



The SEAL Community Newsletter No.8, Summer 2015 SEAL in practice

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Welcome!

Welcome to the eighth newsletter of the SEAL Community. We've a case study from a school that has tackled massive behaviour problems using SEAL, and lots of news, research and new resources.

If you missed our earlier newsletters, you'll find them in the Newsletter archive on the SEAL Community members' pages. The theme of the first (Keeping SEAL alive and growing) may be of interest if you have been using SEAL resources for some years and are looking to refresh your approach. The second focuses on diversity – how schools and settings have adapted SEAL so as to meet the needs of different groups of learners (children with SEN, looked after children, boys who don't respond well to too much talking.) The third is all about Ofsted/Estyn, the fourth is about SEAL and academic learning, the fifth focuses on SEAL and early years, the sixth on SEAL in secondary schools and the seventh on SEAL developments.



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News Update

Social and emotional skills matter more than IQ

Children with well-developed social and emotional skills have a better chance of being happy and healthy adults than those who are just bright, a new study has revealed. They are also likely to do better in the labour market and other areas of life.

A report by the UCL Institute of Education, commissioned by the Early Intervention Foundation, the Cabinet Office and the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, found that compared with cognitive skills when a child is aged 10, social and emotional skills:

- matter more for adult general mental well-being (such as greater life satisfaction, mental health and well-being);
- matter similarly for health and health related outcomes (such as lower likelihood of obesity, smoking and drinking, and better self-rated health);
- matter similarly for some socio-economic and labour market outcomes (such as higher income and wealth, being employed, and not being in social housing);
- matter less but are nonetheless important for labour market outcomes such as obtaining a degree, having higher wages and being employed in a top job.

The research also shows that the gap in social and emotional skills between children brought up in poorer households and those brought up in better off households has doubled within a generation. The EIF said the study shows that developing social and emotional, as well as literacy/numeracy, is vital in helping children break inter-generational cycles of disadvantage, improving social mobility and life chances and unlocking access to high-status and well-paid jobs.

A second report in this review shows that these skills are not fixed and there is a lot that can support children to learn and improve. A number of effective programmes are available in the UK now.

The EIF is setting out key recommendations to ensure social and emotional skills are given the priority they need. They include:

- The establishment of an expert taskforce with government, schools, teachers, other key professional groups, the voluntary and community sector, business and children and young people involved to set out urgently which social and emotional skills should be prioritised and how to measure them within and outside schools.
- The development of social and emotional learning should be built into teachers' initial training and continuing professional development.
- Character and social and emotional learning should have cross-government leadership and responsibility, including not only the Department for Education, but also Health, Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department of Work and Pensions, the Home Office and the Cabinet Office, which leads on youth policy.

Read the reports at <http://www.eif.org.uk/publications/social-and-emotional-learning-skills-for-life-and-work/>. Read Jean Gross' blog *Busting the myths about social and emotional learning* about the reports here <http://www.eif.org.uk/busting-the-myths-about-social-and-emotional-learning/>

New Ofsted judgement on personal development

From September 2015 the Ofsted framework for all age groups will include a new judgement on

children and young people's 'personal development, behaviour and welfare'. This will replace the current behaviour judgment. A consultation on this change showed strong support. More than three quarters of all respondents were in favour. This question drew a strong positive response from headteachers of schools and leaders of other settings, as well as from pupils and learners. More than seven out of 10 staff in all remits and parents also agreed or strongly agreed. 47. There was agreement in the FE and skills sector, but it was less strong.

Sharp rise in number of girls with emotional problems

According to new research from University College London and the Anna Freud Centre emotional problems are on the rise, with a 55 per cent increase between 2009 and 2014. This is compared to other mental health and behavioural difficulties, such as conduct disorder, which didn't see a significant change over the time period. The research, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, compared the mental health of 1,683 11 to 13-year-old boys and girls in 2009 with the same number of pupils in 2014. The pupils were matched by age, gender, ethnicity, eligibility for free school meals and the overall socio-economic mix of their schools. According to figures, the number of girls at risk of emotional problems rose from 13 per cent to 20 per cent in 2014 – meaning that, in an average class of around 30 pupils, where previously one or two girls might have exhibited emotional problems, now



there would be three. Commenting on the research, Dr Elian Fink, lead author of the report, said: "5 years is a relatively short period of time, so we were surprised to see such a sharp spike in emotional problems among girls. "The fact that other mental health issues stayed about the same makes us think that there must have been significant changes over the past 5 years which have specifically affected young girls." She warned that "more effective interventions" were needed in order to address the issue, including increasing provision of mental health services for young people.

Lack of 'soft skills' in the UK workforce will cost the economy around £8.4 billion per year by 2020

'Soft skills' need to be taken much more seriously as factors for business success, according to a new campaign report commissioned business leaders. The skills encompass an individual's ability to listen well, communicate effectively, be positive, manage conflict, accept responsibility, show respect, build trust, work well with others, manage time effectively, accept criticism, work under pressure, be likeable, and demonstrate good manners.

The report says that over half a million (535,000) UK workers will be significantly held back by soft skills deficits by 2020, an issue expected to affect all sectors of the economy. The annual overall expected loss of production due to expected soft skills deficits is anticipated to amount to just under £8.4 billion per year by 2020.

McDonald's is backing the campaign to and wants to challenge the idea that a soft skill is a woolly concept with no clear economic value. It is working alongside firms such as Barclays and organisations including the CBI.

Neil Carberry, the CBI's director for employment and skills, said: "Business is clear that developing the right attitudes and attributes in people - such as resilience, respect, enthusiasm and creativity - is

just as important as academic or technical skills.

Winners of the Character Awards announced



Education Secretary Nicky Morgan has announced the 27 schools and organisations winning £15,000 for their work in character education – and the overall winning school, which receives an additional £20,000.

Announcing the winners, the Secretary of State for Education said that “Teaching character not only benefits children at school - it also plays a vital role in ensuring young people leave school prepared for life in modern Britain.

The winners were chosen by a panel of experts. They all had to display evidence that their work has improved pupils’ future outcomes from exam results to behaviour, attendance or job prospects.

The overall winning school was King’s Leadership Academy in Warrington, Cheshire. ‘Seven pillars’ of character - aspiration, achievement, self-awareness, professionalism, integrity, respect and endeavour - permeate the curriculum, direct extra-curricular activities and inform the day-to-day running of the school. All children are issued with a ‘King’s passport’ to develop their character, and pupils attend weekly public speaking, philosophy and ethics lessons

- Queensbridge School, a secondary school in Birmingham. Life at Queensbridge is underpinned by responsibility and rigour. Pupils use an ‘iMap’ - a personal portfolio - to record the evidence of their personal development through residential and extra-curricular activities. The school has pledged to match fund their prize to expand their model with other schools

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- School 21, a new school in Newham, one of the most deprived boroughs of London. The school’s overwhelmingly disadvantaged children abide by the 6 attributes of professionalism, grit, spark, eloquence, expertise and craftsmanship, which are developed through a focus on speaking skills and coaching

- Oakthorpe Primary School in Derbyshire. The school’s ethos focuses on the traits of reciprocity, reflection, resourcefulness and resilience. The school council has developed a positive behaviour rewards system to help children reach their ‘ideal selves’, and their whole school approach has led to an increase in pupils’ self-reported ability to bounce back from challenges

Read more at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/winners-of-the-character-awards-announced>

Is wellbeing back?

No less than five sets of guidance on how schools can promote wellbeing and deliver PSHE have



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recently come out.

First, government guidance from Public Health England says that school-based programmes of social and emotional learning have the potential to help young people acquire the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as benefit pupil health and wellbeing. This document sets out key actions that headteachers and college principals can take to embed a whole school approach to promoting emotional health and wellbeing. The SEAL materials are recommended as useful resources. Find the guidance at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EH_WB_draft_20_03_15.pdf

Next, the DfE have published advice on mental health and behaviour in schools. It highlights the importance of schools helping children to develop resilience, made up of several related elements - a sense of self-esteem and confidence, a belief in one's own self-efficacy and ability to deal with change and adaptation; and a repertoire of social problem solving approaches. Details can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>.

A further publication <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools> provides advice for schools is about setting up and improving counselling services for pupils.

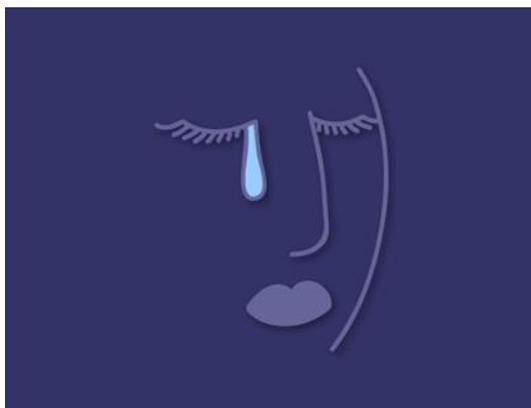
A DfE review of impact and effective practice in PSHE education www.gov.uk/government/publications/pshe-education-a-review-of-impact-and-effective-practice concludes that the evidence shows PSHE can improve the physical and psychosocial well-being of pupils, and create a virtuous cycle, whereby pupils with better health and well-being can achieve better academically, which in turn leads to greater success. It notes that research shows that universal, school-based social, emotional and/or behavioural programmes can benefit pupils across a range of outcomes.

SEAL expert Professor Katherine Weare has written new evidence-based guidance for the National Children's Bureau on what works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools. It is designed to support schools, in particular, school leaders, in the delivery of their work on promoting positive social and emotional wellbeing for all in schools, and tackling the mental health problems of pupils. It advocates a whole-school approach and notes that 'A recent example is the SEAL programme in which a well-coordinated and embedded whole school approach was correlated with higher attainment, whereas small, piecemeal and uncoordinated interventions were not.'

Download at <http://www.ncb.org.uk/areas-of-activity/education-and-learning/partnership-for-wellbeing-and-mental-health-in-schools/what-works-guidance-for-school>

Children's mental health in Budget promise

In his last budget, George Osborne's announced that £1bn will be spent on improving access to treatment for 110,000 extra children and young people from 2015/16. A further £118m has also been earmarked for completing the expansion of the Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme across the rest of England by 2018/19. This will ensure every local area has mental health workers trained in talking therapy techniques. In addition, £75m will go towards improving mental health maternity services, while the Department for Education will



provide an extra £1.5m towards piloting joint training for designated leads in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and schools to improve access to mental health services for children and young people, including the most vulnerable. The extra investment, announced in the government's response to the Mental Health Taskforce report, will aim to tackle the chronic underfunding of CAMHS that has led to long waiting times for both community and inpatient treatment. See more at:

[http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1150357/budget-2015-children-mental-health-benefit-gbp125bn-](http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1150357/budget-2015-children-mental-health-benefit-gbp125bn-investment#sthash.bRvEWQvb.dpuf)

[investment#sthash.bRvEWQvb.dpuf](http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1150357/budget-2015-children-mental-health-benefit-gbp125bn-investment#sthash.bRvEWQvb.dpuf)

Ministers said that mental health services for children and young people in England need a "complete overhaul". Numbers of children and young people with problems are growing, and children are presenting with increasingly complex and severe problem. The rising number of referrals accompanied with the squeeze on budgets has led to increasing delays for treatment.

28% of pre-school children face problems that have an impact on their psychological development; one in 10 five-to-16-year-olds has a mental disorder, and one in six young adults aged 16-24 has a common mental disorder. About 500,000 children and young people say they are unhappy and dissatisfied with their lives. 75% of adult mental health problems are present before age of 18. But research has shown fewer than 35% of young people with mental health problems actually get help.

The report of the taskforce, led by senior officials at the Department of Health and NHS England, sets out a five year plan to improve services.

Early Years Pupil Premium Toolkit highlights importance of spend on social and emotional learning



A new Early Years toolkit has been published by the Education Endowment Foundation, to guide settings' choice of how to use their Pupil Premium for disadvantaged children. The Toolkit gives the thumbs-up to social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies, saying they can have a positive impact on social interactions, attitudes to learning, and learning itself. On average, children who follow SEL interventions make around three additional months' progress in early years settings and reception classes.

Though on average, all children benefit, there

is some evidence that social and emotional approaches can benefit disadvantaged children more than their peers.

However, though universal SEL strategies almost always improve emotional or attitudinal outcomes, not all interventions are equally effective at improving early learning outcomes. Improvements seem more likely when approaches are embedded regularly into activities, and when the introduction of SEL approaches is linked to professional development to support and explain the strategies to staff.

Even more powerful than general SEL strategies are those which promote children's self-regulation

skills (sometimes referred to as executive function, or learning capability) - their ability to manage their own behaviour or learning. Work on self-regulation can add an extra seven months to children's progress in early reading, mathematics and problem-solving.

In the early years, efforts to improve self-regulation often seek to improve levels of self-control and reduce impulsivity. Activities typically include supporting children in articulating their plans and learning strategies and reviewing what they have done. A number of approaches use stories or characters to help children remember different learning strategies.

.There are some indications that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to begin nursery or reception with weaker self-regulation skills than their peers. As a result, embedding self-regulation strategies into early years teaching is likely to be particularly beneficial for children from disadvantaged background

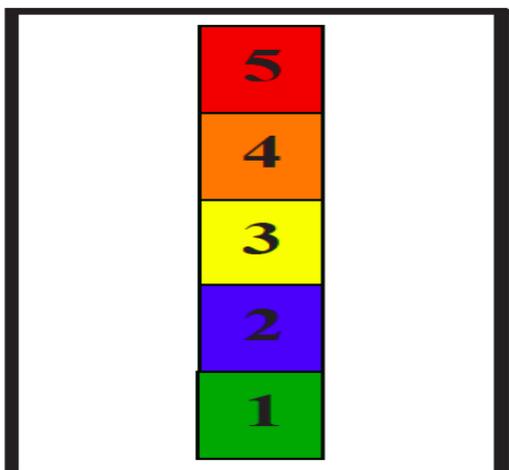
Resource round-up

New resources for Relationships SEAL theme

Check out the new resources on the SEAL Community website for work linked to the SEAL **Relationships** theme. You will find them at <http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/primary-relationships-planning-and-assessment>, <http://sealcommunity.org/member-resources/292> and <http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/got-some-girls-making-each-others-lives-misery>.

There are primary medium term planning and assessment tools, secondary lessons on working well with others, and a brilliant series of lessons for all age groups to help girls learn about 'relational aggression' - the subtle tactics of social exclusion, spreading rumours and threats to withdraw friendship that are so common amongst girls. Over this half term we'll be uploading new resources for Changes/transitions work, so do watch out for these.

Have you ever used the Incredible 5-Point Scale?



This really simple idea helps individuals understand and learn when emotions, voices, or whatever you are moderating is getting out of control. The example here was developed for a student who had difficulty managing anger. A 1 meant everything was fine and 5 meant he was hitting, screaming and crying. The goal was to try to recognize that he was a 2 or a 3 and bring the anger level down before it reached a 5. To do this he could take a break, do

some deep breathing, or other strategies we had rehearsed with him when he was calm.

The 5-point scale, once a student has learned it, gives caregivers and students a shorthand to talk about feelings. Teachers can model, "I'm feeling like a 3, I better take a break." And the scale gives the opportunity to just say to the individual, how are you feeling and he or she can respond with a number. Then no one around him has to know what that means and he doesn't have to generate much language to express feelings of distress.

You can also use the scale to help students link how they feel with actions to try to reduce their level of stress, anger, voice volume, anxiety, etc. Simply add another column to write actions in. .



The website <http://www.5pointscale.com/> has lots of downloadable materials and examples if you look under Sweet Scale Ideas.

There is also an app that creates a 5-point scale that you can customize with pictures. You can check that out here: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/autism-5-point-scale-ep/id467303313>

New resilience website for young people

Public Health England has created a new website <http://riseabove.org.uk/> that offers help for young people on how to deal with personal and societal issues. The Rise Above website, created by young people for young people, aims to build emotional resilience in individuals aged 11 to 16 by equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to make informed decisions, and help deal with the pressures of growing up. It also encourages conversations about the key health and wellbeing issues that affect adolescents and young people, including puberty, relationships, alcohol, self-harm, smoking, contraceptive choices, drugs, body confidence, peer pressure and mental health.

Guidance from PSHE Association on teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing and body image

The PSHE Association has launched new guidance for teachers on preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing through PSHE, which will be accompanied by a set of lesson plans spanning key stages 1-4, due to be published later this term.

Suitable for key stages 1-5, the guidance includes advice on how to build teaching about mental health into a planned PSHE programme, how to ensure teaching is appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils and how to use visitors to the classroom to support lessons. Find it at https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=558

Also published is guidance on teaching about body image, which will enable schools to promote positive body image with pupils by supporting teachers to develop their own teaching materials, or to adapt existing high quality resources for use in the classroom, a range of which are recommended in the document. Find it at https://psheassociation.org.uk/resources_search_details.aspx?ResourceId=563&dm_i=HSS,3CBLZ,BJ06JO,BYDHF,1

Interesting new research

Does talking about feelings help children become kinder?



Ornaghi, V. et al (2015). Let's talk about emotions! The effect of conversational training on preschoolers' emotion comprehension and prosocial orientation. *Social Development*, 24(1), 166-183.

This study investigated whether conversational intervention focused on emotions could promote the development of emotion comprehension (EC), and prosocial orientation in preschoolers. Seventy-five 4- to 5-year-old children assigned to experimental and control conditions, were pre- and post-tested for verbal ability, EC, and prosocial orientation. Over a 6-week intervention, all children were presented with brief illustrated scenarios based on emotional scripts. The training group was then involved in conversations about the nature, causes, and regulation of emotion whereas the control group engaged in free play, where conversation was minimized. The training group outperformed the control group in EC and prosocial orientation, even after controlling for gains in verbal ability. The positive effect remained stable over time.



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Closing the gap for disadvantaged children

Nix, R. et al. (2013). Findings from Head Start REDI. *Early Education & Development*, 24(7), 1000-1019. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2013.825565>

This study examined processes of change associated with the positive preschool and kindergarten (age 6) outcomes of children who received the Head Start REDI (Research-based, Developmentally Informed) intervention compared to usual practice Head Start. Using data from a large-scale randomized controlled trial (42% African American or Latino, all from low-income families), this study tests the logic model that improving preschool social-emotional skills (e.g., emotion understanding, social problem solving, and positive social behaviour) as well as language/emergent literacy skills will promote academic gains and behavioural adjustment after children transition into kindergarten. The study found that intervention effects on three important kindergarten outcomes (reading achievement, learning engagement, and positive social behaviour) were mediated by preschool gains in the social-emotional and language/emergent literacy skills targeted by the REDI intervention. It is important to note that preschool gains in social-emotional skills made unique contributions to kindergarten outcomes in reading achievement and learning engagement, even after the researchers accounted for concurrent preschool gains in vocabulary and emergent literacy skills. The researchers conclude that their findings highlight the importance of fostering at-risk children's social-emotional skills during preschool as a means of promoting school readiness.

You can do it! Early Years curriculum shown to be effective

Ashdown, D. & Bernard, M. (2012). Can explicit instruction in social and emotional learning skills benefit the social-emotional development, well-being, and academic achievement of young children? *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 39(6), 397-405. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-011-0481-x>

This study investigated the effect of a social and emotional learning skills curriculum, the You Can Do It! Early Childhood Education Program (YCDI), on the social-emotional development, well-being, and academic achievement of five and six year olds one school in Melbourne, Australia. One preparatory and one grade 1 class were randomly chosen to receive structured lessons in YCDI, delivered by their classroom teachers over a period of 10 weeks, while the remaining preparatory and grade 1 class served as the control group. The lessons were designed to teach young children confidence, persistence, organisation and emotional resilience. The educational program consisted of explicit, direct instruction lessons drawn from the YCDI Early Childhood Curriculum taught three times a



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week, supported by a variety of additional social and emotional teaching practices. The results indicated that YCDI had a statistically significant positive effect on levels of social-emotional competence and well-being for the preparatory and grade 1 students, a reduction in problem behaviours (externalising, internalising, and hyperactivity problems) for the grade 1 students, and an increase in reading achievement (decoding text) for the lower achieving grade 1 students.

What builds character?

Arthur, J. et al (2015). *Character education in UK schools: research report*. Birmingham: Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

This report explores the current situation in character education in the UK, and how developed British students are with respect to moral character.

The Jubilee Centre asked secondary students to respond to a series of moral dilemmas and select the best and worst justifications for their chosen action from a list. Many students taking the moral dilemma tests appeared, the researchers say, 'to approach the dilemmas from the perspective of self-interest. On average, participating students had less than a 50% match (42.6%) with the ideal responses to the moral dilemmas, as selected by an expert panel. Girls (at 47%) significantly outperformed boys (37%).

The researchers explored the characteristics of the UK schools, whose pupils were, on average, best and least able to respond to a series of moral dilemmas. Different types of schools appeared in both groups, including state and independent, faith and non-faith, large and small, those with high and low percentages of free school meals, and those with varying Ofsted ratings.

The Jubilee Centre's findings contradict some widely-held beliefs about the types of activity that build character. Contrary to the widely held public belief that sport builds character, students claiming to participate in sporting activities did not perform better than those who said they did not practise sports when asked to respond to moral dilemmas. However, students who said they were involved in music or choir or drama outside of school performed better than those who said they

The report makes a number of recommendations: 'Members of school staff should be trained in developing character, and each school should have at least one teacher (preferably more) who is especially passionate and knowledgeable about character education and directly involved with its implementation. This, however, is unlikely to be sufficient without an effective school leadership team that is also concerned with character education. Schools ought to have a character education



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policy that will be influential across all staff. Students require more direct help moving from motives of self-interest towards moral orientations concerned with others – this is an aspect of character development deserving of emphasis in schools. Schools should assess their own efforts towards the development of students' characters. The Jubilee Centre is developing a measure for this purpose, known as The School Virtue Measure (SVM).

Teachers' feelings matter too

Becker, E.S. et al (2014) The importance of teachers' emotions and instructional behaviour for their students' emotions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, October 2014.

Academics carried out a study of teenagers in a number of Swiss schools, asking students to identify how they were feeling, how they imagined the teacher was feeling and how well the teacher was teaching at intervals during lessons. They found that although the quality of teaching is a factor in how students feel about lessons, teachers' emotions play an equally important role. They conclude that teachers should care about their emotions, for their students' sake as well as for their own.

Boost maths scores with mindfulness

Schonert-Reichl, K. et al (2015) Enhancing cognitive and social-emotional development through a simple-to-administer mindfulness-based school program for elementary school children: A randomized controlled trial. *Developmental Psychology*, Vol 51(1)

The study in Canada took place in four elementary schools, which were allocated at random to deliver either a mindfulness programme or a social responsibility programme as a control. In total, almost 100 grade 4 and 5 (Year 5 and 6) children took part. The mindfulness programme, MindUp, consisted of 12 lessons taught once a week, each lesson lasting around 45 minutes. The programme included mindfulness activities such as breathing and attentive listening and lessons encouraging acts of kindness and community service.

Children in the MindUp programme showed significant improvements in executive function, self-reported well-being, and self- and peer-reported social behaviour. They also demonstrated better maths performance.

Measures assessed executive functions (EFs), stress physiology via salivary cortisol, well-being (self-reports), prosociality and peer acceptance (peer reports), and math grades. Relative to children in the social responsibility program, children who received the SEL program with mindfulness (a)

improved more in their cognitive control and stress physiology; (b) reported greater empathy, perspective-taking, emotional control, optimism, school self-concept, and mindfulness, (c) showed greater decreases in self-reported symptoms of depression and peer-rated aggression, (d) were rated by peers as more prosocial, and (e) increased in peer acceptance (or sociometric popularity).

Sharing practice: case studies

Growing to Good at Mason Moor Primary

When Sian Smith came to Mason Moor primary as its new headteacher in February 2007, there had already been 146 exclusions since the start of the school year. It took her till eleven o'clock on her first day just to get a group of children down from the school roof.



Mason Moor serves a highly disadvantaged area of Southampton. Since Sian has been at the school, two parents have been murdered. 35 children are currently on the child protection register. Most children come from white British backgrounds, and from families with a long intergenerational history of unemployment. The school does not have a nursery and, not surprisingly, standards on entry are low.

In 2007 only 13% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage. Now that figure is 74%. Standards in KS1 and 2 have risen equally fast, and the school received a 'good' judgement in its latest Ofsted inspection.

How has this been achieved? Sian puts much of the early change down to a new whole-school approach to behaviour, rooted in developing children's social and

emotional skills through SEAL. Empowering staff and supporting their development has also been very important. When Sian arrived, good staff had been leaving in droves. She immediately organised an INSET day for everyone to talk about what they wanted to keep and what they wanted to lose from the way the school had operated in the past. Subsequent staff development has been based on solution-focused coaching (<http://www.mentoringforchange.co.uk/classic/solution.php>). This has created a climate of openness, in which people are happy to ask for help when they need it. In contrast to the more common scenario in struggling schools, the huge improvements in standards have been achieved without a massive change of staff - and without excluding children. There are hardly any exclusions; indeed, the school often takes children who are at imminent risk of exclusion from other schools.

The school still follows the SEAL themes – ‘New Beginnings’ at the start of the year, followed by ‘Getting on and falling out’ and so on, until the ‘Changes’ theme in the summer term. There are discrete SEAL lessons for at least 45 minutes a week in Key Stage 1 and 2, generally following the SEAL themes but also child-led – if a particular issue has arisen in class or outside, that will be tackled. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is an even greater focus on personal, social and emotional development, which forms the bedrock of children’s learning.

Where children need additional help with their social and emotional learning, this is supplied by trained ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants – see <http://www.elsa-support.co.uk/about-elsa-support/>) who offer evidence-based interventions such as Therapeutic Story Time, and work on anger management. A member of staff is currently undertaking mindfulness training, so that this can be added to the school’s SEL repertoire.

At whole-school level, all sorts of systems are in place to model and reinforce SEAL learning. Children are encouraged to help and support one another; for example, Y6 children read with Reception partners, and if a child is good at something they act as ‘expert witnesses’, teaching other children about what they know or can do.



At the start of each term every class has a circle time to develop the ‘secrets of behaviour’ (essentially their classroom charter) for their group. Children then identify their own target behaviours to aim for, their ‘secrets of success’. Photographs are taken of what achieving/demonstrating that behaviour would look like, and shared with the child - a proven solution-focused strategy to help the achievement of goals.

Mirroring the SEAL New Beginnings theme, at the start of the year children design a ‘shield’ for their class, in which every child represents themselves and their special characteristics. These are all displayed in the school hall. Children also develop a ‘This is our class’ brochure which describes the behavioural routines that will help them be successful learners.

In the summer term, to support transition (mirroring the SEAL Changes theme), children design a reading corner for their new classroom, work on their secrets of success for the new school year, and develop a piece of SEAL work which will be displayed in the new classroom.



Building on the SEAL Going for goals theme, which focuses on perseverance and resilience ('grit' in today's popular terminology), the school has developed a whole strand of work on growth mindset (<http://www.mindsetonline.com/>) – the belief that intelligence is malleable and that learning depends on effort and strategies rather than any fixed ability. Staff constantly talk with children about taking risks, perseverance and co-operation. Children are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning and success, so

if behaviour is poor, adults will remind them they are 'losing learning time', rather than 'behaving badly'.

In one lovely piece of work, children read the picture book 'Stuck' by Oliver Jeffers. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hipx6HJs4XQ>). They then wrote down their strategies for ensuring they kept on learning when they were stuck, in the face of difficulties. In another class, the teacher created a wall display of key words like 'persevere', 'be co-operative', 'be better than your best'. Children then wrote examples of times they had shown those behaviours on slips of paper and attached them next to the words on the display. Reflection sheets in children's books ask them to note 'What learning muscles have you used today?' under their academic work.



Sian and her staff still use the SEAL assemblies but have adapted and added to them over time. An example was an assembly on achieving our dreams. Sian read the children the Yeats quote 'Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams'. She talked about how our dreams can be big or small, but all need to be respected by others. Then she shared her own dream for the school, that it would be a family where everyone felt safe and secure, and were learning well – and that it would get a 'good' in Ofsted. She asked the children to help her describe what it would look like in school if her dream became a reality, and to suggest what they could do to make that happen. After Ofsted came and did indeed judge the school good, children sent Sian a card saying 'See – dreams can come true.'

Sian is moving on now to head up a new group of schools, but leaves Mason Moor as a place where success is achieved against the odds, by children and staff alike, because everyone sees themselves as a learner with capacity to grow. It is this, and the whole-school systems that now well embedded, that will make the changes she and her team have created sustainable.

To find out more about the work at Mason Moor, contact acting assistant headteacher Sarah Harvey on 02380390140.

Practical tools

Getting started with SEAL

We've just uploaded to the SEAL website some indispensable resources for schools that are new to SEAL, or those who are supporting schools new to SEAL. Created by Julie Casey, co-founder of The SEAL Community, they include four PowerPoint presentations that will take a group of staff step-by-step through understanding what SEAL is and why we need it, through to exploring the SEAL resources and developing an action plan for their setting. Find the resource at

<http://sealcommunity.org/resources/results/taxonomy%3A391>

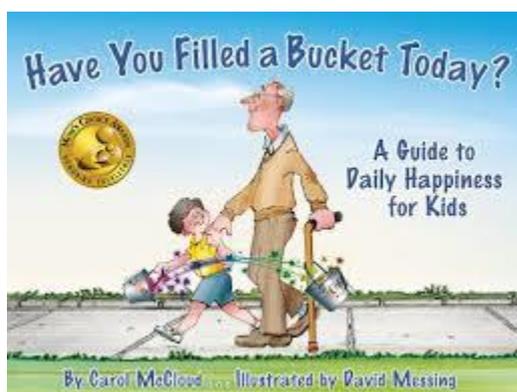
SEAL Teaching Tips



To go with the Getting Started materials, Julie has written some fantastic teaching tips. Originally written for the SEAL programme in China, we thought the tips would be very useful for UK schools too. You can find them at

<http://sealcommunity.org/resources/getting-started-seal-2-top-tips-practitioners>

How full is your bucket? A top tip from Highfield Primary



Try this lovely work based on the book '*Have you filled your bucket today?*', which tells us that we all carry an invisible bucket around with us that fills and empties throughout the day. Your bucket fills up when someone does something to make you feel good. As your bucket fills up, the happier and better you feel in yourself.

Bucket filling, 'dipping' and bucket 'lids' can act as



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metaphors for understanding the effects of our actions and words on the wellbeing of others and ourselves. Dipping is when you dip into someone else's bucket and take stuff out; lids means that if someone tries to take stuff from yours use your lid and don't dip back .

The work encourages positive behaviour as children see how rewarding it is to express daily kindness, appreciation, and love.

At Highfield School in Sunderland the book is read in assemblies. Every class in school then has a 'bucket of happiness'. If a child feels someone has said or done something nice to them they need to write it down and put it in the class bucket. The weekly challenge is to see which class are the best bucket fillers! The school say 'Last week Mrs Snaith's class won the challenge with over 200 acts of kindness in their bucket! In the whole school we managed to have 780 acts of kindness written down and put into buckets.....our challenge this week is to get over 1000!'

For more information on bucket filling and free downloadables and resources, visit www.bucketfillers101.com. Here you can find lesson plans, self-reflection end of day questionnaires, checklists of ways to fill a bucket, online jigsaw puzzles, colouring sheets, and award certificates

Upcoming newsletters

Upcoming newsletters will focus on evaluating the impact of your SEL work, and round-ups of favourite children's books and films to use as starting points for lessons. Please contact us, using the 'Contact us' option on the website or email jean.gross@btinternet.com directly if you have interesting practice to share on these or any other issues. Let us know the best phone number and times to contact you. Or just email with useful resources you have found, or your top tips. We'd love to write your work up as a case study, too, so do get in touch.