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Title – Moray Educational Psychology Service

Building teachers knowledge, understanding and skills in aspects of the wellbeing curriculum to track and monitor progress for all.

What did we ask?

Will using two Curriculum for Excellence outcomes to frame an intervention with teachers, improve their knowledge, understanding and skills?

How could a more robust tracking and monitoring system for wellbeing be created to address the attainment gap?

What is the evidence base?

Addressing wellbeing is at the core of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (Scottish Government, 2013). According to Young Minds (2015) on average there are three children per class of thirty pupils who have mental health difficulties, and half of lifetime mental illnesses have started by the age of fourteen (Weare and Nind, 2011). These statistics highlight the need to prioritise wellbeing much earlier in schools (DoE report 2008-2011, p. 13). Effectively assessing children's wellbeing is paramount if we want to improve positive outcomes for all children.

Currently the thresholds needed to gain access to clinic based interventions to support children and young people with mental health difficulties are high. It is therefore argued that there is a need for school based intervention programmes (Neil and Christensen, 2009). Given the broad features of the CfE health and wellbeing curriculum (HWB curriculum), there is scope for the delivery of such interventions and an opportunity to help teachers develop their knowledge and skills in this area.

The Moray Council

According to NICE (2008) primary education providers should offer teachers training so that they have the knowledge, understanding and skills to deliver a curriculum that integrates social and emotional learning within all subject areas effectively. Weare and Nind (2011) found that school based interventions were more effective if they were embedded at a whole school level and underpinned by sound psychological theory.

Building teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding in delivering a wellbeing curriculum runs parallel to the tracking and monitoring of children's progress. Without tracking and monitoring pupils progress in all aspects of the curriculum there won't be evidence of pupil progress; which is 'fundamental to taking forward high-quality learning for all' (Education Scotland, 2012, p.4).

The Scottish Government, Education Scotland, OECD and other research in this area, identifies that data collection is only one aspect of the tracking and monitoring process. It is how the information is used that has the impact. It should inform planning, learning and assessment approaches to ensure pupil progress (Education Scotland, 2014, p3). The collecting of consistent and robust evidence is linked to raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Effective tracking and monitoring gives information about attainment gaps for different groups at key stages which should inform all teaching, learning, planning and intervention (National Improvement Framework, pages 16 & 17).

Evidence shows that academic success, behaviour and engagement in school are interlinked. When children experience academic success this has a positive impact on their life satisfaction (Public Health, 2015). Therefore, we aimed to build teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills within aspects of the HWB curriculum and, support their assessment, tracking and monitoring of wellbeing to improve outcomes for all.

The Moray Council

What did we do?

We carried out a piece of action research with the staff group of a small primary school. There were two action research cycles over five workshops which were three/four weeks apart between August and December. The focus of the intervention was twofold:

- To deliver an intervention which will develop teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills in 2 of the mental and emotional wellbeing aspects of the health and wellbeing curriculum (with a focus on HWB - 06a and HWB -07a).
- To enable teachers to gain a deeper understanding of ways in which pupil wellbeing could be tracked and monitored, using two specific tools (pupil wellbeing journal and teacher reflection journal).

Six sources of data were used for analysis:

- Pre- and post- teacher questionnaire - rating teachers' confidence in their knowledge of the wellbeing curriculum
- two reflective paper-talks with whole teaching staff at the end of each mini action research cycle.
- four individual teacher case studies
- two reflective re-connector sessions with whole teaching staff
- survey to evaluate individual impact of the intervention

The data derived from the above were analysed using latent theory Thematic Analysis (TA) using Braun and Clarke's guidelines (2006). To structure our interpretation into a thematic network, we used Attride-Stirling's (2001) three stages: basic, organising and global themes. The researchers individually coded data sources and came together for inter-rater reliability. Additionally, researchers triangulated all data sources to enhance credibility (Robson, 2002).

The Moray Council

What have we found so far? 200 words

The findings are presented in order of data collection.

Pre-intervention baseline questionnaires.

A baseline of teacher confidence in their knowledge of the HWB Curriculum was gathered using a five point Likert Scale. This was carried out pre- and post- intervention. Pre- intervention the groups' average confidence level was rated as 3.4 – reasonably confident. Post-intervention it was 4.5 - very good confident. A question about confidence in using assessment to track progress was rated low across the group, with the average at 1.67 – not confident. Post-intervention average was 2.8 – somewhat confident.

During and post intervention reflective talk

The following key themes emerged from the Thematic Analysis of:

- the two reflective paper talks at the end of each mini research cycle, and
 - the four individual case studies (in order of frequency).
1. Capacity building (Teachers' and Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills of specific aspects of the wellbeing curriculum).
 2. Agency (having ownership, control , power over choices and decisions – external agency v internal agency)
 3. Whole school (whole school systems, whole school approaches, part of policy/practice)
 4. Tools
 5. Self-reflection
 6. Relationships (a new theme from reflective paper talk two)

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Post intervention re-connectors and survey.

Post-direct intervention there were two re-connectors and a survey to evaluate individual impact of the intervention (after a three month period).

The initial themes derived from the reflective paper talks and the case studies were used to analyse the re-connector and survey data. Researchers used this to review if talk had changed and to evidence impact of the intervention on teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills of two aspects of the wellbeing curriculum and the tracking and monitoring of wellbeing.

In terms of teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills, talk was thematically different from pre- to post-intervention. Post-intervention teacher confidence had increased:

"I have a far greater understanding of why...." (T1, Q 4)

"a lot more confident..." (T2, Q4)

"much more confident and less likely to avoid these areas" (T3, Q4).

And collectively, knowledge, understanding, and skills had developed:

"I have felt more confident in delivering the 2 outcomes....children definitely understand that part of the wellbeing better" (T2, Q6)

the intervention had "developed my awareness" (T4 , Q10).

However, there were individual differences in how new knowledge and understanding had been applied in practice:

"for pupils that needed extra support for wellbeing but for the majority no" (T2 ,Q8).

Three teachers reported the impact on pupils had been the opportunity to talk about wellbeing and reflect on wellbeing "develop confidence and

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those resilient strategies ...refer to growth mind set frequently and are developing their ability to reflect” (T 4, Q8)

In exploring tracking and monitoring wellbeing using the school’s revised learning logs the teachers’ reported:

“Better communication with pupils and parents ...parents feel more included and able to support their children” (T3, Q7).

However, two teachers felt it had no impact hasn’t really had much of an impact” (T 2, Q7)

In regards to their new knowledge to inform tracking and monitoring of wellbeing the following was reported:

“I use them as a tool to track learning and wellbeing (T4 Q9).

“lesson plans and planned next steps from children’s responses” (T1, Q10)

However, the majority of the staff group still shared difficulties with tracking and monitoring wellbeing:

“ still difficult to use them to track and monitor they still need ‘tweaking’” (T1, Q9)

To conclude, findings showed thematically different talk through the two mini action research cycles. There was a shift in agency for all teachers from external agency to teacher agency. The survey showed a further development in agency to include pupils having a sense of agency over the two aspects of the wellbeing curriculum (see figure 1 below). This sense of agency apparent in the talk is derived from the talk of relationships, capacity building, self-efficacy, teacher confidence and pupil confidence (organising themes).

The Moray Council

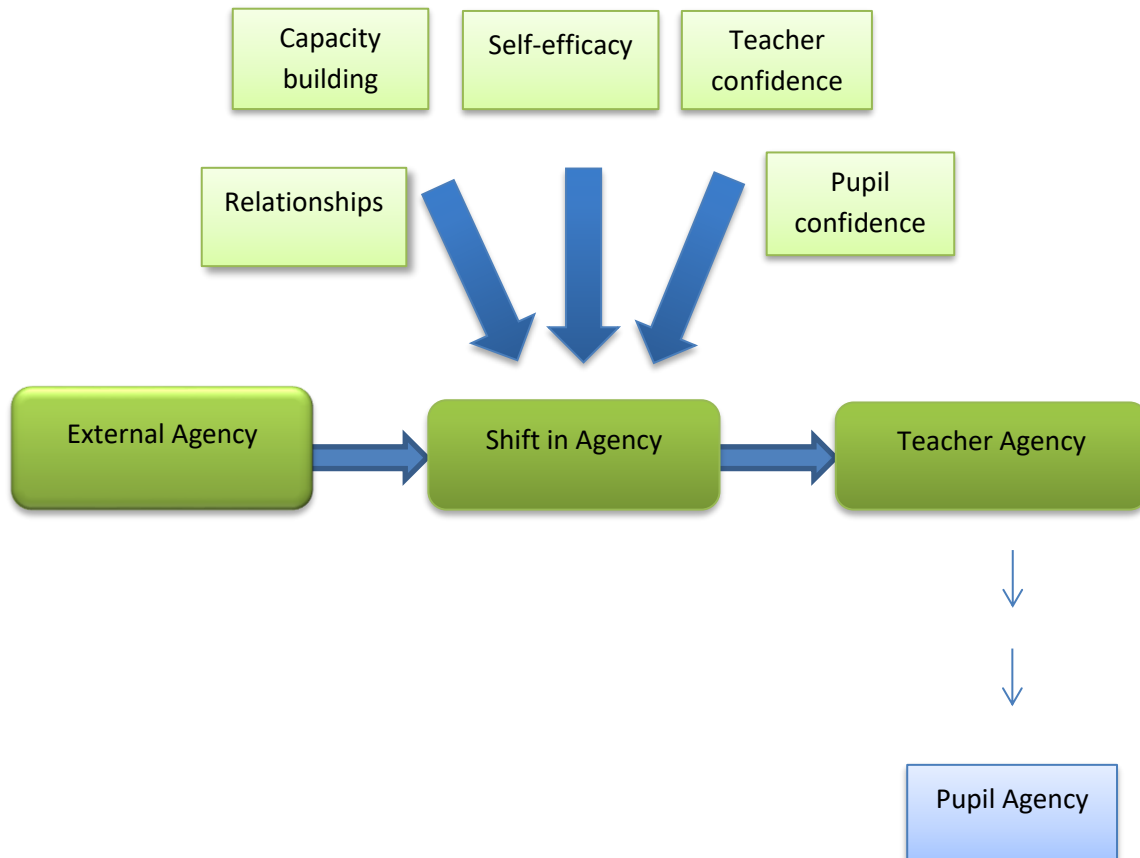


Figure 1: Model to show the shift in a sense of agency

What do we plan to do next?

Proposed phase 2

- a) Develop a visual representation of the building blocks of wellbeing. This will be based on the psychological factors that impact positively upon wellbeing such as self-efficacy, resilience self-regulation, and the CfE HWB curriculum. The aim of which will be to build teachers'

The Moray Council

knowledge, understanding and skills.

- b) To continue to embed capacity building in delivering, tracking and monitoring the HWB curriculum within the school using their new whole school monitoring and tracking practices.

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The Moray Council

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For further information contact

Kirsty Henry and Grainne Watters

Kirsty.henry@moray.gov.uk