan
- Literacy Initiatives
- CYPP "Rights to Action" Links to all 7 Core Aims in some way or other.
- Healthy Schools
- Investors In Family
- Well Being –Agenda

### Links to the School Effectiveness Framework

- Encouraged **distributed leadership**- transformed learning through teacher leadership; teachers empowering other teachers and leading other teachers
- Promoted **working with others across** the phases and in house, information sharing in meetings culminating in a Conference
- Good example of a **PLC**
- **Improvement & Accountability** - linking SEAL to Performance Management as a whole school development target.
- **Curriculum & Teaching** - embedded across curriculum, planned for in teaching activities.
- **Intervention & Support** - Training on Emotional Literacy, SEAL and SAP

## 3. Gellifaelog Primary School

### Final Report - Project Title-Improving Emotional Well Being

Gellifaelog Primary School is situated in the Penydarren district of Merthyr Tydfil and serves the catchments area of Penydarren and Galon Uchaf. The area is socially and economically disadvantaged. The school has a nursery class and seven mixed ability classes, some of which are mixed ages. A high percentage of children entering the school have very poorly developed personal, social and academic skills, as is reflected in the school's baseline assessments.

At present there are 205 pupils on roll. 39% of pupils receive free school meals and 82 pupils (40%) are on the ALN register, including 62 at School Action and 19 at School Action Plus.

### Sustainability within the RAISE Programme

The previous RAISE funding was used to support strategies to raise standards of achievement in literacy. These strategies have been successful and are now firmly embedded in the schools literacy policy. However as a result of our self evaluation process we concluded that we need to develop strategies that will develop the 'whole child' both within the school and the home setting if we are to make significant improvements to our pupil's life long learning. We began to explore strategies that would improve the social and emotional well being of our pupils. As a cluster we all recognised the importance of improving pupils' Emotional Intelligence and were involved in the ESIS Think2Learn training that included a module on Emotional Intelligence. This became a priority for our cluster and we have been fortunate to receive further support from RAISE to develop this action research project.

### Description of Activities Undertaken

The initial activity was a cluster training presentation provided by Katherine Weare that outlined the evidence and the key principles involved in a comprehensive approach to SEAL. Each school then decided on how they would use SEAL to address the needs of their own pupil's. We then decided on the key ingredients of the most effective approach for the pupils at Gellifaelog:

- △ A whole school approach.
- △ Integrating the SEAL themes into our PSE/Values curriculum.
- △ Target groups established for manageable collection of data.
- △ FSM indicator used to identify target groups in Year 2 and 3.
- △ Questionnaires from Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention completed by pupils, staff and parents.
- △ Each theme introduced in assembly followed by weekly assemblies based on the theme.
- △ Each class to deliver a weekly session using the relevant SEAL resources.
- △ Parent group established and supported by Family Programmes Team.
- △ Use outside agencies/community (School Nurse/Educational Psychologist/Behaviour Support Teacher/ local pastor) to provide topic focused group support e.g. anger management.
- △ Monitoring and evaluating through discussions and classroom observations.

## Objectives

- The key aim of this project has been to utilise the SEAL curriculum resources to develop pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills with the expected outcome that they will be more able to engage in learning and ultimately will achieve greater personal success.
- Each class in differing ways has provided opportunities in the curriculum to compensate for pupils' inexperience by addressing their social and emotional issues through such areas as speaking and listening, drama, PSHE, PE and the development of thinking skills.
- We have provided support for our parents and used the expertise in our local community.
- To share good practise within our cluster and with the whole of the LEA.
- To establish the implementation of SEAL as our PLC (Professional Learning Community).
- To ensure the continuity of the teaching of Emotional Intelligence throughout the Key stages.
- To ultimately raise standards for not only the initial target group of learners, but for all future cohorts of learners as well.

## Outcomes

Our expectation in terms of educational performance, for the pupils targeted at the beginning, was for them to show an increase in their understanding of their feelings, such as anger. We also hoped for them to improve their skills of getting on with others and dealing with disagreements. It was an ambition for them to increase in confidence, develop a level of empathy and to generally take more responsibility for their actions. However, we are realistic in our approach and visualise this to take a long time, hence the importance of the continuation of this project. Our initial evaluations have indicated the following outcomes:

- △ Shared understanding of the key principles of the SEAL resources.
- △ Need to target communication skills and develop 'emotional' vocabulary to enable pupils to fully access topics and resources.
- △ Language and communication skills proved to be a barrier to administering the Assessment questionnaires with both pupils and parents. The cluster as a whole recognised this problem and we have now agreed to implement the PASS assessment survey to address this issue.
- △ Parental involvement is vital to developing emotional intelligence of our pupils.

## Outputs

- △ Contributed to the evaluative report on this collaborative activity
- △ Gathered a range of valuable resources
- △ PSE scheme of work amended to include SEAL
- △ PASS now being implemented in all schools in the cluster as an assessment tool
- △ Sharing of good practice across the cluster



## Description of Monitoring and Evaluation

We commenced our project with an individual analysis of the target group, but as stated earlier we found these questionnaires to be lacking in both the depth of information provided, while also rendering themselves incomprehensible, in places, to the very young and to those most lacking in emotional vocabulary. However, what it did do was to highlight those children most lacking in motivation, self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills and empathy. This gave us a starting point and operating a traffic light system, with red being the most vulnerable, we were able to see at a glance who needed the most help and where.

To resolve this problem the whole cluster has bought into the PASS Survey, which will still require support from an adult when being administered, but it will also provide a much more detailed analysis of information. PASS is a form of screening, not a diagnosis, but via the data provided we can prioritise a referral list. This information will be able to inform the class teacher when planning teaching and learning opportunities.

At the end of the first year these SEAL questionnaires were revisited to see if there was any change. As predicted there was no real evidence of any dramatic change, but the majority of the children were more aware of what qualities they need to achieve, even if they are not quite able to carry out these skills as yet. As with any initiative these things take time, and therefore the continuation of the teaching of the topics in SEAL is paramount in order for the pupils to become more self-aware and ultimately to be more able to achieve personal success.

As with the questionnaires some of the worksheets provided by SEAL expect a certain level of understanding and were out of reach for some pupils. As a result, the staff have had to be creative with some of them and to take a step back and dedicate time to building up a feelings vocabulary for example.

We also carried out classroom observations from the Nursery through to year 6 which has provided us with a clear picture of the progression on a specific topic through out the school. This has also been backed up with the collection of lesson plans, samples of work, photos and film clips to produce a portfolio of the work going on in our school.

The parent groups were well attended and all parents welcomed the opportunity to share experiences. The SEAL parent packs are an excellent resource and provide clear, concise information for parents to enable them to support their children at home. This is an area that we will have to continue to develop and sustain.



The information highlighted so far by the SEAL questionnaires has been a good starting point, but we look forward to more in depth analysis once we start using the PASS Survey. Ultimately, we understand the importance of emotional intelligence and do not view it as an extra, but as an integral part of the curriculum. This needs to be evident in the school mission statement and the whole ethos of the school to ensure its continuation. Our commitment to this program is written into our School Development Plan.

The opportunity for us to develop effective working partnerships both within our cluster, with other clusters in the consortium and with outside agencies has been a valuable and worthwhile experience for everyone involved.

## Links with the School Effectiveness Framework

This action research project has strong links to the School Effectiveness Framework. The School Effectiveness Framework is designed to bring together existing good practice that is being carried out in order to improve learning and well being for all our school aged children and young people in Wales. It will also make sure that all our future policies are properly joined up. Our project highlighted the following links to SEF:

- △ Distributed leadership
- △ Working with others
- △ Developing an effective PLC
- △ Improvement and accountability
- △ Curriculum and Teaching
- △ Intervention and support



## 4. Pantysgallog Primary School

### Final Report

Pantysgallog Primary School serves an area that can be classed as generally disadvantaged with approximately 25% of the residents being relatively prosperous and 75% economically disadvantaged. At the time of this project there were 231 pupils on roll from Nursery to year 6. There are currently four pupils from ethnic minorities. The annual intake of the school covers the full ability range and many pupils enter the school with low levels of ability in language. Around 26% of pupils receive free school meals. There are 71 pupils on the ALN register (30%), including 60 on School Action and 10 on School Action Plus. One pupil has a Note in Lieu of Statement.

### Sustainability within the RAISE Programme

Before embarking on the new phase of RAISE, it was important to look back at previous RAISE initiatives within the school and to ensure sustainability within the programme. Previously the school has used the RAISE money to concentrate on literacy initiatives through the Catch Up programme. It was decided, therefore, to extend the parameters of the project and to move into the area of improving pupils' Emotional Literacy.

### Description of Activities Undertaken

At the outset of the project it was decided to use a cohort of pupils from both Key Stages. The Reception class of 2009/2010 was a small one, so it was decided to use the whole class, but Year 6 were tested using the SEAL Assessment Tool and pupils with an Emotional Literacy Score of 66 or below were chosen to pilot the SEAL materials.

After choosing the pilot cohorts a plan was drafted for activities to cover the Spring and Summer Terms 2010:  
S.E.A.L. Project Action Plan



Action	Carried out by	Dates	Completed
1. Assess pupils in Reception and Year 6 Class using Emotional Literacy; Assessment and Intervention CD	Mrs Brill/ Mr Thomas	February 2010	✓
2. Analyse the data from the assessment tool and choose target groups from Reception and Year 6	Mrs Brill Mr Thomas Mrs Priday	February 2010	✓
3. Start using the SEAL Materials after February half term: • Assembly using SEAL materials to be delivered each Monday • One weekly session to be delivered by Mrs Priday and Mr Thomas to Reception and year 6 respectively	Mrs Brill Mr Thomas Mrs Priday	2nd half term Spring and on-going	✓
4. Use the SEAL materials with the selected children until Summer half term	Mrs Brill Mr Thomas Mrs Priday	2nd half term Spring and on-going	✓
5. Reassess all pupils in the Reception and Year 6 Class	Mrs Brill Mr Thomas	May 2010	✓

It was decided to concentrate on the Themes of 'Going for Goals' and 'Good to Be Me.' The R-Time materials were to be used with both groups. The aim of these materials is to explore the SEAL themes with a variety of child friendly activities, allowing pupils to develop the necessary vocabulary to enhance their emotional literacy. A weekly session was timetabled for both groups which supplemented the PSE curriculum and one assembly a week was used to introduce the themes that pupils were covering.

It was also anticipated that we run a Family SEAL with parents of the target groups being invited into school to look at the SEAL Parent Packs. This was to be facilitated by Family Literacy Practitioners.

## Objectives

The main objective of the project as outlined in the initial bid for RAISE funding was:

### *Reducing barriers to learning through emotional intelligence and self-esteem initiatives*

As a school we were looking to use pilot groups to try out the materials before creating a sustainable programme for the development of pupils' emotional intelligence by rolling out the SEAL materials to the whole school from September 2010.

As research has shown self-esteem and self-awareness can be key factors in a pupils' achievement, it was felt that if we could identify pupils who had low self-esteem using the SEAL Assessment Tool, we could use the SEAL materials to enhance their self-esteem and as a consequence improve their attainment. At the outset we did understand, however, that the outcomes may be difficult to measure and that the objective would be a long-term one.

Here are two examples of SEAL sessions and their outcomes that took place in the Spring Term of 2010.

With the Reception class, the theme was 'Good to Be Me' and the activity was designed to enhance self-esteem and inclusion. The session began with pupils looking at their reflection in a spoon and then working in pairs to pick out a positive feature of their partner. Pupils were given a starter phrase: 'I think you are nice because.....'

As a plenary activity, pupils were then asked to draw themselves from their reflections on a spoon.

This session highlighted the need to develop an appropriate vocabulary to make the SEAL resources successful. The pupils found it quite difficult to express themselves using the given phrase and their answers consisted generally of one word. They understood the concept, but some didn't have sufficiently developed language to express their response.

With Year 6, the most positive session came in discussing relationships. The SEAL theme was Relationships and the objectives were dealing with loss and bereavement as well as forming relationships. Pupils were given a series of scenarios that they could face e.g. losing a grandparent, not being picked in a school team, losing a pet, divorce. The children had to rank these events in order in relation to how bad they would feel if these things happened to them. They were encouraged to understand that they would all come up with a different order depending on their own personal circumstances.

They all agreed that the death of a close relative would have the greatest effect, but the other categories were ranked in a different order. There were a range of responses according to the pupils own life experiences, and there was a palpable sense of trust between members of the group and the teacher delivering the session.

Teacher evaluation of the Year 6 sessions highlighted that the less involvement the teacher had in the discussions, the more the pupils opened up to each other and gave more honest answers to the questions.

## Outcomes

- Clearer understanding of the SEAL materials, how they fit together as a whole school resource
- Need to develop pupils vocabulary in relation to the issues covered by the SEAL topics
- Need to use additional assessment tool for assessing children to obtain a baseline as SEAL assessment tool proved difficult with younger pupils and those with literacy difficulties. The school has now purchased the PASS survey to facilitate this

## Output

- School is now using PASS as the assessment tool for SEAL
- The SEAL materials have now been dovetailed into the current PSE Scheme of Work and all staff are currently rolling the programme out in all year groups.
- Production of an evaluative report on the collaborative project.
- An understanding that parental input and understanding of the SEAL materials is a vital component in its success.



## Description of Monitoring and Evaluation Processes

All pupils in Reception and Year 6 were tested at the start of the project in the Spring of 2010. The assessment tool used was the SEAL Emotional Literacy; Assessment and Intervention CD. This was used with mixed success with the two groups. Reception pupils found the language used in the assessment tool difficult to understand, while year 6 coped well with the assessment tool. It was decided to abandon the assessment tool with Reception and to use baseline scores for Personal and Social and Language Literacy and Communication.

Year 6 were tested and the spread sheets below are a record of their Emotional Literacy scores at the start and end of the project:

Gender	Date of birth	Year group	Class/Form	Ethnicity	Overall score
Female	20/11/1998	6	9	White British	59
Female	13/10/1998	6	9	White British	66
Female	30/08/1999	6	9	White British	62
Male	13/11/1998	6	9	White British	59
Male	09/02/1999	6	9	White British	70
Female	04/06/1999	6	9	White British	74
Male	20/05/1999	6	9	White British	76
Male	27/12/1998	6	9	White British	66

Gender	Date of birth	Year group	Class/Form	Ethnicity	Overall score
Female	20/11/1998	6	9	White British	50
Female	13/10/1998	6	9	White British	70
Female	30/08/1999	6	9	White British	65
Male	13/11/1998	6	9	White British	68
Male	09/02/1999	6	9	White British	74
Female	04/06/1999	6	9	White British	86
Male	20/05/1999	6	9	White British	88
Male	27/12/1998	6	9	White British	74

This was the only quantitative data that we were able to collect on the Year 6, with 87.5% of pupils achieving an improvement in their emotional literacy score. However, we did discover some interesting qualitative data in relation to two pupils in the group.

### Pupil 1

One Year 6 pupil who didn't meet the criteria of a score lower than 66, was placed onto the project due to parental concerns regarding her vulnerability at the start of the Spring Term. Typical behaviour for her would be to isolate herself from her peers, making no eye contact with adults in the school setting, walking around the playground with her coat and hood completely fastened and with her head permanently down.

She embarked on the project and by the end of the Summer Term was confident enough to perform in the Leavers Assembly as a soloist. In evaluating this progress, staff feel that one of the vital components in this success was parental involvement.



### Pupil 2

The second pupils fell within the criteria for the project, but outwardly appeared to have good levels of self-esteem. During the Spring Term, however, factors external to the school had a negative effect on the pupil. Parents refused to recognise the problem and little progress was made in terms of improvement in the emotional literacy score when re-tested at the end of the Summer Term.

This has led us to believe how vital it will be that parents are fully aware of and involved in the SEAL programme when it is rolled out to the whole school.

For the purposes of the project, we concentrated on using the R-Time resources which we found to be well designed and clearly laid out in the five categories of the SEAL project. The vocabulary has to be adapted to the needs of individual classes but the picture packs have proved to be very effective when delivering SEAL sessions.

The individual Year Group resources require more preparation than the R-Time but is clearly laid out into each category. Similarly, the Parent Pack is a superb resource to be used with parents.

In this area, we found that we could not sustain a Parent Group and this is now a clear area of development for the future, given the effect that parental engagement had on the two pupils outlined above.

One of the key beneficial elements of the project for us was the links that could be made with the School Effectiveness Framework. The framework at its centre has 'Children and Young People's Improved Learning and Well-Being', an element which fits exactly with the SEAL materials. The project allowed for the following aspects of SEF to be explored:

- Distributed Leadership : members of staff were able to plan and carry out the Action research.
- Working With others : moving outside the immediate sphere of colleagues and working with cluster schools has enabled shared good practice and the setting up of a PLC.
- Networks of Professional Practice : this has encompassed not just other school-based professionals but colleagues from health, family literacy.
- Intervention and Support :the assessment tool allowed us to target appropriate pupils for intervention and support.
- Improvement and Accountability: the assessment data proved to be a useful baseline for measuring improvement. This will further be enhanced by the use of the PASS survey from September 2010.
- Curriculum and teaching: the success of the pilot project has led to changes in the PSE curriculum and will allow us through the PASS survey to adapt out teaching methods and curriculum content to match the pupils needs.



## 5. Goetre Infant School

### School Context

The school is situated in a Communities First Area and is described as having high levels of socio-economic deprivation. A large proportion of children begin their formal education with significant language delay. Currently the percentage of children on free school meals is 62% and approximately 72% of children are on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) register under the various categories of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

The staff at our school recognises that through promoting positive emotional health and well being, pupils will begin to understand and express their feelings better, build their confidence and emotional resilience and therefore their capacity to learn.

### Description of Activities

The SEAL Resource is extensive and to be truly effective a whole school approach is fundamental to its success.

It is a structured themed resource making key skills explicit and accessible to all.

Staff completed a whole school mapping exercise which linked SEAL themes to the School Foundation Phase, PSHE programme and the Values led Education. This produced a range of themes for staff to use each term and staff then used the themes to plan weekly activities.

In mainstream classes Staff decided to concentrate on the themes of Going for Goals, New Beginnings and Changes.

Staff used the following teaching approaches to achieve the intended impact, small group work, whole class circle time discussions and talking partners' practical activities. The themes were introduced through whole school assemblies.

The activities were differentiated according to the particular year group taken from the SEAL material.

Staff has also built in a series of activities from various other resources.

A Values display has been put up in the school hall and the Value of the month is displayed and every opportunity is created to discuss the value with the children in individual classrooms and in Assemblies.

Staff has also researched stories that link specifically to the themes and are age appropriate.



## Case Study Learning Resource Base Unit

During the Summer Term 2010 the SEAL Activities were trialled in the Learning Resource Base Unit where the children are aged between 3-6years old.

The theme for the term was "Changes". The class had spent a great deal of time and worked through the Spring Term growing seeds, flowers and vegetables therefore the word "Change" had been used extensively.

The class began with a session on "changing our faces"-happy, sad. They observed each others faces and used the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) visual cards to reinforce the changes.

This was a good activity for one particular child who regularly displayed different emotions and mood.

Another session involved changing water into squash using the fruit drink Ribena. The children used observational skills, thinking skills and questioning skills.

Throughout each circle time session the children were reminded about thanking their partner and the whole class for listening.

### Case Study-YrR

With the Reception Class the theme was based around improving motivation, behaviour, self awareness and self-esteem.

The children worked in random pairs; each child has a photograph of an activity they had completed that week. A two minute timer is used and the children in their pairs talk to their partners about their piece of work, what is good about it, how they completed it and how it can be improved. On completion of discussion children sing "What a star". Children then take it in turns to talk to the whole group about their completed activity.

Emphasis throughout the activity was on children trying their best and willing to take risks, if you don't succeed keep trying.

Another activity was using the feelings dice to develop pupil's emotional vocabulary. The results of their comments were recorded on a graph using the 2 Simple Program. This activity helped to develop pupil's confidence to express their feelings and to give a reason for their emotions.

### Case Study-Year 2

Year 1 & 2 focussed on "Going for Goals". In this theme the children begin to explore effective learning and how they can influence their success. The activities encourage reflection on how they prefer to learn –by seeing, hearing and doing-and to help them realise that different learning tasks require different ways of learning.

Photo cards from the whole school resource file (for example, "determined") to illustrate the meaning of the word "goal" were used.

The children achieved the intended learning outcomes at the end of a series of activities which were to:

- Set a goal
- Break a goal down into small steps
- Choose a realistic goal.



## The Project

Staff were involved in training sessions by outside providers and in-house INSET.

A Family SEAL programme was set up with the Family Programmes Team. The team used the SEAL Parent Packs.

## Objectives

The main objectives of our school for getting involved in this project were to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills.

Develop a consistent approach from staff to communicating with pupils in a manner which is mindful of their life circumstances and promotes an effective environment for learning.

Develop a learning environment that is supportive to emotional health and well being for whole school community.

Secure consistency across the whole school provision for PSHE ensuring progression and development of skills.

To raise awareness of staff that SEAL provides a taught curriculum but the environment and conditions for learning must provide opportunities for pupils to be supported in this learning about the world around them.

## Outcomes

The curriculum materials were generally considered to be easy to use and linked successfully with the school's PSHE programme.

Staff suggested that the small group work had a positive impact upon pupils' social and emotional skills.

More formal evaluation involving outcome measures need to be embedded in practice.

The pupils need to develop an appropriate vocabulary, and this needs to be built up consistently.

The staff have qualitative evidence rather than quantitative data at this stage in the school SEAL journey

The project has raised teachers' expectations and supported staff to develop the use of SEAL.

## Quotes from staff

"The SEAL Material has lots of useful ideas, lots to think about and try with our children"

"The training session was very informative and it made me determined to be a part of the whole school programme"

"It's been useful working with others and planning the whole school programme"

"Cluster working on this project has developed my professional expertise "

## Quotes from children

"I like circle time it helps me to share a problem"

"I like partner work and sharing my ideas with a friend"

## Output

An overview of SEAL and its link to Foundation Phase PSHE programme.

How SEAL can support and develop the Healthy Schools programme.

The involvement of parents and other agencies are necessary to enhance the programme.

Clear learning intentions are in teachers planning

SEAL Activities are timetabled into the week's activities.

Staff are increasingly aware of how their emotional needs have an impact on their work and also the children they work with.

The project has developed transitional links from Key Stage 1- Key Stage 3

## Description of Monitoring and Evaluation Processes

The activities were monitored and evaluated in weekly planning meetings by all staff.

The SEAL Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention Tool were unsuccessful as the vocabulary was too difficult for the children to understand.

The Local Authority Baseline Assessment was used in September 2009 to establish each child's level in Personal Social and Health Education and in Language Literacy and Communication and the assessment was revisited in July 2010. The top score is 12 for each section of the baseline and the % below indicates the number of children who reached that score when initially assessed in September 2009 and then the number of children who achieved the top score in July 2010.

The following diagrams indicates the value added.

Autumn 2009	Summer 2010
Personal & Social	Personal & Social
6%	62%
Oracy A	Oracy A
16%	47%
Oracy B	Oracy B
2%	31%

Evidence of how staff are making a difference to the lives of these young children can be seen in the increase in the above value added scores.

Staff also uses a Personal & Social Continuum which overlaps with SEAL assessments and these are recorded termly.

The monitoring of staff planning documents is carried out by Senior Management Team.

Classroom observations and Listening to Learners are further strategies used to monitor the effectiveness of the programme.

## The Way Forward

Incorporate all actions into the SIP

Establish a whole school baseline using PASS. This will support transition from Key Stage 1 - Key Stage 3.

After establishing a baseline and incorporating actions into the school improvement plan progress can be monitored and developed as part of the regular cycle of school self-review

Ensure impetus is maintained through a continued process of review and development with identified timescales

Embed SEAL within the review cycle as an integral part of the school self-evaluation framework recognising the contribution that SEAL makes to this process.

To ensure that the 7 themes of SEAL link to the Children Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) "Rights to Action"

Links to previous RAISE Initiatives

Previous RAISE initiatives within the school focussed on improving children's speech and language skills.

Staff worked along side a Speech & Language Therapist and was trained to provide Speech & Language sessions with an identified group of children. Staff were trained to develop children's vocabulary/understanding and use of concepts/sentence structure and speech skills.

A high % of children were assessed as having a language delay as opposed to speech difficulties.

Previous RAISE created a multi-professional team to deliver a range of pro-active interventions to improve the life chances of children.

### Links to Previous RAISE Initiatives

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Previous RAISE created a multi-professional team to deliver a range of pro-active interventions to improve the life chances of children.

### Links to School Effectiveness Framework (SEF)

Through the involvement of all staff in this project we have focussed very clearly on improving outcomes for children and young people.

This project has linked to the vision of SEF

- Curriculum & Teaching-engaging pedagogy
- Networks of professional practice-collective professionalism
- Working with others-joined up Inclusive
- Leadership-visionary and strategic, collaboration
- Improvement & Accountability-transparent processes
- Intervention and support-early and strategic, differentiated

## 6. Goetre Junior School

### A Whole School Approach to SEAL - 2009-2010

#### Brief Summary of Goetre and its Social Problems

Goetre Junior School, built in the 1960s, is located on an elevated site shared with the infant school on the edge of the Gurnos, a large, predominantly local authority, housing estate, in an economically and socially disadvantaged area to the north of Merthyr Tydfil town centre. The school is within a Community First Area.

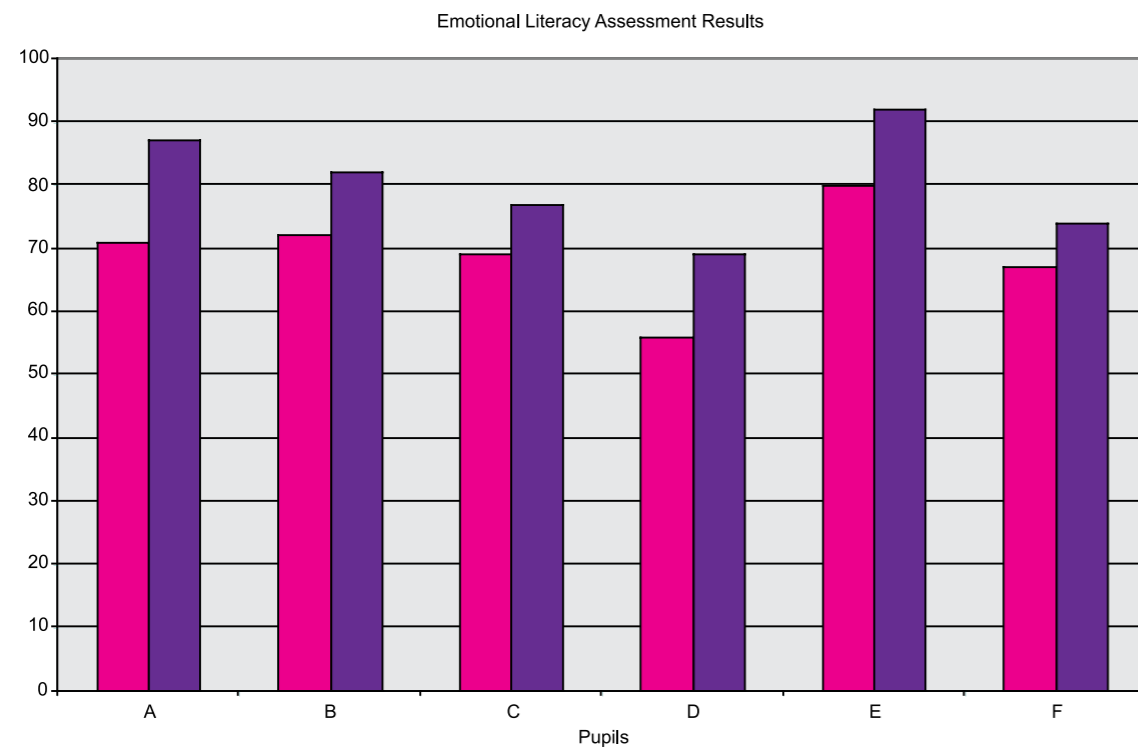
The intake comprises many less-able and few able pupils, 73% being identified as having Additional Learning Needs (ALN). 56% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Our school aims to develop a caring community where every child and adult feels respected and listened to. The school promotes a culture of continuous learning in all aspects of school life through teamwork, collaboration and shared responsibilities.

Action	Carried out by	Dates	Completed
1. Assess pupils in Reception and Year 6 Class using Emotional Literacy, Assessment and Intervention CD	DHT Class teachers	November 2009	✓
2. Analyse the data from the assessment tool and choose target groups from Reception and Year 6	DHT PSE Coordinator	November 2009	✓
3. Begin using SEAL Materials after October half-term	Class Teachers	2nd half term Autumn onwards	Ongoing
4. Assembly using SEAL materials to be delivered each Monday	HT DHT	2nd half term Autumn onwards	Ongoing
5. One weekly session to be delivered by PPA teacher	J Anthony	2nd half term Autumn onwards	✓
6. Evaluate use the SEAL materials with the selected children until Sept 2010	DHT PSE Coordinator Class Teachers	September 2010	✓
7. Reassess all pupils in Year 5 and Year 6		September 2010	✓

We decided to assess all pupils in the school in order to identify their needs. For the purposes of the project, we focused on year 6 pupils. The assessment used was the Southampton Psychology Service, Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention ages 7 – 11. We used the assessments in a number of ways:

- To group the needs of pupils in the cohort and identify pupils who were below average and well below average. These pupils would then be provided with appropriate intervention.
- To compare cohorts of pupils – in this instance year 5 and year 6.

The results of this assessment are illustrated below



## Description of Approaches and Activities

### Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour

The school also saw this as an opportunity to rewrite the behaviour policy to ensure that pupils with a range of behavioural needs were clear about the rules, rewards and sanctions that the school were adopting based on the idea of 'Staying on Gold'. Pupils are rewarded for making good choices. The theme of Motivation was believed to be appropriate because it was felt that the greater the engagement of pupils in their own learning and their ability to collaborate, the more their self esteem would improve naturally. As pupils gain pleasure from personal achievement, they are becoming intrinsically motivated and independent learners.

### Whole School Staying on Gold Achievement Assembly

The pupils have a Staying on Gold achievement assembly every Friday. This is the pinnacle of the week for the Staying on Gold System during which time certificates, stickers, etc are given for a variety of reasons. Pupils sit with their house group and points are added to the house total and the team with the most points have an additional 15 min playtime. Such events are a tremendous motivational event and pupils enjoy these extrinsic rewards. Pupils have been taught a song which too is motivational and thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils because it is a rap.

### Whole School Assemblies

Assemblies are a whole school approach to introducing the theme. Classes also perform their own assemblies linked to themes and there is a final assembly to close the theme.

## Whole School Approach to using SEAL

The SEAL Resource is a whole school approach to developing pupils' social and emotional skills. For it to be effective, a whole school approach is fundamental to its success.

It is a structured and themed resource making skills explicit and accessible to all.

Using the SEAL resources, we prioritised three themes. These were, New Beginnings, Going for Goals and Changes. For the purposes of this project, and to ensure that staff really familiarised themselves with the resources, only these three themes and anti bullying week, were undertaken throughout the year.

**Motivation** is the skill we decided to focus on. Motivation is closely linked to emotion. The SEAL themes that we used develop motivation through activities that help to foster the achievement of personal, academic and pro-social goals. Particularly prioritising resilience, where pupils bounce back and get themselves back on track. It also involves an emotional toughness. Through encouraging our pupils to see difficult tasks as a challenge rather than a threat, pupils are becoming more able to problem solve, work out the pros and cons of their actions and have a realistic appraisal of likely outcomes. Ultimately, that pupils will persist with tasks and remain motivated.

### Planning

The newly appointed PSE Coordinator has begun to review the current PSE programme in order to incorporate the SEAL themes and the Values led Education. This involved writing detailed mid - term plans for year 3/4 and year 5/6 for the themes and provided relevant resources. Activities were undertaken through Circle Time and lessons in class.

### Teaching

Staff used the following teaching approaches to achieve the intended impact, small group work, whole class circle time discussions, talking partners' practical activities and themes were introduced through whole school assemblies.

The activities were differentiated according to the particular year group taken from the SEAL material.

## How the Resources were Used

In the Year 5/6 Learning Resource Base, pupils were involved with activities taken from the theme 'Going for Goals'. The session began with the story 'The Fourth Son', pupils were given thinking time to consider what happened in the story, what son they would have liked to be and which son had been given the most useful present from the spirit. In groups pupils decided what skills the fourth son used to be a good learner.

Pupils' ideas were displayed and referred to during learning across the curriculum. The pupils found it easy to identify what skills and attributes make an effective learner. The challenge was to put those skills into practice.

Following this activity the pupils rose to the challenge and were motivated to prepare to teach one another something new, they made a plan of what they needed and how they would teach it.

New skills were demonstrated and pupils reviewed how effective they were as a teacher and as a learner. Also in line with the teacher role the pupils were given the opportunity to celebrate they own and others achievements by preparing certificates for a 'mini' Achievement Assembly.



The SEAL resources provided the pupils with opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and motivate them to persevere in achieving goals.

## Case Studies of Pupils whose Emotional Literacy has Increased

### Case Study 1

One Year 6 pupil whose Emotional Literacy score was well below average using the Emotional Literacy Assessment (ELA) is an excellent example of success as a result of a combination of using the SEAL resources with our 'Positive Behaviour Strategies'. This pupil is medicated because of ADHD and his lack of self-esteem, impulsiveness, and often inability to work with others meant that until these interventions and strategies were implemented that he wasn't able to fully access the curriculum.

During the year, significant improvements were made where he was able to work with others and recognise the affect he had on others if he didn't work well. The pupil became more confident and was motivated to keep on going. Following this intervention this pupil was re-assessed using the ELA and went from being well below average to an average score.

Case Study Pupil Quote "I really like pleasing my teacher and it makes me feel better."

### Case Study 2

The second pupil again met the criteria of being below average displaying low self-esteem. This pupil was unable to engage vocally in any class activity and would become very withdrawn from others, he was unable to make eye contact or communicate with his class teacher or indeed any adults. On the other hand this pupil would become very active and involved in rough play at break and lunch times which often resulted in aggressive fights. The SEAL sessions provided opportunities for the pupil to build confidence and enabled him to 'open up' during circle time to discuss how he was feeling. Through regular home-school contact we found that the pupil was able to become more confident and open with family members as well as his school peers. Again this pupil was re-assessed using the ELA and his score improved from below average to average.

Case Study Pupil Quote "I feel I can talk to people better, and I was able to take part in our leavers assembly."

## Outcome of Project – What we have Learned

The curriculum materials were generally considered to be easy to use and linked successfully with the school's PSHE programme.

Staff suggested that the small group work had a positive impact upon pupils' social and emotional skills.

More formal evaluation involving outcome measures need to be embedded in practice. This will be achieved with the PASS assessment tool

The pupils need to develop an appropriate vocabulary, and this needs to be built up consistently.

The staff have qualitative evidence rather than quantitative data at this stage in the school SEAL journey

The project has raised teachers' expectations and supported staff to develop the use of SEAL.

## Way Forward

Incorporate all actions into the SIP

Establish a whole school baseline using PASS. This will support transition from Key Stage 1 - Key Stage 3.

After establishing a baseline and incorporating actions into the school improvement plan progress can be monitored and developed as part of the regular cycle of school self-review

Ensure impetus is maintained through a continued process of review and development with identified timescales

Embed SEAL within the review cycle as an integral part of the school self-evaluation framework recognising the contribution that SEAL makes to this process.

To ensure that the 7 themes of SEAL link to the Children Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) "Rights to Action"

## Links to School Effectiveness Framework (SEF)

Through the involvement of all staff in this project we have focussed very clearly on improving outcomes for children and young people.

This project has linked to the vision of SEF

- Curriculum & Teaching-engaging pedagogy
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- Intervention and support-early and strategic, differentiated



## 7. Pen Yr Dre High School

### 'Reducing barriers to learning emotional intelligence and self-esteem initiatives'

### "Improving Emotional Well Being"

#### Background

Pen Y Dre High School is an 11-18 mixed-sex comprehensive school situated in the town of Merthyr Tydfil. The school serves a catchment area consisting mainly of a large council estate and a number of traditional Welsh valley communities. The school is committed to raising achievement of all its pupils.

The school's vision is one where every child realises his or her potential. To enable us to achieve this goal it is important that we as a school improve learners' attendance, develop their self-esteem and encourage them to have high aspirations. We want them to have respect for themselves, respect for their peers and respect for the community in which they live in.

#### Realising the vision

Prior to taking part in this pilot scheme, a positive discipline initiative had already been adopted within the school. It has been our aim however to update our current policy by initiating a whole-school approach to enable pupils to develop their social and emotional skills.

Among the challenges we faced were:

- Inappropriate responses by individual students
- A lack of awareness in certain students of how their actions can have an impact on others
- Poor self esteem resulting in the inability in certain students to accept praise

#### Aims and Objectives

If teaching and learning was going to improve it was essential to develop a new set of core values. A final decision rested on the core values of respect, enterprise and performance. The new behaviour code is based on the values of respect for oneself and others and for the school environment.

Respect is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Being considerate to others at all times
- Employing the correct attitude to learning and making every effort to have the relevant resources required for each lesson
- Being self aware and aware of the effects of one's actions
- Being punctual to all lessons

Enterprise and performance is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Developing potential by working hard
- Developing essential skills that underpin all achievement: Communication, Numeracy, ICT, Research Skills, Working with others, Problem solving, Time Management, Taking part in extra-curricular activities, Developing community links.



Our main aim was therefore to evaluate the effect that the initiative would have on small focus groups. A supplementary aim was to look at effective interventions to enable the dissemination of this good practice.

#### Research Design

The focus of this research study involved small group interventions for pupils designated as having ALN (*Additional Learning Needs*) within the school (wave 2 of SEAL intervention program). Students were chosen on the basis of their known difficulties associated with social and emotional difficulties. Following the implementation of the programme a small, qualitative and quantitative evaluation was undertaken involving students who were placed either in a nurture group or a learning resource base-unit. The small study involved 24 children. Quantitative methods used by the learning resource base teacher looked at improvements in attendance and incidence of inappropriate behaviour. Qualitative data involved questioning the pupils about strategies and interventions used. Observational information was also collated during implementation of these strategies.

#### Description of Activities Undertaken

##### Implementing the plan

The school adopted the SEAL (*Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning*) program in the Spring Term of 2010. It is a whole-school approach for the advancement of social and emotional skills which in turn promotes successful learning and improves behaviour and attendance. According to Humphrey et al (November 2008), "SEAL is delivered in three waves". In wave one the senior leaders at Pen y Dre High School decided that the SEAL theme would be delivered through an extended registration lesson and one PSE lesson per week to year 7. Guidance books were distributed to the staff and an overview of the theme and lesson plans were provided for teachers to follow. A resource book accompanied the scheme.

Using this thematic approach, the learning champion (Head of Year) for year 7 delivered her assemblies whilst across the curriculum, class teachers referred to the individual objectives relating to a particular theme when situations arose in their day-to-day teaching.

During the Summer Term, the LEA (Local Education Authority) purchased an online auditing tool to assess social and emotional intelligence (PASS).

Within the faculty of learning support we made a decision to look at individual focus groups which is classified as wave two within the SEAL scheme. The focus groups chosen were a group of year 7 students placed in a learning base-class and the year 7 nurture group.

##### Small Focus Group A: Nurture, Year 7

The school's nurture provision was established in 2008 as a response to the high number of students who had difficulties associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although the unit is not an

EBD unit we have students who are unable to control their emotions. Becoming angry is a natural human reaction and many students within the nurture group use this anger as a means of coping with situations they find difficult. It was essential that we taught the students the appropriate skills to manage their own emotions. Using the theme of emotions within the SEAL programme we talked about how the students could recognise when they were getting angry. The class discussed the physical manifestations, what actually happens to our bodies when we get angry and thought about how we could alter our feelings. We were aware that there was not a single strategy that would work with all the students at all times. Competencies were developed through tasks and direct teaching.

Following an inset day by Tina Rae we were encouraged to look at our own reactions throughout the school day. As a faculty we were aware that we needed to react to the students in a calm and appropriate manner. Through inset meetings we were aware that this did not always happen in practice but knew that it was essential that we were seen as appropriate role models to the students. Each class is led by a teacher and a support assistant. The role of both adults is to work in partnership by leading by example. The tone when communicating with the pupils and each other is calm, light-hearted and non-reactive. All behaviour is a means of communicating and an important aspect of the management of the group is to build up a rapport with each pupil and by so doing further understand their individual needs, thus creating a trusting relationship. The aim of the nurturing process is to develop the skills needed for the pupils to actively achieve in the mainstream setting. It provides a safe base.

We engaged in role play with the nurture group and discussed typical responses that were given to a range of situations perceived as challenging by the students. Initially, we discussed how appropriate the students' reactions were. For example, *Was it appropriate to shout abuse at the class teacher when she had instructed a particular pupil to complete an activity?* The focus group discussed a range of alternative responses to various situations that they would encounter throughout the school day. By practising these responses in a safe environment it was noted that, over time, students' aggressive outbursts declined. Visual cues were used as an *aide-memoire* to encourage appropriate responses.

## SEAL Focus Group (Wave 2) – Nurture

The Nurture classrooms ethos is now built on guidance from SEAL and the Nurture Group Network and is arranged to develop pupil's social, emotional, behavioural and academic needs – different areas are set up within the classroom to identify different expectations and skills.

A key part of the daily routine is to provide a social eating activity, which not only gives sustenance, but also provides opportunities to share common etiquette and manners and to promote and encourage social communication. The well-being of the pupils is also nurtured by providing a selection of fruit once a week.

During these sessions, pupils are taught table etiquette and manners.

They are responsible for preparing their own food and afterwards working together to wash, dry and clear everything away. The rest of the day is segmented into teaching sessions which are separated by structured social activities. SEAL activities and resources are used to target specific topics, such as building self-esteem, relationships and feelings. From our experience, some of the SEAL resources are extremely wordy, so other resources have been used to support the themes, for example, the Talkabout resources by Speechmark to help capture the imagination of our kinaesthetic learners. Pupils follow the mainstream curriculum topics which are adapted to suit small group delivery, taking account of the pupils' individual needs. A range of teaching techniques are used to provide stimulating hands on activities, which are often seen by the pupils as a form of play.



Initially recording of work is kept to a minimum; using some photographic evidence. But as pupils are prepared for reintegration the expectations on them are brought into line with those required for a mainstream class.

Specialist subjects such as: PE, music, French, Welsh, technology and art are delivered by teachers in mainstream classrooms. Teachers are made aware of the needs of the pupils. Pupils are reintegrated when they conform to general rules within the Nurture classroom and have built up the confidence to enable them to achieve in mainstream classes. Pupils are integrated gradually.

The implementation of SEAL principles had had a profound positive effect on the progress of pupils. Of the pupils joining the focus group in 2009/2010, 1 pupil has completely integrated into mainstream and four other pupils are integrating for a range of subjects ranging from 40% to 70% of their time.

## Small Focus Group B: Learning Base, Year 7

Using the medium of Drama, the SEAL programme was implemented to a group of MLD (*Moderate Learning Difficulties*) pupils in the ALN department to improve their social and self-awareness, whilst helping them to understand the implications of bullying and behaviour using role-play and analysing emotions through theatrical terms such as facial expression, body language, pose and mime.

The children were introduced to the lesson objective and asked to participate in group/whole class discussions to brainstorm ideas surrounding the issue at hand (i.e. – for a lesson on how to treat other people, we looked at bullying and the forms of bullying that exist and how that makes people feel.) The children were able to use their unit worksheets as a tool to help motivate and prompt them in their participation as well as receiving some general observations from the class tutor, learning about body language and tone to judge how a person is feeling.

The class would then be divided into groups or pairs, depending upon the nature of the lesson and allowed a set amount of time to work upon a particular feeling or emotion, creating a particular real-life situation in which that emotion could be portrayed adequately through role play or mime. (eg – a lesson on being responsible for one's own actions led to one group performing a situation where a wife was being abused because she would not stand up for herself, then replayed into a situation where she did, highlighting the outcomes of the difference. Another group performed a very deep situation where a child played the part of a ghost who narrated how she had been treated by bullies in school, which had subsequently led to her death, and how the people who were involved had reacted to this outcome.)

The class would analyse each performance and feedback their opinions not only on the acting, but on the primary objective of the emotions they had observed, critically observing the use of body language from the actors and their use of tone to express their emotions. As close to the lesson, the children would be allowed time to discuss in an open and unassuming environment how they feel about that particular emotion, analysing what happens to their bodies and their thoughts when they express this particular emotion or feeling/situation. They quickly learned that it's not what you say but the way that you say it that makes the difference.

Because of the nature of the class, and their additional learning needs, it was decided to concentrate upon the personal development of the class rather than academic achievement, as evidence shows that children with learning difficulties often suffer socially and emotionally, and manifest this through their behaviour – whether it be through disruption, withdrawal or 'child-like' behaviour earlier than that of their peers. The intention of initiating the SEAL programme to these learners was to help them overcome any barriers they may have of attending a new school, addressing issues such as behaviour and reiterating to the class, the importance of the school's policy on Positive Discipline and the Points to Success scheme whilst ensuring that the message of Pen-Y-Dre's Zero Tolerance to bullying was completely understood by all.

We expected to see a general improvement in the children's emotional inadequacies to the point that they would hopefully resist the urge to name-call each other as a means of hurting each others' feelings, and generally improve the child-like behaviour.

What we found was that through using Drama as a tool the children were able to express themselves freely, improving not only their confidence but their relationships with each other too. Throughout the course duration, their levels of self-esteem and self-worth improved dramatically, and they formed friendships with each other. They were able to recognise how someone was feeling and act accordingly to try and help each other – all of which improved their bonding as a group. In turn, this reduced the levels of bullying issues that had previously arisen from the class, and resulted in the children taking more responsibility for their own actions and those of others. They understood that it is not wrong to feel a certain way, but the wrong-doing can come from the course of action that they take to deal with that emotion – all of which led to a better understanding of how to deal with their behaviour, and adopt a more mature approach to their emotions.

An unexpected outcome of the programme was that attendance improved by 45% throughout its duration, and that instances of reported bullying resulting in punishable offences within the group reduced by at least 30% throughout a school term. Another positive outcome is that some of our pupils have been offered the opportunity to work in mainstream lessons where they excel because of improvements in their behaviour. Two of our class currently attend maths with their mainstream peers, and 1 boy has been fully re-integrated into mainstream education as a direct result of the improvement in his behaviour and is now being taught alongside his peers.

According to Marilyn Sorenson PhD (2005) *'low self-esteem is frequently the root cause of many psychological, emotional, personal and relationship issues'*. We therefore deemed it necessary to evaluate the children's self-esteem at certain points throughout the scheme. Using the resource booklet as a foundation upon which to base our evaluation process we completed a survey developed by Coopersmith (1987) with the class at relevant stages of the programme. We found that 66% of the class had a higher self-esteem as a result of the SEAL lessons, most of the group's aspirations were higher than their initial responses, and 83% of the children now made a more conscious effort to think of other people's feelings now that they knew how to read people's simple body language tone and expression – which were taught throughout the programme.



## Description of Monitoring and Evaluation Process

Within the context of this small focus group study, the following statements can be made:

- The initiative, from the perspective of both students and staff alike, had a positive impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of the students involved. Two students showed very little improvement in the development of their social and emotional skills. Pupil A requires a far more intensive one-to-one intervention programme and has been referred to the primary mental-health team. Pupil B has severe behaviour problems and has now obtained a place at the pupil referral unit.
- Students chosen for this programme varied in their individual needs and were selected on the basis of the current provision provided and selected on their attendance either in a Nurture class or a Learning Base class. 92% of the students involved made a significant improvement in their behaviour and social skills performance. This was recognised both in the learning bases and in mainstream classes.
- All staff within the programme used SEAL materials to develop strategies to improve social and emotional intelligence within the unit classes. It was observed that there was a good rapport between members of staff and students taking part in this programme.

## Further Development

This programme of study is still in its infancy and requires a longer period of time to see whether the strategies used can be effective over time. It is only then that we can evaluate the programme effectively.

However, here is a list of initial recommendations:

- An important factor for future development is to ensure that school staff are given sufficient time to deliver the programme.
- It is essential that the work carried out in the small focus groups is carried on when pupils are attending their mainstream lessons.
- The programme should be disseminated in a comfortable and pleasant environment. All activities should be child centred.
- A more robust referral process should be used (We are currently assessing the PASS assessment tool to meet this criteria.).
- Further assessment should look at how the impact of the small focus group work has on the students' families.

## 8. Gurnos Nursery School

### 'Improving Emotional Well Being'

The Gurnos Nursery School is situated on the Gurnos Estate, Merthyr Tydfil. The Headteacher is Mrs Judith Stevens MBE, there are four teaching staff, including Mrs Stevens and nine non-teaching staff. The school comprises of three base rooms, classes 1, 2 and 3. In line with the Foundation Phase, a ratio of 8 children per adult exists, so each class is led by one member of the teaching staff and two non-teaching staff.

Alongside the main nursery is a Flying Start Pre-School, 'Seren Bach', which caters for children from the age of two years three months until they are placed into nursery. The nursery is equipped with a sensory room, an outdoor covered shelter and is a Forest School.

Number of children on roll: 94

Children entitled to free school meals: 74.9%

Attendance: 80.5%

Children on School Action Plus: 4

Children with ALN: 5

Number of children with IPP's: 9

Children with EAL: 0



### Description of the Activities Undertaken

It is a given that parents want the best for their children and here at Gurnos Nursery School, we felt that we wanted to use the funding we received from RAISE to go towards working with both children and their parents to help elevate the well-being and emotional intelligence of both groups within our area of Gurnos. Discussions were held during staff meetings and it was agreed that we would utilise the SEAL curriculum to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills. Our nursery's theme was based upon the individual programme of learning; Social Skills.

As this project was self contained to Class 2, the targeted children would be the nursery and pre-nursery children in that class and the parents of the children involved, but the project would be voluntary, it was up to the parent to decide if they or their child would participate.

We used the SEAL, 'Parent pack' to support the parents, predominantly;

Book 1: New Beginnings- *Helping your child to feel confident*

Book 2: Getting On and Falling Out- *Talking and listening to your child*

Book 4: Going for Goals- *Helping your child to motivate themselves*

The parents were given the leaflets to read over at home.

The project was split into four sections;

- **Children's journals**

The parents were asked to attend a meeting where they were told of the idea of sending journals home.

The journal would consist of activities for the child and parent to do together; the activity would either be a reflection of the weeks work, finding out what the child knew about a particular topic or what the child would like to learn about that topic, for example, the children were asked to name all the creatures they knew that lived around the seashore, this topic had not been approached beforehand, it was to help us, as practitioners find out the child's knowledge of the shore life. They were also asked what they would like to find out about the sea life. This gave the children a chance to plan their own learning; the ideas were put into our weekly planning, thus giving the child a sense of well-being when their activity was used.

Of the twenty children in the class, 90% of parents agreed to participate in the project. The journals were given out every Friday and returned by the following Wednesday. When they were given out the two mothers not involved asked to participate, although they only completed a few activities and the journals were not seen again. The activities were differentiated for nursery and pre-nursery children. The project continued throughout the school year.

- **Visit to the beach**

The whole school theme for 2009-2010 was 'Stickman' and Class 2 was to create the seaside display from the story. It was agreed that before the children began their work for the display, that we would go on a school trip to Barry Island and build sandcastles, (experiential learning). As the children had only been in the nursery for around six weeks it was felt that although the guidance is for one adult per two children ratio on school trips that we would ask each parent to attend, therefore building sandcastles with their individual child.

Barry Island was chosen as we could travel by train instead of hiring a bus, helping to lower the costs of the trip. Of the twenty children in the class, fourteen were taken by their parents. It was a really fun trip, although it was bitterly cold the children really enjoyed digging in the sand and collecting sea water in their buckets. Most of all, the trip demonstrated the differences between the parents personalities, the shy ones worked only with their child, while some of the more outgoing sorts worked together and built a number of sandcastles, ranging in sizes from small to large.

We were able to use the evidence gathered from the trip to identify which children and parents needed extra support whilst participating in the journal project.

- **Parents group**

During the summer term, we set up a parents group; the idea was for them to produce a class quilt. The parents would work as a unit to form the majority of the quilt, but would also have the opportunity to work with their own and other children to create a portrait of the child.



A meeting was organised and almost all thirty two mothers attended.

They were told of the task and asked to help, it was made plain to them that it did not matter if they could not sew; any help was appreciated, whether they could use a scissors, draw around a template or just tack materials together. All that was asked of them was to give up an hour or two to help make the quilt.

The first occasion did not run as smoothly as anticipated as only one parent came, but as the sessions progressed, different mothers turned up and we were very pleased to state that we also had a father help. The children were delighted to see their mother or father in the school setting and were eager to participate in the different activities that they could help with, i.e. painting their faces or stuffing the quilt.

What had started out as an idea for the parents to come into school and work with the children or each other for a set goal soon turned into a social gathering, they would chat amongst each other; talk about their children and generally enjoy each others company.

They would also approach myself or the other adult members of class 2 to discuss their children's needs or ask how did we think they would cope in the infant school, or how could they help their child during the summer before attending reception class.

- **Garden party**

On the last Friday of term, we invited all the parents to attend a garden party at the Nursery. As we could not guarantee the weather, this was to be held inside our shelter area. The shelter was decorated with ribbons and flowers, designed by the children and a banner thanking them for the fantastic support we had received throughout the academic year.

Every child's mother attended the party; there were no fathers in attendance. To begin with we showed off the quilt and Mrs Stevens, our Head teacher gave a speech, thanking them for their cooperation. They were all then invited to eat the buffet provided. Initially the response was disappointing, but once the children began eating, the mothers did. Then they began talking to each other, with the children and staff.

## Objectives

The aims of the project were to;

- △ Use the SEAL programme to improve emotional well being and self esteem of children so that they engage in learning and improve their language development;
- △ Provide opportunities from the WAG Framework for Children's Learning to compensate for children's inexperience by addressing their social and emotional issues through speaking and listening, drama, PSHE and the development of their thinking skills;
- △ Work with families, encouraging an increase in parental involvement.

## Outcomes

1. Improve the emotional intelligence of the children.
2. Parents have a better understanding of working with their child.
3. Parents and children find staff approachable to their needs.
4. Parents develop skills on how to motivate, give praise and boost their child's confidence by talking and listening to them.

## Outputs

1. Journals to be used again next academic year.
2. A Learning Programme to be rolled out to run alongside the Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity area of learning in order to elevate the children's Well-Being.
3. A PowerPoint presentation of the initiative to demonstrate the progression of work contributed by both parents and children.
4. Develop the PSWB&CD areas of the new WAG Baseline to identify children who require particular attention to increase their emotional intelligence through nurture groups.
5. Set up a Parents Group which involves the parents working with their children both inside and outside school and organise activities for the parents alone which will help encourage their self esteem and confidence.

## Description of Monitoring and Evaluation Process

All nursery children are baseline assessed six weeks after they begin nursery. The Baseline only considers four aspects of a child's personal and social development, these are

1. Settles into classroom environment.
2. Able to cater for most needs.
3. Plays alongside peers.
4. Associate and cooperates.

Although these aspects do not ultimately cover all of the child's emotional well-being, the children's scores were initially evaluated and then re-evaluated during the summer term, and the progression made by the children was appraised. These results were monitored by Mrs Stevens and it was recognised that the project had helped to improve the children's baseline score.

Another form of assessment was the Child Development Profile, which contains a category on Well-Being/Emotional Development. The profile identifies what developmental stage a child is at rather than their chronological age. These results showed the majority of children increased their developmental age, with the exception of one, (who did not have a journal).

Again it demonstrated that by using the journals and the support given to and by the parents, it has helped to maintain if not improve the children's well-being or emotional development.

Although we could not evaluate or monitor the response by the parents, we were able to recognise that the self belief had heightened in a number of parents. They were confident enough to approach the staff on a number of occasions; many of them took part in the parents group and offered to help with a number of school activities.

Overall using the SEAL curriculum to involve the parents with their children's work demonstrated that the well-being of the children did improve, therefore it has been agreed by Mrs Stevens that we shall be continuing the journal next school year and hopefully setting up another parents group, in which they can help with their child's learning again.



## 9. Dowlais Primary School

### Contextual Information

Dowlais Primary School comprises the former Dowlais Infant and Gwernllwyn Junior Schools. The school is a Community Primary mixed school and caters for children between the ages of 3 years and 11 years. There are 223 pupils presently on roll. For teaching purposes the school is organised into a nursery, early years unit for reception and year 1 and six further mainstream classes on two separate sites. The school also has a Learning Resource Base where pupils with moderate learning difficulties are sent by the Authority.

On the whole pupils begin school with below average abilities. About 75% of pupils come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. About 24% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and about 33% of pupils are considered to have some degree of special educational needs.

### Description of Activities Undertaken

Previous RAISE initiatives had developed literacy and numeracy in groups of disadvantaged pupils. Some progress had been made with these but it had become clear that we needed to consider broader issues in order to continue to raise attainment. In particular, although we had added value to these groups of pupils, there remained the problem of a low baseline on entry to the school. We identified the following factors that needed addressing in order to raise the baseline:

- A recognition of the importance of the role of the family in pre school child development
- A need to engage parents and to help equip them with the skills necessary to help their pre school children

In order to facilitate the progress of children already in school we felt that a similar approach should be taken to involve parents more. However the most fundamental change in our approach was to consider the social and emotional aspects of children's learning. The SEAL initiative combined both of these and so the following activities were planned.

### Support for Pre School Children and Parents

Year 2 pupils were transferred to the junior site and the mobile classroom released on the infant site was adapted for a pre school parents and children group. A Learning Support Assistant (LSA) received training in language and play and number and play. This was achieved through RAISE funding. A detailed programme was planned and in the summer term weekly sessions were held for language and play and number and play.

In order to encourage good practice at home and in school we promoted and rewarded good behaviour at all times. Children were rewarded with stickers and praised. Children who were not as pro-active with good behaviour were regularly reminded and encouraged to behave accordingly and rewarded and praised when they displayed good behaviour. This provided a consistent model for parents in promoting good behaviour at home.

Resource packs were produced for parents to use at home with their children and they were encouraged to complete home-school tasks. We felt early home-school tasks would encourage children to have a good attitude towards future homework and also provide an excellent opportunity for children and parents to spend quality time together.

During language sessions we promoted listening to stories and singing rhymes. Parents were encouraged to use these at home.

During our numeracy sessions we encouraged children to participate in practical activities. We aimed to develop the children's understanding of order and size and encouraged children to use positional language using the three bears, bowls and spoons. Again parents were encouraged to continue these strategies at home.

We encouraged parents and children to sing together on the mat. We explained to parents that singing with their children encouraged confidence and self-esteem.

The importance of developing fine motor skills and encouraging creative development was stressed to parents. Opportunities to do this were shown to parents using a range of simple materials which could be done at home. We also explained the importance of displaying children's work and produced a class display of their work. Parents were encouraged to display their work at home, for example on the fridge.

We explained to the parents the importance of encouraging good quality play and allowing children the opportunity to explore and develop their creativity. We advised parents not to become too involved in their play as they needed some time and space to explore and learn independently.

### The Introduction of SEAL as a Whole School and Cluster

A cluster introduction to SEAL was held for all staff. This emphasised the high profile and importance of the project and ensured everyone was included.

Further staff meetings and INSET were held to ensure SEAL was disseminated to all staff including non teaching. Cluster meetings were also held regularly to monitor and plan the introduction of SEAL.

The project was well resourced through the RAISE funding and staff were able to use a wide range of materials.

Each week now begins with a junior assembly led by the headteacher. This introduces the emphasis for the week. The infants have small group introductions. The issues were developed during week and differentiated class activities completed. The RAISE resources were particularly effective and provided a great deal of choice regarding material used. Parental follow up activities are being targeted this year with our Virtual Learning Environment providing an ideal opportunity to involve families.

Baseline assessments have been completed using initially the SEAL assessment materials and disc. However, the Pupils' Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) has now been adopted.

Involvement of pupils and Dining Room Assistants (DRAs).

A group of pupils were trained as PALS and helped to organise break and lunchtime activities for the children. Our extensive resources gained through a previous PESS initiative were used.

A training CD and booklet were bought by the school and INSET provided for all DRAs. This linked with the work of PALS and emphasised positive behaviour management and how to deal with incidents in the playground.

A further group of children underwent a ten week programme of training in conflict resolution with our Behaviour Support Teacher.

## Objectives

1. Our main objective was to raise the baseline of children entering the nursery with a view to eventually raising attainment at the end of key stage one and two. A group of about eleven pupils were targeted and will be monitored every year.
2. A further objective was to effectively identify further families and children who would benefit from greater involvement with the school. Free school meals were felt to be an inadequate measure in identifying such children.
3. A longer term objective was to raise the confidence and self esteem of all children, but especially those from a disadvantaged background, leading to improved academic achievement.
4. A fourth objective was to enable the initiative to be sustained by providing mechanisms to support families and children in the future.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

### Objective 1

At first children were running around and had no concept of sitting on the carpet or routines in a typical nursery. Also the behaviour and interactions with other children was not appropriate for some children. Half way through the LAP and NAP initiative the order of the day was deliberately changed in order to evaluate progress so far. It was pleasing to see that children automatically sat on the carpet when they arrived and at appropriate times. A sense of routine and the establishment of appropriate behaviour patterns had been established.

By the end of term parents' views were sought. All responses were positive with typical comments being:

"I've started singing nursery rhymes in the car now"

"We count the number of cars of a certain colour"

"This has taken me back to basics with nursery rhymes"

"My oldest child in the juniors often brings home things he has done in school and now my youngest also does and we put them on the fridge together"

"I loved some of the activities in messy play, particularly putting drinking chocolate powder on a tray and practicing letter formation. We do this at home together"

"I didn't realise Dowlais Library did all these things and we've joined the library and toddler group there"

Parents were keen that this group should continue and encouraged others to take part.

This term the nursery teacher commented that those who had attended the group were easily identified through their behaviour and interactions with other children. There had been no phone calls in the first week from parents checking how their child was. Also no child had to leave early (short stay). The link group was considerably calmer.

### Objective 2

The PASS assessment was found to be easy to administer in the juniors but required more support in the infants. Initial findings had confirmed that free school meals were not a sophisticated enough measure when targeting families. The broad range of social and emotional parameters that PASS measures will help identify children who would not otherwise have been targeted.

### Objective 3

This is a longer term aspect and will be evaluated in the summer.

### Objective 4

Family packs are being produced for parents together with activities on our Virtual Learning Environment. This will be evaluated in the summer.





## Notes

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