



the british
psychological society
scottish division of
educational psychology

Educational Psychology in Scotland

Volume 20 Number 1
Autumn 2020

ISSN (Online): 2396-8710

The EPiS Editorial Team

Dr Sharon Brown Sharon.Brown@educationscotland.gov.scot

Karen Findlay karen.findlay@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Lynne Fernie lynnefernie@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Contents

- 1 **Editorial**
Lynne Fernie
- 2 **Scottish Division of Educational Psychology**
Alison Crawford
- 3 **Dundee MSc Educational Psychology Course Update**
Beth Hannah
- 4 **Strathclyde DEdPSy update**
Clare Daly
- 6 **Response to Covid-19: How do schools support children following a crisis?**
Rose Bangs, Emma Ni Bhrádaigh, Christie Brown & Eoin Keane
- 13 **Wellbeing in a digital world: What can EPs do?**
Jordan Ford, Eilidh MacIver & Leisa Randall
- 19 **What worked within an external SEBN provision and utilising how to support re-engagement post Covid-19**
Lynne Fernie
- 24 **The effectiveness of nurturing approaches on primary-aged children in the UK: A systematic review**
Sophie Harker, Bethany Howell, John Niven & Jenny Thorne
- 40 **Evaluating the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's social, emotional and psychological wellbeing: A systematic review**
Kirstie Howard, Heather Quinn & Marel Thomson
- 51 **How do children with Autism Spectrum Disorder engage in a play-based pedagogical environment and how do teachers support this?**
Ruth Carleton & Hayleigh Spence
- 60 **'Mix it up and keep it lively!': An exploratory study of perceived effects and implementation of The Daily Mile in the North of Scotland**
Maggie Eggeling, Vicky Heath, Emma Rait & Katie Sprang
- 68 **An exploration of the use of ABLe by educational psychologists to promote universal inclusive practice in primary school classrooms in one local authority in Scotland**
Megan Ayliffe, Caroline Gos & Gwen Hobbs
- 76 **A systematic review of practitioners' perceptions of supporting inclusion in a UK mainstream primary context**
Ciara Brady, Ainsley McLarty & Rebecca Rankin
- 84 **Practitioner enquiry: Supporting peer relationships by taking an online cooperative learning approach with upper-primary age pupils**
Jenny Fraser-Smith, Mark Jones, Isabel Martland, Alan McHardy & Robert Quigley

Editorial

Lynne Fernie

WELCOME to a unique edition of *Educational Psychology in Scotland*. In this Autumn edition we feature a special update from the University of Strathclyde and acknowledge the great influence Professor Jim Boyle has had on many practitioners as well as his positive impact on our profession. Professor Jim Boyle was the Director of the Strathclyde MSc Educational Psychology Programme and DEdPsy for a number of years and following his retirement, the new Director role is being taken forward by Dr Clare Daly.

Beth Hannah, Course Director of the MSc Educational Psychology course, has provided an insight into how Covid-19 has impacted on the course and recruitment. Beth Hannah details the ways in which trainees and staff have been creative and forward thinking within their approach to the MSc Educational Psychology course.

This edition captures a wide array of articles that represent our experiences of Covid-19 and which we hope will deepen our thinking about our individual practice and the contexts we find ourselves in as we respond, adapt and reconnect with children and families, colleagues and stakeholders. An update from the SDEP provides an insight into their partnership work with the BPS to highlight key opportunities for cross nation and division working.

Articles provide insight into well-being in a digital world, the challenges of re-engagement with education and the focus to build upon what is working well. A systematic review highlights how we can support children and young people following the pandemic.

The articles presented in this edition will navigate complex questions: How do EPs continue to support inclusive practice and the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families as we reconnect? How can we support schools to make the best use of the environment for play-based pedagogy for learning? Can we maximise practitioner enquiry to build peer relationships in an online environment? We can take comfort from reflecting upon our profession's history, and how adaptable and innovative we have been and continue to be. We find ourselves in a unique space in history and I hope the articles in this edition showcase that innovation and nudges your thinking towards how we move forward.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and feedback on the development of our national professional journal. Listening to your feedback we are working to deliver some exciting updates to the journal as we plan for the next edition in 2021. To support the editorial committee in our endeavours to innovate, we are seeking creative editors to join our collaborative team. Notes of interest are encouraged to make contact for an informal chat with any of the editorial committee.

We hope you enjoy this edition and want to thank all contributors.

Lynne Fernie

On behalf of the Editorial Team

Scottish Division of Educational Psychology

Alison Crawford

SDEP are delighted to promote the work of educational psychology throughout Scotland through this edition of *Educational Psychology in Scotland*.

Ensuring that the wellbeing needs of all children and young people were understood and well supported during the 'lockdown' phase of the pandemic and using psychology to inform plans for recovery became priorities for many services. Research on responding to a pandemic and a sound evidence base to inform this work were scarce and so the contents of this edition of *EPiS* will contribute to our body of knowledge as we move through recovery and consider the longer term impacts on wellbeing, learning and service delivery design.

The SDEP was privileged to be represented on the BPS Covid-19 Coordination Group which over saw the production of a wide range of publications to support both professionals and members of the public. Partnership working across nations and across divisions allowed for a rapid response in ever-changing circumstances and a focus on accessible psychology broadened the reach of our key messages.

Partnerships have proven to be key across communities and this has been no less the case amongst psychologists. We hope that the conversations started by the contributors to this edition of *EPiS* will further strengthen links across the profession in Scotland.

Alison Crawford

Alison.Crawford@glasgow.gov.uk

Dundee MSc Educational Psychology Course Update

Beth Hannah

IT HAS BEEN a very eventful year for the course. Academic session 2019–2020 was the first year that we have had two cohorts running concurrently. This development has offered opportunities as well as challenges. Currently, we have 59 trainees (30 in year 1 and 29 in year 2) and staffing levels have increased to accommodate this change. Having two cohorts, overlapping one day at the university, has enabled us to arrange joint teaching sessions/days. This approach has worked well, and we plan to continue with this going forward. Challenges have included the logistics of planning teaching when two modules are running at the same time. To address this, next session we are planning to have core staff teaching on a module and ensure that staff are not teaching on modules running concurrently.

The new model of partnership funding has resulted in uncertainty for trainees regarding arrangements for the third year of training. We have worked closely with other members of the National Scottish Steering Group for Educational Psychologists (NSSGEP) to plan and implement the new processes and support trainees given the understandable anxiety this has engendered.

In mid-March, trainee placements for both year groups were suspended due to the pandemic. This was a difficult time for trainees given the abruptness of the change. Throughout the period of lockdown, we have endeavoured to support trainees in a range of ways, including individual and group tutorials with their Advisor of Studies, business meetings with the year convenor and programme director, setting up Teams channels for each year group, and weekly updates from the programme director. We have also worked hard to make the transition to online teaching.

Selection for the new cohort took place in April/May using remote means. We held a Q&A session for new trainees in early July, attended by some staff and trainees, and another session is planned for the end of July.

We are delighted that Dr Will Shield, University of Exeter is joining the programme as external examiner in addition to Dr Janet Rowley, University of East London.

We are looking forward to the next academic session and wish our current year 2 trainees all the very best for next year.

Beth Hannah

Dundee Programme Coordinator
e.hannah@dundee.ac.uk

Strathclyde DEdPSy update

Clare Daly

The end of an era

OVER THE past three decades Professor Jim Boyle has trained possibly half of all educational psychologists across Scotland at the University of Strathclyde. Impressively, he still remembers fondly each and every EP he has trained and like a proud grandfather, taking delight in watching careers flourish and educational psychology making a difference. Jim's tenure at the university has navigated the profession through many changes and challenges over the years, yet he has retained the same zest for evidence-based research he has had since he started. So much so that when Jim recently retired from Strathclyde, his family thought he would be able to realise new passions and pursue new hobbies, then quickly realised that for Jim, psychology is his passion and research is his hobby. Jim continues to advise and support colleagues within the department and beyond in his new role as Emeritus Professor. We have been very fortunate to have had Jim's guidance through the years, a true grandfather of Educational Psychology in Scotland. Thank you for everything Professor Boyle!

Continuing professional development

Despite the MSc in Educational Psychology training course undertaken entirely at the University of Dundee, the University of Strathclyde continue to play a part in the continuing professional development of educational psychologists through its Doctorate in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy).

The DEdPsy is a flexible research degree which was specifically designed to meet the

needs of practising educational psychologists with at least one year's experience in the field approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS). The course combines applied psychology with high quality real world research in a variety of vital and complex educational issues. It provides a framework in developing rich evidence based practice and self-reflection. In response to changes in working practice derived from the global pandemic, there is now greater flexibility for our students, e.g. online support and supervision, multiple virtual platforms and access to bespoke learning opportunities across university departments.

DEdPSy students will:

- Develop research skills in design, data collection and analysis, leading to the submission of an original thesis that makes an identifiable contribution to knowledge in an area of developmental/educational psychology;
- Cultivate a critical academic understanding of current advances in theory and research within a specialist area of expertise;
- Develop effective, critical and reflective independent professional practice using a range of assessment and intervention approaches that are underpinned by psychological paradigms and are evidence based;
- Benefit from career long professional development opportunities to enrich and expand students psychological toolkit;
- Be part of a networking community of peer support;

- Have opportunities for independent and collaborative publications;
- Have at least two HCPC registered supervisors with a wealth of experience in the field of educational and developmental psychology;
- Have access to award winning facilities across the campus including, the Andersonian library, Technology & Innovation Centre and the new Sport Centre.

The DEdPsy community

At Strathclyde we recognise the experience of our colleagues and have developed a cascading model of training where DEdPsy graduates can support existing students as second or third supervisors. This enriches the experience for all involved. We are

able to offer further training, if required, on various topics from leading specialists for students and supervisors. We aspire to create a supportive peer network for EPs to upgrade their research skills and develop evidence based practice.

Alumni

Our alumni have gone on to achieve success in a wide range of professional contexts and specialisms within Scottish Local Authorities (SLA) and related fields in psychology.

To find out more, search 'Educational Psychology' on www.strath.ac.uk or contact the DEdPsy programme director, Dr Clare Daly clare.daly@strath.ac.uk

Dr Clare Daly

The DEdPsy gave me opportunity to develop my research skills and confidence in data analysis.
Senior SLA EP

The DEdPsy was invaluable for me – the most relevant and useful CPD I have undertaken.
Depute Principal SLA EP

The qualification was a pivotal opportunity. From there I developed a voice to defend my argument.
Education Scotland National Improvement Framework Advisor

I enjoyed the whole process, particularly being immersed in a research area I am passionate about.
Senior Teaching Fellow

Response to Covid-19: How do schools support children following a crisis?

Rose Bangs, Emma Ní Bhrádaigh, Christie Brown & Eoin Keane

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is a global health crisis which has resulted in mass disruption to daily life, extended school closures and quarantine measures. Research suggests that the pandemic is likely to negatively impact children's mental health. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how to support children returning to school following Covid-19. The aim of this systematic review was to analyse existing empirical research focusing on methods of supporting children following a crisis to identify the most effective school-based supports in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Six databases were searched which initially identified 4301 articles. Through an iterative process, 18 articles were identified which met the inclusion criteria for review. This review highlighted the ecological nature of school-supports, with schools providing support to children across various levels such as direct support in the classroom in addition to indirect whole-school and community approaches. The role teachers play in supporting children's wellbeing post-crisis through responsive teaching was also identified. Furthermore, results showed the effectiveness of universal strengths-based interventions to promote resilience and the role of peer support in enhancing children's wellbeing. At a systemic level, findings also highlighted the importance of community-based school supports such as communication with families, the promotion of staff wellbeing and professional collaboration. Overall, this review identifies schools' capacity to support children at various levels post-crisis. It also highlights the potential role of educational psychologists when children return to school post-Covid-19, whilst also establishing the need for more research on children's mental health following Covid-19.

THE CORONAVIRUS pandemic (Covid-19) is an unprecedented global health crisis which has, at the time of writing, led to over 600,000 fatalities worldwide (WHO, 2020). In March 2020, to prevent the spread of the virus the Scottish Government introduced social distancing measures and closed schools. Shortly after, widespread lockdown and quarantine measures were put in place. Whilst these measures were necessary to protect public health, it is important to acknowledge their potential negative impact on children's wellbeing.

Previous research on the impact of pandemics provides insight into the possible mental health consequences of Covid-19.

Prolonged lockdown; quarantine; loss of face-to-face contact with family, friends and teachers; boredom; and fear of contracting the virus can be detrimental to mental health (Brooks et al., 2020). Sprang and Silman (2013) found that children quarantined during previous pandemics including SARS, H1N1 and avian influenza had post-traumatic stress scores which were four times higher than peers who had not been quarantined. They also showed that quarantined children met the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at similar rates to children who had experienced traumatic events and disasters. This research offers evidence for the potential mental health impacts of the

current pandemic and the need to identify strategies to support psychological recovery.

Covid-19 falls under the 'severe illness' crisis event classification of Brock et al. (1996). Minimal global health crises over the last century and a lack of evidence for effective methods of supporting children after a pandemic make it appropriate to look to other Brock et al. (1996) crisis classifications (natural disasters, war and terrorism) to inform a response. These crises are sudden, unpredictable, cause fatalities and are traumatic for those with significant exposure (Ayub et al., 2012). Therefore, the effects of natural disasters, war and terrorism are comparable to the effects of the current health crisis.

Crisis situations can be stressful, disruptive and traumatic for those affected. Following a crisis, psychological morbidities such as PTSD, anxiety disorders, panic disorder, phobias and acute stress reactions can manifest in children (Kar, 2006; Kar & Bastia, 2006; Kar et al., 2001). These can result in challenging behaviours in school, including problems with concentration, social behaviour, and reduced attainment (Coombe et al., 2015). However, it is important to note that PTSD symptoms are more prevalent in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, and steadily decrease in the first year with less than 30 per cent experiencing chronic symptoms (Pfefferbaum et al., 2015). Peer support has been identified as a protective factor against mental health implications (Self-Brown et al., 2013) therefore making schools an appropriate context for post-crisis interventions. Alongside acknowledging the lack of peer support during school closures, it is important to note the mental health risk factors of gender (Adams et al., 2014), age (Adams et al., 2014) and social class (Masozera et al., 2007) when considering how schools can support children after a crisis.

Considering the mental health impacts of crises, including pandemics, on children, there is a need to identify ways in which school-based supports can be offered to children following large-scale traumatic events,

such as Covid-19. Therefore, the purpose of this review is to answer the question 'how do schools support children following a crisis?'

Methodology

This systematic review was completed in May 2020. The search methodology followed an adapted framework from Moher et al., (2009).

During the 'Identification' stage, the researchers searched for relevant papers using the terms: ((crisis) AND children) AND school) AND psychology) AND education) AND (intervention OR recovery OR reintegration). The word 'crisis' was interchanged with other search terms, including pandemic, war, terrorism, earthquake, tsunami and wildfires. 4301 articles were identified and only articles which met all inclusion criteria (English language studies, children aged 5 to 12 years, school-based, peer-reviewed, and published between 2000 and 2020) were included. During the 'screening' stage, 77 articles were refined to 32 by ensuring they were empirical and involved an intervention, support or model delivered by school staff. The researchers rated the relevance of the papers to the research question, reducing them to 23. During the final phase, the researchers assessed each article separately before cross-referencing their results. From this process, four articles were removed due to lack of relevance to the research question. 18 articles were included in the review.

Results

The 18 reviewed papers met the agreed criteria and addressed the question of 'how do schools support children following a crisis'. However, the process of selection provided variety in the research approaches used and results gained. The review process provided both quantitative and qualitative papers which gathered data from a variety of sources and perspectives, including children, teachers, head teachers/principals, parents and psychologists. Considering the variety in literature, the researchers created

three categories to demonstrate the contexts and resources in which supports for children apply: role of the teacher, classroom-based interventions, and whole-school approaches. These categories include examples of school supports which have a direct or indirect impact on children following a crisis.

The reviewed papers highlighted the impact of crises on children through their areas of assessment. Eleven of the papers demonstrated that children's mental health was significantly impacted after a crisis. They focused on increased PTSD (Berger & Gelkopf, 2009; Berger et al., 2007; Green et al., 2015; Wolmer et al., 2003; Wolmer et al., 2011; Wolmer et al., 2005), anxiety (Baum et al., 2013; Berger et al., 2007; Ducey & Stough, 2011; Ho et al., 2017) and depression (Berger & Gelkopf, 2009). Children were measured on their level of somatic complaints (Berger & Gelkopf, 2009; Berger et al., 2007), functional impairment (Baum et al., 2013; Berger & Gelkopf, 2009; Berger et al., 2007; Gupta & Zimmer, 2008) and grief and loss (Wolmer et al., 2003; Wolmer et al., 2005). Considering the impact on children's mental and emotional wellbeing, measures of social behaviour (Ducey & Stough, 2011; Green et al., 2015), academic performance (Ducey & Stough, 2011; Wolmer et al., 2005), self-efficacy (Convery et al., 2010; Ho et al., 2017), and access to peer support (Convery et al., 2010) were taken and demonstrated a further impact on children's social and academic abilities. Furthermore, the reviewed literature highlighted protective and risk factors for children following a crisis, particularly that the mental health of young girls was often impacted more than boys, but girls also demonstrated greater improvement following support (Baum et al., 2013; Berger et al., 2007; Wolmer et al., 2003).

These levels of impact highlight the need to identify strategies which schools can offer to support children following a crisis. A key area of the literature was the supportive role the teacher has, and the strategies used.

Teachers provided emotional support by facilitating classroom discussions (Convery et al., 2010; Green et al., 2015; Johnson & Ronan, 2014). During these discussions teachers would have conversations which: clarified misconceptions and dispelled rumours (Green et al., 2015; Johnson & Ronan, 2014; Jørgensen et al., 2015); discussed emotional reactions and coping strategies (Convery et al., 2010; Green et al., 2015); and encouraged peer support (Convery et al., 2010; Johnson & Ronan, 2014). Teachers also supported pupils by focusing on their safety (Green et al., 2015; Johnson & Ronan, 2014), shielding them from potential triggers (Johnson & Ronan, 2014), and adapting the curriculum (Green et al., 2015; Johnson & Ronan, 2014). These strategies, implemented by teachers, all provided support for children in relation to their mental and emotional wellbeing. However, teachers reported various levels of confidence in emotionally supporting pupils following a crisis (Alisic, 2012; Green et al., 2015; Johnson & Ronan, 2014).

Alongside the role of the teacher, the literature measured the impact of teacher-led classroom-based interventions to improve pupil outcomes following a crisis. These interventions involved teachers attending training or receiving a manual and delivering the interventions to their whole class. Although the interventions varied in their focus (direct processing of trauma or resilience-based focus and direct or indirect impact), the content within both contexts demonstrated areas which improved pupil wellbeing following a crisis. These interventions included the following content, methods and strategies: psychoeducation (Baum et al., 2013; Berger et al., 2007; Seyle, Widyatmoko & Silver, 2013); narrative techniques (Baum et al., 2013; Berger et al., 2007; Gupta & Zimmer, 2008); meditation and relaxation (Berger et al., 2007; Seyle et al., 2013); art therapy (Berger et al., 2013; Ho et al., 2017); understanding emotions and impact on functionality (Baum et al., 2013; Wolmer et al., 2003; Wolmer et al.,

2011; Seyle et al., 2013); grief and loss (Gupta & Zummer, 2008; Wolmer et al., 2003); and addressing misconceptions and planning for the future (Gupta & Zummer, 2008; Wolmer et al., 2003). These aspects within the interventions demonstrated areas in which classrooms could provide support for children following a crisis. Wolmer et al. (2011) showed that although participants with previous traumatic life events showed greater improvements after the intervention, all participants still benefitted demonstrating a strength in universal classroom supports. Additionally, alongside the need for training to support teacher confidence, the classroom-based interventions highlighted a need for teachers to access training in order to improve pupil outcomes (Baum et al., 2013; Gupta & Zimmer, 2008; Wolmer et al., 2003).

The literature demonstrated how whole-school approaches can support pupils following a crisis. The reviewed papers highlighted that teacher wellbeing can impact pupils' wellbeing. Teacher peer support (Alisic, 2012) and emotional and structural support from school management (Alisic, 2012; Fletcher & Nicholas, 2016; Seyle et al., 2013) helped teachers feel more confident and secure in supporting their pupils following a crisis. Additionally, professional collaboration indirectly can increase pupil support after a crisis. Professional collaboration between teaching staff can provide reassurance and develop confidence for teachers which would create consistency in wellbeing support for pupils (Johnson & Ronan, 2014). Multiagency professional collaboration also provides improved and consistent support for children, through: teacher training (Gupta & Zimmer, 2008; Ducey & Stough, 2011); creating collaborative and consistent mandates, protocols and policies (Rees & Seaton, 2011); and involving psychological services to provide advice, support and debriefing (Nickerson & Zhe, 2004). A final whole-school approach which can support children following a crisis is providing community support. Continuous

communication with home during and following a crisis meant schools had a greater understanding of their pupils' experiences and therefore how to support their needs (Ducey & Stough, 2011; Fletcher & Nicholas, 2016). Furthermore, it was identified that the school itself was often a community hub and therefore being open could be a protective factor for children following a crisis (Convery et al., 2010; Ducey & Stough, 2011; Fletcher & Nicholas, 2016).

Discussion

A key finding from this review is the important role of the teacher in supporting children's wellbeing following a crisis which is advocated by previous literature (Vernberg & Vogel, 1993). Teachers used a variety of strategies to support children's emotional wellbeing following a crisis as outlined in the results. Coping assistance was provided in a relational manner, implicating the need for positive pupil-teacher relationships to support the transition back to school after the current crisis. However, many teachers expressed a lack of confidence in responding to children's emotional needs following a crisis. In the context of Covid-19, professional learning opportunities may be required to build teacher self-efficacy. This could include training on trauma-informed approaches, loss and bereavement or psychological first aid.

This review also supports the efficacy of universal teacher-delivered interventions. Resilience, or the ability to 'bounce back' following a massive crisis such as a flu pandemic (Masten & Obradovic, 2008, p.9), was a key element within the interventions. By equipping children with skills to promote healthy adaptation following Covid-19, resiliency can be fostered. Within Scotland, many programmes currently exist to support resilience such as the Compassionate and Connected Classroom Curricular Resource (Education Scotland, 2019).

Schools also provided indirect support to children through whole-school approaches.

The psychological impacts of quarantine on adults are well documented (Brooks et al., 2020) and an important finding from this review is the need to support staff well-being. Opportunities for peer-support were perceived to be effective in supporting recovery for students and teachers alike, highlighting the importance of social support as a protective factor following a crisis (Eustace et al., 1999; Self-Brown et al., 2013). School and multiagency professional collaboration during crisis intervention were also emphasised as effective components of whole school crisis intervention. Furthermore, clear communication and the development of consistent school guidelines were valued by teaching staff. Finally, prolonged school absence following a crisis can significantly increase stress for families (Convery et al., 2010). Schools prioritised links with families through the provision of resources, increased communication using technology, supporting disadvantaged families and providing guidance on supporting children with additional support needs in the home (Ducy & Stough, 2011).

As educational psychologists (EPs) in Scotland work within an ecological framework (Scottish Executive, 2002) they are well placed to support the response to Covid-19. Considering the findings of this review, EPs have a potential role to play in building school capacity by offering training for teachers, supporting staff wellbeing and encouraging schools to identify their existing strengths. Linking with families to support transition and re-engagement, supporting the development and implementation of universal interventions to build resilience, and collaborating with professionals to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families will also be crucial. Finally, future research is required to investigate the impacts of Covid-19 on the school-community. Specifically, there is a lack of research exploring the experiences of children with additional support needs during crises or the role of pupil voice in the recovery process.

This review provides a unique contribution in that it is the first synthesis of school-based supports for primary aged children following a range of crises with implications for Covid-19. It does, however, have several limitations. Firstly, due to the absence of research on school supports following a pandemic, the validity of the review's findings when applied to Covid-19 is limited by its reliance on general crisis literature. Secondly, only two of the 19 papers are UK based and therefore cultural differences should be considered when applied to Scotland. Thirdly, the review includes both quantitative and qualitative research which provided challenges when drawing conclusions due to the heterogeneity of the data. Finally, only one of the papers contained longitudinal data and therefore the long-term efficacy of supports are unknown.

In conclusion, this systematic review investigated ways in which schools have supported children following a range of crises in order to inform school recovery planning in the aftermath of Covid-19. This mixed-methods review highlighted the ecological nature of supports. Schools supported children within the classroom through responsive teaching and universal resilience-building interventions. Whole-school approaches involving the promotion of staff wellbeing, professional collaboration and home-school links were also perceived to be important elements of crisis intervention. EPs can play a valuable part in supporting the return to school at the level of the child, family, school and local authority. Future research is required to investigate the impact of Covid-19 on children's mental health and educational outcomes.

Rose Bangs, Emma Ní Bhrádaigh, Christie Brown & Eoin Keane

Correspondence

Rose Bangs

Trainee Educational Psychologist
2391649@dundee.ac.uk

References

- Adams, Z.W., Sumner, J.A., Danielson, C.K. et al. (2014). Prevalence and predictors of PTSD and depression among adolescent victims of the Spring 2011 tornado outbreak. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 55(9), 1047–1055.
- Alisic, E. (2012). Teachers' perspectives on providing support to children after trauma: A qualitative study. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 27(1), 51–59.
- Ayub, M., Poongan, I., Masood, K. et al. (2012). Psychological morbidity in children 18 months after Kashmir Earthquake of 2005. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 43(3), 323–336.
- Baum, N., Cardozo, L., Pat-Horenczyk, B. et al. (2013). Training teachers to build resilience in children in the aftermath of war: A cluster randomised trial. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 42(4), 339–350.
- Berger, R. & Gelkopf, M. (2009). School-based intervention for the treatment of tsunami-related distress in children: A quasi-randomised controlled trial. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 78(6), 364–371.
- Berger, R., Pat-Horenczyk, R. & Gelkopf, M. (2007). School-based intervention for prevention and treatment of elementary-students' terror-related distress in Israel: A quasi-randomised controlled trial. *Journal of Traumatic Stress: Official Publication of The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies*, 20(4), 541–551.
- Brock, S.E., Sandoval, J. & Lewis, S. (1996). *Preparing for crises in the schools: A manual for building school crisis response teams*. Brandon, VT: Clinical Psychology Publishing Company.
- Brooks, S.K., Webster, R.K., Smith, L.E. et al. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: Rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*, 395, 912–920.
- Convery, I., Balogh, R. & Carroll, B. (2010). Getting the kids back to school: Education and the emotional geographies of the 2007 Hull floods. *Journal of Flood Risk Management*, 3(2), 99–111.
- Coombe, J., Mackenzie, L., Munro, R. et al. (2015). Teacher-mediated interventions to support child mental health following a disaster: A systematic review. *PLoS Currents*, 7, 1–13.
- Ducy, E.M. & Stough, L. (2011). Exploring the support role of special education teachers after Hurricane Ike: Children with significant disabilities. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(10), 1325–1345.
- Education Scotland (2019). *The Compassionate and Connected Classroom curricular resource*. Livingston, Scotland: Education Scotland.
- Eustace, K., MacDonald, C. & Long, N. (1999). Cyclone Bola: A study of the psychological after-effects. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping*, 12(3), 285–298.
- Fletcher, J. & Nicholas, K. (2016). What can school principals do to support students and their learning during and after natural disasters? *Educational Review*, 68(3), 358–374.
- Green, J., Holt, G., Kwong, M. et al. (2015). School- and classroom-based supports for children following the 2013 Boston Marathon attack and manhunt. *School Mental Health*, 7(2), 81–91.
- Gupta, L. & Zimmer, C. (2008). Psychosocial intervention for war-affected children in Sierra Leone. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 192(3), 212–216.
- Ho, R.T., Lai, A.H., Lo, P.H. et al. (2017). A strength-based arts and play support program for young survivors in post-quake China: Effects on self-efficacy, peer support, and anxiety. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 37(6), 805–824.
- Johnson, V. & Ronan, A. (2014). Classroom responses of New Zealand school teachers following the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. *Natural Hazards*, 72(2), 1075–1092.
- Jørgensen, B.F., Skarstein, D. & Schultz, J.H. (2015). Trying to understand the extreme: School children's narratives of the mass killings in Norway July 22, 2011. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 8, 51–61.
- Kar, N. (2006). Psychosocial issues following a natural disaster in a developing country: A qualitative longitudinal observational study. *International Journal of Disaster Medicine*, 4(4), 169–176.
- Kar, N. & Bastia, B.K. (2006). Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and generalised anxiety disorder in adolescents after a natural disaster: A study of comorbidity. *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health*, 2(1), 17.
- Kar, N., Thirthalli, J. & Murali, N. (2001). Post-traumatic stress disorder in children following disaster. *Kerala Journal of Psychiatry*, 16, 7–14.
- Masozera, M., Bailey, M. & Kerchner, C. (2007). Distribution of impacts of natural disasters across income groups: A case study of New Orleans. *Ecological Economics*, 63(2), 299–306.
- Masten, A.S. & Obradovic, J. (2008). Disaster preparation and recovery: Lessons from research on resilience in human development. *Ecology and Society*, 13(1), 9.
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J. & Altman, D.G. (2010). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *International Journal of Surgery*, 8(5), 336–341.
- Nickerson, A. & Zhe, E. (2004). Crisis prevention and intervention: A survey of school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools*, 41(7), 777–788.
- Pfefferbaum, B., Jacobs, A.K., Griffin, N. & Houston, J.B. (2015). Children's disaster reactions: The influence of exposure and personal characteristics. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 17(7), 56.

- Rees, P. & Seaton, N. (2011). Psychologists' response to crises: International perspectives. *School Psychology International*, 32(1), 73–94.
- Scottish Executive, (2002). Review of provision of educational psychology services in Scotland, *The Currie Report*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.
- Self-Brown, S., Lai, B.S., Thompson, J.E. et al. (2013). Posttraumatic stress disorder symptom trajectories in Hurricane Katrina affected youth. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 147(1), 198–204.
- Seyle, D., Widyatmoko, C. & Silver, R. (2013). Coping with natural disasters in Yogyakarta, Indonesia: A study of elementary school teachers. *School Psychology International*, 34(4), 387–404.
- Sprang, G. & Silman, M. (2013). Post-traumatic stress disorder in parents and youth after health-related disasters. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 7(1), 105–110.
- Vernberg E.M. & Vogel J.M. (1993). Interventions with children after disasters. *Journal of Clinical and Child Psychology*, 22(4), 485–498.
- Wolmer, L., Hamiel, D., Barchas, J.D. et al. (2011). Teacher-delivered resilience-focused intervention in schools with traumatised children following the second Lebanon war. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 24(3), 309–316.
- Wolmer, L., Laor, N., Dedeoglu, C. et al. (2005). Teacher-mediated intervention after disaster: A controlled three-year follow-up of children's functioning. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 46(11), 1161–1168.
- Wolmer, L., Laor, N. & Yazgan, Y. (2003). School Reactivation Programs after disaster: Could teachers serve as clinical mediators? *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 12, 363–381.
- World Health Organization (2020). *WHO Coronavirus disease dashboard*. Retrieved 21 July 2020 from: <https://covid19.who.int/>.

Wellbeing in a digital world: What can EPs do?

Jordan Ford, Eilidh MacIver & Leisa Randall

1.1 Introduction

‘How do people interface with technologies? How does technology sculpt us? How do people become addicted to technology and what can we do about this? How does technology change us as a species?’

These were questions posed by Simon Bignell, founder of the BPS’s Cyberpsychology Division, in *The Psychologist* (August 2019, Vol 32, pp.54–55).

AS AN educational psychologist, you may find yourself advising on parenting approaches to managing screen time; supporting young people with anxiety arising from social media; encouraging the use of websites to provide support for mental health or working with a school to tackle (cyber)bullying. This article explores digital wellbeing issues, provides recommendations and describes some early work by educational psychologists (EPs) and trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) in Scotland in this area.

1.2 National Context

In Scotland, the Mental Health Strategy’s (2017–2027) progress report (November 2019), reflects a requirement for more research regarding the impact of digital technology on adolescent mental health and sleep. The Scottish Government (2020a) has since completed an intensive review which highlights the need for further studies, due to a limited evidence base.

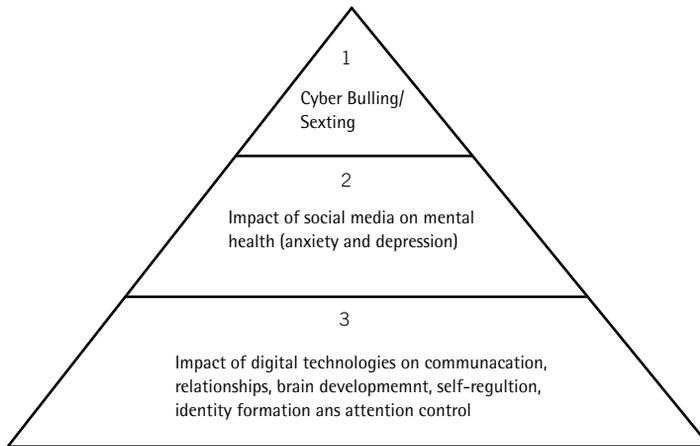
At the same time, the Scottish Government’s Digital Strategy (page.24, 2017), aims to focus efforts on ‘building digital literacy and confidence from the early years onwards.’ Digital devices are now an everyday feature of both school and home life, with some local authorities introducing free iPads for all pupils from P6 to S6 (BBC, 2019). Although in principal this appears to be a positive proposal for supporting pupils with their education, the impact of using digital devices on mental health and wellbeing needs to be further explored.

1.3 Impact of Covid-19

The global Covid-19 pandemic has raised questions about society’s relationship with the digital world. Once seen as luxury items, having technological devices that connect to the internet are now seen as a human necessity to support families during self-isolation to access work, education and social interactions. ‘Connecting Scotland’, an initiative to help vulnerable individuals get online, supports the concept that the internet is now considered essential to all households, particularly when people are advised to ‘stay home’ (Scottish Government, 2020b).

With UK schools closed from 23 March 2020, education staff have navigated a new territory where they must deliver lessons and support pupil’s wellbeing online. The Children’s Commissioner (2020), created a ‘five a day’ approach to support children to consider their own ‘digital diet’ during lockdown. This advice recommended striking a healthy balance between online and offline activities. The Office of National Statistics

Figure 1.



(2020), discovered that online activities have dominated UK families' daily routines for coping with the lockdown. The Scottish Government (2020c), have formulated advice to support parents to home-school their children, mainly through use of online resources. However, with the majority of these supports focused around screen use, it is difficult to evaluate the potential effect this increased reliance on digital devices may have on individuals in the long run. Now more than ever, there is an important role for EPs to offer guidance to parents and carers on how to support pupils to have healthy relationships with digital devices and help families adapt to this change in routine. Future EP research directions could focus on exploring best practice related to online pedagogy. Furthermore, EPs could help shape national guidance by discovering strategies to support teachers, children and young people adjust to a 'new normal.'

2. Digital Wellbeing

EPs have an important and in demand role in supporting the wellbeing of children and young people as highlighted within a recent inspection report of Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) and through internal EPSs surveys (Education Scotland, 2019; Greig et al., 2019). Education Scotland, BPS and ASPEP (2019) recommend that EPSs must

continue to incorporate supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing within their service delivery. However, with a further recommendation suggested to refine the established Currie functions (SEED, 2002), discovering how and at what level EPs can best support wellbeing in a digital environment requires further exploration (Education Scotland, BPS & ASPEP, 2019).

The internet, social media platforms and electronic devices have evolved and been developed into features of our daily lives as seemingly essential as running water. We are simultaneously discovering the positive and negative impacts of the way we choose to use digital technology. Media focus has typically been on overtly damaging activities such as online bullying and sexting. More recently there has been greater interest in the impact of social media on mental health with the associated rise in mental health problems particularly amongst young females, (Appendix 1, Scottish Government Mental Health Strategy, September 2018) and the impact of the growth in sales of mobile phones in the last 10 years (Twenge, 2017). Of less interest, although of fundamental significance, is the impact of the way we use technology on our communication, relationships, attachments and identity.

A way to conceptualise this is shown in the diagram above (Figure 1).

Walker (2015) at the University of Leeds argues for the 'digisystem' of an individual to be added to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. This digisystem cuts across the micro, exo and macrosystems allowing the individual to interact with all three levels through a digital self. Shankardass et al. (2018) propose a unified ecological framework in which wellbeing is considered across the connected physical and digital places we inhabit. Technology effectively liberates the agency of the individual from being restricted to the microsystem of a physical space. It also provides the benefits and the drawbacks of anonymity, accessibility and affordability (Aitken, 2016).

The impact of social media is evident across all age ranges in society. For example, increased use of social media at night and emotional investment in social media has been linked to poorer quality sleep, increased anxiety and depression in adolescents (Woods & Scott, 2016). The negative impact of 'selfies' on women's body image is another area where direct use of social media has been shown to harm mental health (Mills et al., 2018).

Indirectly, the impact of social media on parents' and carers' interactions with their children has been found to be potentially damaging. One of the key concerns relates to attachment, with a significant positive association between insecure attachment (anxious and avoidant) and intensive and dysfunctional parental use of social media (D'Arienzo et al., 2019).

Social media use also has many positives associated with it. It can provide a chance for young people to develop an identity and practice relationship management strategies (Wang & Edwards, 2016). For adults, it can be a place of support. Many social media supports exist for parents or carers of children with a specific condition. These provide help and information for parents and a chance to feel connected to others with a similar experience (Barton et al., 2019). Digital wellbeing is therefore relevant to the work of EPs.

3. Implications for EP practice

At a universal level, RSHP (relationships, sexual health and parenthood) education, within the Curriculum for Excellence, begins to address online interactions in second level 2 (P5 to P7) by getting pupils to consider online friends, what they do online and being smart online. It is not until third and fourth (S1 to S3) that the concept of the digital world having the potential to affect wellbeing is introduced. With children being impacted by device use sometimes from birth, the need to provide support for parents and young children on digital wellbeing is becoming increasingly pressing.

ASPEP's 2018 position paper supports EPs role in developing, delivering and evaluating universal and targeted interventions for supporting children and young people's mental health. Public Health England (2019) conducted a synthesis of systematic reviews of 113 mental health and wellbeing interventions for children and young people. A number of interventions involved digital world related topic areas (such as cyberbullying, digital citizenship and social media etiquette). However, gaps in the literature were revealed with a lack of programmes aiming to reduce anxiety related to internet use/social media use, many involved solely online delivery, and most were aimed at secondary pupils. Other reviews exploring interventions for excessive device use have found weak evidence for therapeutic approaches and issues with generalisability, due to the majority of studies taking place in South Korea (MacCárthaigh, 2020). The apparent lack of specific groupwork for primary school aged children in the UK, represents a gap in research on the topic of early intervention for supporting digital wellbeing. EPs can add to the evidence-base of this developing field by gathering practice-based evidence through their work with pupils, parents, carers and school staff.

4. EPs'/TEPs' work in Fife and Midlothian

In Midlothian, a dialogue has been started by EPs with young people and adults regarding the use of digital technology and the way in which this impacts on wellbeing both positively and negatively. This has taken the form of interactive workshops where participants make posters, do a quiz, look at photographs, debate statements and discuss what, if anything, needs to be done by them, their schools and their EPS. The findings from research such as Kimball and Cohen (2019), Barnardo's 2019, The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, 2019 and the Royal Society for Public Health, 2017, were used as background information for these workshops. The workshops have been evaluated very positively, with young people and adults requesting more of the same across the school community as well as making suggestions for what they themselves can do to promote their own wellbeing in relation to their use of technology. A next step is to deliver a family learning event jointly with community and life-long learning services for P7 pupils and their parents/carers. This event will bring together parents, young people and school staff to explore the issues together, perhaps through the format of a World Cafe.

The MSc thesis of a TEP in Midlothian hoped to build on these workshops by extending the project into a programme. However, due to Covid-19 related school closures only one workshop was delivered. The focus of the research shifted to also explore the role the digital world plays in upper primary pupils' lives, through collecting their views and information about their online habits. The preliminary aim of this research was to evaluate digital wellbeing workshops as a method of intervention. A total of 58 pupils from a P6 and P7 class within a Midlothian primary school were recruited for this study. A cognitive behavioural approach (Beck, 1976; Stallard, 2019) underpinned this workshop, focusing on teaching pupils about how

the digital world can affect thoughts, feelings and behaviour through the presentation of research (Twenge & Campbell, 2019; RCPCH, 2019; Martin et al., 2020). The evaluation results present initial support for the use of workshops as an intervention, offering pupils a unique opportunity to learn and reflect on their identity as 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001). However, further research is essential to strengthen this evidence base. In addition, the results offer an interesting insight into pupils' views on the digital world and their online preferences (for example, what devices, social media platforms and video games are the most popular, etc.). This up to date data will inform future support by enabling workshop material to be appropriate for upper primary pupils.

In Fife, a trainee educational psychologist (TEP) began a research project to gather the views of young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in relation to the protective and risk factors associated with social media use. However, due to the impact of Covid-19 this project has been changed to a systematic literature review. The review aims to investigate the risks and protective factors associated with social media use, with the view of providing key findings around the risks and protective factors to help inform practice when supporting young people with ASD.

5. Recommendations

There are three key messages that EPs are well placed to deliver in the area of digital wellbeing:

The first is that electronic devices and social media platforms are designed to encourage us to embed them as essential features of daily life. It is the way in which we choose to use digital technology that has a positive or negative impact on wellbeing. Young people and adults are adept at citing both the benefits and the drawbacks of their digital lives. What is sometimes less readily acknowledged is the personal agency and decision-making, critical to determining whether we make good use of the technology, or not.

A second message is that adults, as well as young people can benefit from conversations around how they use their technology, and what impact it has on the way they communicate and their relationships. Incorporating consideration of the ‘digisystem’ of a young person into our assessments of need is a priority task for EPs. How well do we consider the digisystem of a young person when reviewing their wellbeing indicators for example?

A third message is that we can build resilience and avoid pathologising normal feelings of sadness and worry. As EPs, we can spread the message that feeling sad does not mean you have depression, feeling worried does not mean you have anxiety, and being upset does not necessarily mean you have some kind of disorder, or need the services of a professional. This is important, given the prolific online advice and supports

for mental health and is very relevant in this new era of school counselling services. We will want to ensure that referral to these services is carefully considered and part of the embedded systems within schools and communities for supporting young people’s mental health. This message must not be lost if we are to encourage young people to take primary responsibility for their own physical and mental health, asking for support from those around them, and then seeking more specialised intervention when and if appropriate.

Jordan Ford, Eilidh MacIver & Leisa Randall

Correspondence

Jordan Ford

Trainee Educational Psychologist
jjford1992@hotmail.co.uk

References

- Aitken, M. (2016). *The Cyber Effect*. London: John Murray.
- ASPEP (Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists) and SDEP (Scottish Division of Educational Psychology) (2018). Educational Psychology and Children and Young People’s Mental Health in Scotland Position Paper. Retrieved from: www.aspep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ASPEP-SDEP-EPS-MH-Position-Paper-2018.pdf
- Barnardo’s (2019). *Left to their own devices: Young people, social media and mental health*.
- Beck, A.T. (1976). *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders*. International Universities Press.
- BBC (2019). First Borders school pupils pick up free iPads. Retrieved from www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-49740276
- Children’s Commissioner (2020). Digital 5 a day: Simple steps to balanced digital diet and better wellbeing. Retrieved from www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/our-work/digital/5-a-day/
- Education Scotland (2019). Educational Psychology Services in Scotland. Making a difference to excellence and equity for all: Outcomes from inspection evidence 2015 to 2018. Retrieved from: <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/EducationalPsychologyServicesInScotland.pdf>
- Education Scotland, BPS, and ASPEP (2019). Making a difference to excellence and equity for all: The future of educational psychology services in Scotland. Retrieved from <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/EPsReportApril2019.pdf>
- Greig, A., Mackay, T. & Ginter, L. (2019). Supporting the mental health of children and young people: A survey of Scottish educational psychology services. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35(3), 257–270.
- Kimball, H. & Cohen, Y. (2019). *Children’s mental health report: Social media, gaming and mental health*. New York: Child Mind Institute.
- MacCárthaigh, S. (2020). The effectiveness of interventions to reduce excessive mobile device usage among adolescents: A systematic review. *Neurology, Psychiatry and Brain Research*, 35, 29–37.
- Office of National Statistics (2020). Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 7 May 2020. Retrieved from: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirus-andthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the horizon*, 9(5), NCB University Press.
- Public Health England. (2019). *Universal approaches to improving children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing: Lay summary report of the synthesis of systematic reviews and grey literature review*.

- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2019). *The health impacts of screen time: A guide for clinicians and parents*.
- Royal Society for Public Health (2017). #Status of mind: *Social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing*.
- Scottish Executive Education Department. (2002). *Review of provision of educational psychology services in Scotland*. Edinburgh: SEED.
- Scottish Government and Digital Scotland (2017). *Realising Scotland's full potential in a digital world: A digital strategy for Scotland*.
- Scottish Government (2018). *Mental Health Strategy, Appendix 1*, p.24.
- Scottish Government (2019). *Mental Health Strategy 2017–2027: Second progress report*
- Scottish Government (2020a). Systematic literature review of the relationship between adolescents' screen time, sleep and mental health. Retrieved from: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/35074/1/systematic-literature-review-relationship-between-adolescents-screen-time-sleep-mental-health.pdf>
- Scottish Government (2020b). *Getting People Online*. Retrieved from www.gov.scot/news/getting-people-online/
- Scottish Government (2020c). *Supporting pupils, parents and teachers – Learning during term 4*. Retrieved from: www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2020/04/supporting-pupils-parents-teachers-learning-during-term-4/documents/supporting-pupils-parents-teachers-learning-during-term-4/supporting-pupils-parents-teachers-learning-during-term-4/govscot%3Adocument/supporting-pupils-parents-teachers-learning-during-term-4.pdf
- Shankardass, K., Robertson, C., Shaughnessy, K. et al. (2018). A unified ecological framework for studying effects of digital places on wellbeing. *Science and Medicine* 227, 119–127.
- Stallard, P. (2019). *Think good, feel good: A cognitive behavioural therapy workbook for children and young people*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Twenge, J.M. (2017). *iGen*. Simon & Schuster.
- Twenge, J.M. & Campbell, W.K. (2018). Associations between screen time and lower psychological wellbeing among children and adolescents: Evidence from a population-based study. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 12, 271–283.
- Walker, A. (2015). *The ecology of digital childhood: The 'Digisystem'*. Retrieved from www.aishawalker.com/2015/07/06/digistem

What worked within an external SEBN provision and utilising how to support re-engagement post Covid-19

Lynne Fernie

Re-engagement in education for children and young people after lockdown may be a challenging aspect for all, especially those who have had previous disengagements with education. This article explores the implications for educational psychologists (EPs) working with children and young people who are out with their local mainstream and experienced challenges in engagement in education previously. A Working On What Works (WOWW) project undertaken in an external social, emotional and behavioural needs (SEBN) provision prior to Covid-19 focused on building positive relationships and engaging young people in their education. The project results have formed new implications as a result of Covid-19. The current article provides a description of how previous educational psychology practices and interventions, which promote positive relationship building are key for the re-engagement of pupils in their education post Covid-19.

DESPITE education authorities across Scotland being led by inclusion legislation (Standards in Scotland's School Act 2000; the Education (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009) and policies (GIRFEC, Scottish Executive, 2005; Promoting Positive Relationships, North Ayrshire 2019), unfortunately, some children and young people with a range of learning, social, emotional and behavioural needs have not remained within their local mainstream school for a variety of reasons. For these children and young people, many have not had a positive experience of education and re-engagement in education can be a challenging task for the learner as well as for the supporting staff at their current educational provision. One of the key aspects to re-engage a learner is to have an understanding of their educational journey and utilise a solution focused approach to encourage building trust and positive relationships. Only once these positive relationships have been established, when learners are feeling safe, can we support learners to re-engage with their education. Given the current circumstances, re-engagement and the return to school from Covid-19 will

provide challenges for staff and learners alike and one that EPs will continue to support through consistent key messages around building positive relationships through relational approaches, nurture, and resilience.

Over the last several years, nurture has become a priority for many authorities as we are continuously seeing improvements in attainment and engagement (Education Scotland, 2019). Improvements in attainment and engagement are not specifically related to the use of any one tool or resource, but through using positive relational interventions as a vehicle to build trusting, unconditional positive regard for staff and learners. A systemic review by Evans et al. (2003) found that classroom interventions (e.g. circle time, cognitive behavioural approaches, promoting of mental health education and modifications to the school environments) that support emotional and behavioural difficulties led to a reduction in challenging behaviours (including, peer conflicts, aggressive and violent incidents). However, improvements in positive behaviour were not sustained upon the withdrawal of the intervention. When promoting posi-

tive relationships, relationships should be maintained to have a longitudinal impact on learners who often display distressed, challenging, or non-engagement behaviours (Evans et al., 2003). For children and young people who often display distressed behaviours, it can be difficult for them to see any success within their schooling careers.

Noticing and acknowledging successes, however small, is fundamental to the Working On What Works (WOWW) approach and this serves as a reminder to keep doing things that are positive. Most importantly it opens up a discussion and provides opportunity to build and maintain positive relationships between staff and learners, thus afforded staff and learners a safe environment in which to learn. Adapted by Berg and Shilts (2004), the WOWW approach involves a coach(es) observing children and their teacher in the classroom setting. Its aim is to enhance the quality of education in a classroom by focusing on what is working well for both learners and teachers and using positive psychology to provide effective use of feedback.

This approach fits well with Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (Scottish Executive, 2004) which highlights the importance of children being actively involved in their own learning and assessment, including shaping and reviewing their learning by reflection, setting learning goals and next steps and working in collaboration with their teacher and peers. The WOWW approach also compliments the Scottish Curriculum's focus on health and wellbeing in schools, including developing self-awareness, self-worth, and respect for others and building relationships.

The CfE contains *Building the Curriculum 4*, which sets out key messages about how children and young people develop and can apply their skills. This piece of policy focuses on building: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. Developing a skill set for post-school life was embedded into the WOWW project's aims to help young people develop skills to focus, to re-engage in the

classroom and to enhance their team working abilities. These transferable skills are invaluable for successful destinations and engagement with education may even support young people to go onto further education.

WOWW study and methodology

This WOWW study was undertaken prior the Covid-19 context and new implications have been formed as a result of Covid-19. An external education provider agreed to implement the WOWW approach as the young people were struggling to take advantage of the learning opportunities provided. WOWW was utilised to enhance the current relationships within the school and maintain these relationships to encourage the young people to fully engage in their education and develop transferable skills for transitions to post school. From discussions with the school staff it was clear they promoted positive relationships, however there were difficulties in maintaining relationships and many learners were reluctant to engage. The needs analysis underpinned the school objective to support team working as many of the learners were experiencing difficulties in this area and found developing and maintaining staff and peer relationships challenging. For the WOWW intervention, one of the objectives was to aid further building of positive relationships between learners and staff.

Staff within the external educational establishment undertaken WOWW implementation training sessions and a staff scoping exercise to understand what solution orientated practice was already in place in order to provide a baseline of staff practice.

Several coaching sessions for the school manager were offered in order to provide a deeper understanding of what feedback should look like. The EP modelled the first session alongside the school manager to support introducing the project to the young people. The school manager facilitated the remaining six sessions, with the EP regularly checking in to provide ongoing coaching. The EP attended the last session to gathering feedback and measures.

The social inclusion scale (Secker et al., 2009) consists of the prorated sum over 16 items, and scores can range from 16 to 64, with higher scores representing higher levels of social inclusion. The social inclusion scale was utilised for each pupil as a baseline and at the end of the project eight weeks later. A whole school solution-oriented scaling of the school goals were completed weekly by all the pupils to make an average, which was then displayed on the WOWW wall display.

Results

Overall there were significant differences in results from the social inclusion survey and whole school goal scoring from the WOWW project that evidence the learners being more focused, working better as a team and improved relationships between peers. The goal ratings from learners both increased. The first target of focus saw a 29 per cent increase in their goal rating (from 5.4 to 8.3 out of 10). The second target of team work saw a 31 per cent increase in the learners' rating of the goal (from 5.4 to 8.5 out of 10).

From the social inclusion scale completed by learners, the results highlighted more positive relationships and less negative relationships reported by the young people. There was also an 87 per cent rating (20 out of 23 learners) reduction in 'don't know' ratings, illustrating the young people had learned more about their peers and had opportunities to build relationships. Learners rated a 95 per cent (22 out of 23 learners) improvement in positive relationships with their peers. Furthermore, learners reported a decrease of 74 per cent (17 out of 23 learners) in negative relationships with peers.

The staff completed a pre- and post-questionnaire exploring ethos within their class. Overall staff reported improvement in their observations of their class ethos, which contributed to a change in the overall school ethos and learning environment. The outcomes measures included significant results for the categories of 'respect' ($p=0.02$), 'acceptance' ($p=0.01$), 'tolerance'

($p=0.04$), 'collaboration' ($p=0.01$) and 'relationships' ($p=0.05$).

Conclusions and implications for re-engagement after Covid-19

Moving forward, the results of this study may support EPs to reflect on how to support the return to school after lockdown for vulnerable learners. From this study's findings, it was shown that the WOWW intervention is a candidate vehicle to build relationships within a school and can support learners to feel safe, respect, collaborate and tolerate others. Furthermore, the intervention brought the school together as a whole, staff and learners. By bringing everyone together to work upon shared goals through a positive psychology framework, results highlighted the WOWW intervention supported the establishment of a positive whole school ethos. From this positive ethos, this allowed young people who had negative past experiences of education to reengage in the curriculum, feel safe at school to learn and build upon their peer relationships. This could increase the likelihood of them having better peer relationships, attainment, and transferable skills to enable them to be successful post-school destination. From this project, the results illustrate that relational approaches embedded within WOWW are effective in promoting re-engagement in education. These findings can be applied to other contexts and are worth reflecting upon for the return to school climate.

Following the current Covid-19 climate, it would not be unusual to note that EPs should continue to apply solution-oriented thinking to our next steps for education and to reflect upon what worked well previously. For the return to education, EPs should continue to promote the underlying message that relationships are key and to re-engage learners with education and the wider life of the school community. Hattie (2012) illustrated the need for positive relationships through his previous and current visible learning meta-analysis research. Hattie's (2012) research suggested that the quality

and nature of the relationships teachers have with their students has a larger effect on learners' results ($d=0.52$) and outcomes than socio-economic status, professional development or reading programmes. Schools need to first make staff and learners feel safe and listened to in order to lower any anxieties. Although not ground-breaking, promoting the same consistent message that relational approaches are what is needed to re-engage our children and young people back into education may in fact be the re-assurance education staff need at this complex time.

At this time, education staff are looking for reassurance on how their classes and schools will operate and how they will be able to provide support for the many anxieties and promote the positive mental wellbeing of their learners. Resources and tools may be a vehicle, which education staff may use to feel reassured that they are doing the right thing and doing all they can. However, the real impact will come from re-building relationships and getting to know their learners, again regardless of what 'intervention' they use as a vehicle to re-establish or develop learner-staff and peer relationships. Indeed, Treisman (2016)'s publication from her work with trauma highlights the need for strong positive interactions in order to buffer adversities and support children and young people. From the Safe Hands and Thinking Minds resource (Treisman, 2018) states:

'You don't have to be a therapist to be therapeutic' and 'Every interaction is an intervention', these quotes illustrate that to be therapeutic, it is important to provide positive interaction in order to buffer adversities and make a positive difference in the lives of children and young people.

As seen from the previous WOWW study, staff ethos improved through using positive psychology, feedback and enhancing learner

and staff relationships. This is particularly relevant to the current context as it needs to be considered that positive relational interventions may be a way forward in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in addition to learners. For staff returning to schools, it is important that they are supported effectively in their own transitions back in order to fully provide support for their learners in their classes. They may also need to provide a high level of support for each other whilst adjusting to their new normal. Therefore, an intervention that will promote positive ethos and support staff wellbeing through relational approaches is an aspect that needs to be considered and could be an essential use of educational psychology time.

Only once relationships are re-established, can we look at engagement in the curriculum and support learners who are ready to learn. Until then, EPs may need to promote evidence-based practice and reiterate advice to provide reassurance about our same consistent messages around whole school nurture and promoting positive relationships in order to provide a buffer to adversities and build upon a connected community.

Lynne Fernie

Educational Psychologist
North Ayrshire Psychological Service
Lynnefernie@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the hard work of all the staff at Mirren Park School for collaborating in the implementation of this project and Kevin Muirhead (School manager) for coordinating and providing a vital role in coaching staff and learners.

References

- Berg, I.K. & Shilts, L. (2004). *Classroom solutions: WOWW approach*. Milwaukee, WI: BFTC Press.
- Education Scotland (2019). How well are the Scottish Attainment Challenge authorities improving learning, raising attainment and losing the poverty-related attainment gap? Summary Report. Retrieved 13/6/20, from: <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/SACSummaryReport.pdf>
- Evans, J., Harden, A., Thomas, J. & Benefield, P. (2003). *Support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) in mainstream primary school classrooms: A systematic review of the effectiveness of interventions*.
- Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible Learning for Teachers*. London: Routledge.
- North Ayrshire Council (2019). *Promoting Positive Relationships*. Retrieved 13/6/20, from: www.northayr-edpsychs.co.uk/promoting-positive-relationships-policy/
- Secker, J., Hacking, S., Kent, L. et al. (2009). Development of a measure of social inclusion for arts and mental health project participants. *Journal of Mental Health*, 18(1), 65–72.
- The Scottish Executive (2005). *Getting it right for every child: Proposals for action*. Edinburgh, UK. Retrieved 13/6/2020, from: www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/what-is-girfec.
- The Scottish Government (1980). Education (Scotland) Act. Retrieved 13/6/2020, from: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/44
- The Scottish Government (2004). *Curriculum for excellence – The Curriculum Review Group*. Retrieved 13/6/2020, from: www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/11/20178/45862
- The Scottish Executive (2000). Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000. Retrieved 13/6/2020, from: www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/pdfs/asp_20000006_en.pdf
- Treisman, K. (2016). *Working with relational and developmental trauma in children and adolescents*. London: Routledge.
- Treisman, K. (2018). *Safe Hands and Thinking Minds resource*. Accessed 16/6/20 from: www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Values-section-expanded.pdf

The effectiveness of nurturing approaches on primary-aged children in the UK: A systematic review

Sophie Harker, Bethany Howell, John Niven & Jenny Thorne

Nurturing approaches (NA) derived from the need to support children's social, emotional and behavioural development and their ability to build secure relationships with others (Boxall, 2002). This systematic review follows Hughes and Schlösser's (2014) review of the effectiveness of nurture groups (NGs). The purpose was two-fold: To assess whether the issues highlighted by Hughes and Schlösser (2014) have been addressed; and to evaluate the quality of evidence supporting the implementation of NAs in primary schools across Scotland. Both NGs and whole-school nurture were included, reflecting current nurturing practices in Scotland. 647 articles were initially sourced from a range of databases. Following eligibility screening, eight peer-reviewed articles were identified for appraisal and synthesis using the Downs and Black (1998) research quality checklist and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2012) guidelines. A range of methodological approaches and findings were reported, such as: Improvements in relationships, social skills, emotional regulation, academic engagement and attitudes towards school. Overall, NAs have been shown to relate to positive outcomes for primary school-aged children. However, due to a number of methodological issues, the reliability and generalisability of these findings were questionable. The findings were discussed in relation to the current Scottish context. The rise of whole-school approaches; the importance of inclusive practice; considerations for the use of quantitative and qualitative research in education; and considerations around the impact of the current Covid-19 pandemic were included. Implications for educational psychology practice and future research were discussed, in addition to the limitations of the current review.

Nurture groups

NURTURE GROUPS (NGs) were established in 1969 by educational psychologist (EP) Marjorie Boxall. They arose as targeted interventions to provide children with a safe base to build secure relationships with staff in a school setting (NurtureUK, n.d.). Drawing heavily from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1968, 1969), the positive effects of these secure attachments were hypothesised to improve children's wellbeing and behavioural development. In turn, positive effects have been seen on children's attainment and peer relationships in more recent years (Hughes & Schlösser, 2014).

The rise of whole-school nurture in Scotland

While NGs were originally designed as a targeted intervention, the use of universal nurturing approaches (NAs) in schools has gained traction in Scotland in recent years (Kearney & Nowek, 2019). NAs have expanded in scope, with an increasing focus placed on effecting positive change at a whole-school level. This is achieved by promoting positive relationships and enhancing wellbeing in all elements of the school experience (Kearney & Nowek, 2019; Weare, 2015). In Scotland, a nation-wide initiative geared at reducing the poverty-related attainment gap was launched in 2015, under the title of The Scottish Attainment Challenge (Scottish Government, 2018). Health and

wellbeing is now arguably a central theme within the Scottish educational context, given that it is a key focus of the National Improvement Framework for education and a core component of Scotland's national Curriculum for Excellence (Black et al., 2017; Education Scotland, 2016). *Applying Nurture as a Whole-School Approach* (ANWSA) is a framework created by Education Scotland (2016), aimed at supporting the self-evaluation of NAs across school settings.

Previous literature

Given that NAs have been adopted throughout schools in Scotland, and in light of the believed contribution NAs have had with regard to closing the attainment gap (Education Scotland, 2016), it was considered important to review the evidence base for this. The current review considered the relevant literature between 2014 and 2020. Prior to 2014, there had been a number of studies investigating the effectiveness of NGs and their impact on children and young people's (CYP) academic achievements and emotional wellbeing (Hughes & Schlösser, 2014). Hughes and Schlösser's (2014) systematic review examined this research and highlighted gaps in the literature, concluding that there was a need for clearer and more robust future research in this area. Overall, Hughes and Schlösser (2014) concluded that NGs were effective in supporting the emotional wellbeing of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBDs). To that end, they argued that NAs may have whole-school benefits. Furthermore, Hughes and Schlösser (2014) considered that NAs may improve peer relationships and encourage teachers to become more nurturing.

Aims of the current review

The present review aimed to expand upon Hughes and Schlösser's (2014) findings by evaluating the literature since 2014; by reviewing the current evidence regarding the impact of NAs on primary school pupils' outcomes in the UK. Non-UK studies were

excluded in an effort to increase the relevance to the current Scottish educational context. Both NGs and whole-school approaches were included in the current systematic review.

Research question

What does recent evidence suggest about the impact of nurturing approaches on outcomes for primary school-aged children in the UK?

Method

Search procedure

The papers discussed were sourced through the following databases: Google Scholar, Dundee University Library and ERIC. The research question required including all forms of NAs, therefore, the search terms used were: ('nurture approach*' OR 'nurturing approach' OR 'nurture group*' OR 'whole school nurture' OR 'whole-school nurture') AND 'primary school*'. The search was restricted to articles published between 2014 to 2020 in order to review the research conducted since Hughes and Schlösser's review in 2014.

Inclusion criteria

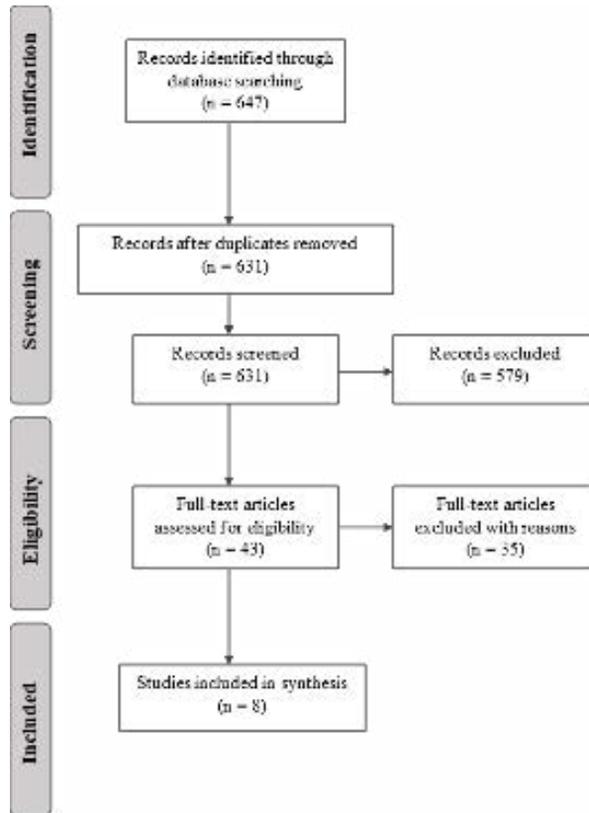
The inclusion criteria below were used to select the articles:

- NAs involving primary school-aged children
- UK studies
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Empirical research
- Published between 2014–2020
- Relates directly to the research question.

Summary of data extracted

The information gathered from the eight studies within this review included: Details of study design; sample size and characteristics; main variables and measures used; type of data analysis used; and findings. Moreover, contrary to the Hughes and Schlösser (2014) review, qualitative and mixed-method studies were included to increase the scope of the evidence reviewed.

Figure 1: Adapted PRISMA 2009 flow diagram. Adapted from *Preferred Reporting Items For Systematic Review And Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement* by D. Moher, A. et al. and The PRISMA Group, 2009, *International Journal of Surgery*, 8(5), P.336–341.



Quality checklist

Hughes and Schlösser (2014) used the Downs and Black checklist (1998) to assess the quality of studies. In order to replicate this process, this checklist was used with the eight selected articles within this review. Hughes and Schlösser (2014) adapted the 27 items in the Downs and Black checklist (1998), removing or editing items, in order to apply the checklist to an educational setting. The checklist was also adapted for the purposes of this review.

The criteria for assessing the ‘weight’ of qualitative research differs from its quantitative counterpart in multiple ways (Hammarberg et al., 2016). A series of

guidelines developed by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2012) provide a quality appraisal framework for reviewing qualitative research (see Appendix H of NICE, 2012). In addition to the Downs and Black (1998) checklist, these guidelines informed critical evaluation undertaken in this review.

Results

Overleaf, Table 1 outlines the data gathered from the eight studies included in the current systematic review. This table was adapted from Hughes and Schlösser’s (2014) paper and highlights the key methodological areas and findings of each paper.

Table 1. Summary of included studies.

Study	Type of NA	Design	Sample	Measures	Data analysis	Findings	Quality rating
Balisteri (2016)	Part-time NG	Quantitative Self-report questionnaires used to assess teacher and pupil views of child-teacher relationship Pupils were asked to draw a picture of themselves and their teacher at school (Fury, 1996). Completed in Oct/Nov and then again in Jun/July	N= 63 pupils (aged 7–11) 42 boys, 21 girls. Across 10 primary schools – 5 with NGS (31) and 5 'matched schools' without (32).	Pupils: Teacher Acceptance Scale (Harrison, Clarke & Ungerer, 2007) Teachers: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1992) Fury's (1996) development of a quantitative child-family drawing method	2x2 mixed ANOVAs: Tests for skewness and kurtosis Means and SD for each of the dependent variables Drawings analysed by two coders, scored on 8 dimensions	Fury's (1996; 1997) child-family drawing method: NG children's levels of vulnerability improved over the year, to a point where it was comparable to that of children in mainstream classes ($p < .018$). Stronger feelings of closeness ($p < .005$) and teacher acceptance ($p = .003$) were also reported by teachers and students attending nurture groups	82%
Coleman (2020)	Whole-school	Qualitative Case study of three schools Interviews via phone (with HTs) and face-to-face (with HTs and school staff) Questionnaires (open-ended and Likert scale questions) taken at two time points from school staff who attended NurtureUK training Researcher observation notes	Staff from three schools enrolled in National Nurturing Schools programme (NurtureUK) in London and South-East England HTs (N=8) and staff (N unspecified) who attended training HTs included in phone-interviews (N=7)	Staff views on the implementation of the NurtureUK training programme Staff views on changes in school culture and ethos following NurtureUK training	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	Near disappearance of exclusions in all schools Change in school culture with positive impacts on behaviour (e.g. fewer children sitting outside school office, less shouting in school)	50%

Study	Type of NA	Design	Sample	Measures	Data analysis	Findings	Quality rating
Cunningham, Hartwell, & Kreppner (2019)	Part-time NG	Mixed-methods Quantitative: Child-reports of social skills Teacher-report of child's social skills Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews with children	N= 16 Age: 6-9.75 yrs M=7.35 From five primary schools in England	Child-report of social skills: Child Role Play Measure (CRPM; Dodge et al., 1985) Teacher-report: Taxonomy of Problematic Social Situations (TPSS; Dodge et al., 1985) Interviews: Children's views of their social skills in NGs and other contexts in school	Child and teacher reports: Mean differences between compared (before and after NG) Descriptive statistics, p -value, effect sizes Cronbach's alpha for reliability Interviews: Thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-stage process	CRPM: statistically significant improvement in child-report social skills over time, with large effect size. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) at time one, was not reliable. TPSS: non-significant improvement in teacher-report, ($p=.05$), medium effect size. Reliable at both times. Used the Reliable Change Index due to small sample size 9 children - +ve reliable change 4 no reliable change 3 -ve reliable change Interviews: children said NGs made them 'happy' 'cheerful' 'comfortable', felt their turn-taking, sharing and talking to peers skills improved	87%

Study	Type of NA	Design	Sample	Measures	Data analysis	Findings	Quality rating
McNicol & Reilly (2018)	Whole-school	Mixed-methods Ongoing Action Enquiry Research model with Nurture Implementation Team Two focus groups with pupils Semi-structured interview with the Speech and Language Therapist Researcher observation Quantitative results were not discussed	Staff: Nurture implementation team in one primary school in Scotland, consisting of: Senior Management Team, Nurture Coaching and Modelling Officer, three members of Educational Psychology Service, a Research Assistant, a Speech and Language Therapist Pupils: N= 16, 9-12 years	Pre- and post- questionnaire of knowledge, understanding and confidence of change methodologies ANWSA Readiness Questionnaire Adapted ANWSA Self-Evaluation Toolkit (with staff and pupils) Needs Analysis Data: pupil statistics, SIMD data, speech and language data, attainment data and observation data, quality improvement review	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) Triangulation of data from multiple sources	Pupils were familiar with the restorative meeting format Pupils often failed to follow up with the outcomes of restorative meetings There was a significant fall in the number of restorative meetings taking place as their quality improved Pupils sometimes felt overwhelmed by the pace of language used by staff	57%

Study	Type of NA	Design	Sample	Measures	Data analysis	Findings	Quality rating
Sloan, Winter, Connolly, & Gildea (2020)	NG	Non-randomised, control group trial evaluation.	N=298, 30 NGs; matched controls N=88, 14 schools (with no nurture provision)	Boxall profile (BP, Bennathan, 1998) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ, Goodman, 1997) Academic outcomes: School enjoyment Attendance Literacy Numeracy	T-tests and multilevel regression modelling to compare intervention and control groups for each outcome.	Improvements in SEBD outcomes for pupils participating in NGs compared to control group, using BP and SDQ: Statistically significant differences ($p<.001$) were found for all outcomes of BP measures and the SDQ. Effects of NG participation were found to be large ($g>0.8$; Cohen, 1977) for the developmental strand ($g=1.352$) and the diagnostic profile ($g=-0.904$) of the BP; and the total difficulties score ($g=-1.303$) and prosocial scores ($g=0.926$) of the SDQ. NG participation had no effect on pupils' literacy ($p=.230$) or numeracy outcomes ($p=.822$) or attendance rates ($p=.101$) School size was found to be a potentially mediating variable and inversely related to particular SEBD outcomes. Pupils with lower pre-test ratings on BP and SDQ appeared to make greater progress in NGs when compared to pupils with higher pre-test scores. NGs tended to have larger effects on female pupils compared to male pupils, in relation to reductions in Total Difficulties ($p=.013$), Emotional Symptoms ($p<.001$) and Peer Problems ($p=.008$) in SDQ ratings	78%

Study	Type of NA	Design	Sample	Measures	Data analysis	Findings	Quality rating
Symeonidou & Robinson (2018)	NG	Mixed-methods Qualitative and quantitative online survey questions for teachers and teaching assistants who have ran NGs with both children with and without Autism Spectrum Disorder	N=8 6 teachers (4 f, 2 m) 2 teaching assistants (2 f) From mainstream and additional support needs schools throughout Scotland (recruited via Nurture Group Network Scotland)	Online Qualitrics survey 32 close- and open-ended questions Qualitative: questions about social interaction, emotion regulation, behaviour management and academic achievements Quantitative: Social Skills Teacher Rating Form in TRIAD Social Skills Assessment (TSSA, Stone et al., 2010) Areas: emotional competence, self-control, social skills	Qualitative: thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006) Quantitative: descriptive analysis, pie charts, bar charts Level of change after NGs in emotional competence, self-control and social skill factors measured	Qualitative: Emotional regulation – emotional expression increased after NGs: consistent env of NGs supported children's emotional regulation Interpersonal relationships (n=6): the NG environment helps for attachments with peers and staff (n=4) Quantitative/Mixed results: Moderate changes in relation to understanding basic emotions Moderate changes in behavioural skills (settling down in class) Not many changes in expressing and identifying complex emotions, in accepting discipline or in interactions with peers No clear changes to academic achievement – teachers expressed high achievement during NGs but also expressed low expectations	77%

Study	Type of NA	Design	Sample	Measures	Data analysis	Findings	Quality rating
Syrnyk (2014)	Adapted NG	Qualitative Analysis of child's drawings at beginning and end of last term Interviews with child at beginning and end of last term	N=6 All male Average age: 7yrs 8mths Range: 6-9 yrs	Pupil drawings: Adapted version of Kinetic Family Drawing instrument (Burns & Kaufman, 1972; Knoff & Prout, 1985) Semi-structured interviews with pupils	Drawings: Evaluation procedure adapted from Kaufman and Wohl (1992) Size, perspective and participants at each time shown in a table and potential reasons for this discussed 'story' discussed by showing each child's drawings at time 1 and 2 - discussed reasons for this Interviews: Answers to each question analysed for positive or negative responses	Researcher concluded that the children were 'Generally positive about their immersion in the Nurture approach' 'capable of noticing...holistic and distinct differences between their current and previous educational experiences' (pg.171) Growing fondness for teaching staff; children found their teachers to be supportive and understanding. Children better understanding the day-to-day operations of school over the time period 'school makes me feel lifted' 'school makes me feel good'	74%

Study	Type of NA	Design	Sample	Measures	Data analysis	Findings	Quality rating
Vincent (2017)	Part-time NG	Mixed Methods Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews with staff, pupils and parents. Observations of pupil's response to activities. Quantitative: emotional literacy scores were taken Quantitative results were not discussed	N= 24, from 1 Primary School 8 staff (5 teachers and 3 NG staff) 13 pupils (7-11yr olds) 3 parents	Semi-structured interviews with staff, pupils and parents Focus on: curricular engagement, behaviour and social skills. Pupil interviews: in pairs using a 'walking tour' approach (Clark & Moss 2011), Focus: how they liked NGs and how the NGs helped them. Observations of pupils' response to activities recorded on daily planning and evaluation sheets. Emotional literacy assessment before and towards the end (Faupeil, 2003)	Qualitative Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Patton, 1990) Data collected over two years.	Improved social skills, growth in personal confidence, greater engagement with academic tasks and fewer incidences of undesirable behaviour. Observable behaviours: Better listening and speaking skills, better at turn-taking, recognising and managing emotions, engaging and persevering in activities and academic tasks, more willing to seek advice and speak out in class, interacting with siblings in more constructive ways, becoming more independent at home and reduction in undesirable behaviour (non-compliance with teacher instructions, physical and verbal aggression and frequent altercations with other pupils - school behaviour records support this).	78%

Discussion

Synthesis of findings

This review evaluated the impact of NAs on primary school-aged children's outcomes in the UK. Through a comprehensive literature search and systematic review, the researchers were only able to include eight studies that met the inclusion criteria. Overall, the findings, reliability and statistical rigour between studies were not entirely consistent. Each study had its own methodological limitations and, in light of this, it was possible for general limitations across the empirical research area to be determined.

However, there were some consistent findings identified across the papers included in the analysis. Some papers reported improvements in children's relationships with staff (Balisteri, 2016; Symeonidou & Robinson, 2018; Syrnyk, 2014) and peers (Vincent, 2017). Other studies found that these changes were not as straight-forward; with Symeonidou and Robinson (2018) reporting that there were little to no changes in interactions with peers after attending NGs. Some papers found that NGs improved pupils' social skills (Cunningham et al., 2019; Vincent, 2017) and emotional regulation (Symeonidou & Robinson, 2018; Vincent, 2017). Interestingly, two papers reported little to no improvements in pupils' academic outcomes after attending NGs (Sloan et al., 2020; Symeonidou & Robinson, 2018) whilst Vincent (2017) found an increase in learner engagement in class. There was more agreement between papers, on the impact of NAs on pupils' behavioural outcomes – many reporting that improvements were observed after engagement in a NA (Coleman, 2020; McNicol & Reilly, 2018; Sloan et al., 2020; Symeonidou & Robinson, 2018; Vincent, 2017). Finally, some studies showed that NAs increased pupils' positivity towards school (Cunningham et al., 2019; Sloan et al., 2020; Syrnyk, 2016).

Hughes and Schlösser (2014), following their systematic review, called for future research to include larger sample sizes; control groups; child-reports of their percep-

tions of NAs and more rigorous statistical analyses. Encouragingly, some of the studies identified and included in the present review, did actively seek children's views about the impact of NAs (Balisteri, 2016; Cunningham et al., 2019; McNicol & Reilly, 2018; Syrnyk, 2014; Vincent, 2017), which is a positive development in the evidence-base in relation to earlier literature in this area.

Quantitative methods

Four studies included in the present review implemented quantitative measures, three of these made a clear effort to conduct rigorous statistical analyses – discussing both statistical significance and effect sizes (Balisteri, 2016; Cunningham et al., 2019; Sloan et al., 2020).

Within most of the studies included in the present review, sample sizes were small (Coleman, 2020; Cunningham et al., 2019; McNicol & Reilly, 2019; Symeonidou & Robinson, 2018; Syrnyk, 2014; Vincent, 2017), which suggests there has been little improvement in this aspect of NA study design since 2014. This may limit the generalisability of the findings to the target population and lead to 'unreliable conclusions' (Sarmah & Hazarika, 2012, p.1). However, Sloan et al. (2020) and Balisteri (2016) conducted studies with larger sample sizes and both found promising results. These papers were also the only ones that included the use of control groups, which may more accurately address intervention effects (McKillip, 1992). In future, quantitative research should aim to be of higher statistical quality by including control groups and larger sample sizes.

Qualitative methods

The epistemological base of qualitative research is fundamentally different to quantitative research. As such, the standards by which qualitative and quantitative studies are assessed for quality are distinct. It is important that researchers understand the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative methodologies and are implementing the appropriate steps to ensure quality. Of the studies

which included qualitative methods in this review, quality was considered in line with NICE (2012) guidelines.

Few studies discussed in this review provided adequate detail of the questioning style used to obtain participants' views. Omitting clear questioning protocols has a negative impact on the dependability of the research and makes it difficult to judge the credibility of the reported findings (NICE, 2012). Future qualitative research should strive for greater transparency and clarity when describing the methodological approach adopted.

Member checks or ongoing verification procedures ensure that the emerging interpretations of the researchers capture the experiences and viewpoints of the participants more accurately (Kozleski, 2017). It has been argued that this step is particularly important in research with children because information is filtered through adult interpretations of children's communications (Williams & Hanke, 2007). No studies identified in this review described implementing this step. This is an area future research should improve on, particularly when gathering pupil views.

Scope of research

Notably, only two studies investigating whole-school nurture since 2014 were identified. Unfortunately, these studies focused considerably on implementation and provided little evidence for the benefits of whole-school NAs for CYP. This illustrates the paucity of research in the area of whole-school NAs, thus highlighting the need for future research. The addition of quantitative measures and the implementation of pre- and post-designs would further bolster the evidence for informing practice in this area.

Overall, the papers included in this review showed the positive impact NAs can have on primary school-aged children's behaviours. However, there was less consistency in the evidence in relation to the effect of NAs on

social emotional and behavioural difficulties and educational outcomes. Due to the small sample sizes, lack of control groups and other methodological limitations, it was difficult for the current researchers to generalise these findings to the overall population of children accessing NAs. Moreover, a stark finding arising from this review was the relative lack of current research evidence underpinning the rising popularity of whole-school NAs. This was particularly surprising given that the use of universal NAs in Scottish education is increasing (Kearney & Nowek, 2019).

Family and learner participation

Education authorities in Scotland are required under the provisions of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, to consult with and give due regard to the views of children and young people in relation to decisions that significantly affect them. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 highlights the vital role parents play in children's learning and includes a responsibility for Local Authorities (LAs) to improve partnerships between schools and parents. However, the present review found evidence of only one recent study (Vincent, 2017) which attempted to gather the views of parents, in relation to the effects of NAs on pupils. Similarly, only five studies incorporated the views of CYP (Balisteri, 2016; Cunningham et al., 2019; McNicol & Reilly, 2018; Syrnyk, 2014; Vincent, 2017). Therefore, there is a need for educational psychologists (EPs) engaged in research, development and the implementation of NAs in Scotland's schools, to take the views of CYP and their families into consideration.

The concept of inclusion is salient in the context of Scottish and UK Education (Florian et al., 2017; Scottish Government, 2019) and enshrined in Scots law under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000. The importance of using adapted methods for some children has been recognised in previous literature (Lewis et al., 2008). While some studies used visual methods (Balisteri,

2016; Syrnyk, 2014) – which may be more inclusive due to the reduced demand on social-communication ability – the oversights of inclusive research feel at odds with standards of inclusive practice in education. This should be a point of consideration for future researchers evaluating the impact of NAs.

Grey literature

Many national and local authority policies and approaches in Scottish education are supported by evidence from school audits, inspections and research conducted by EPs. However, such studies are often not published in empirical research journals and are instead shared on LA websites or on Education Scotland's website. This 'grey literature' shows the success of implementation and the impacts of NAs in schools but – due to its unpublished, non-peer-reviewed status – was not included in the current review.

For future systematic reviews, inclusion of reports from EPSs, LAs and Education Scotland may add to the evidence-base for NAs and provide a clearer picture of the impact they have on CYP's outcomes. However, such reports do not always include rigorous statistical analysis or reliable qualitative approaches, therefore should be interpreted cautiously. In future, grey literature should aim to improve upon current research methods. This would demonstrate the extent to which such findings reliably evidence the impact of NAs.

Covid-19 implications

It could be argued that now, more than ever, the need for children to have nurturing relationships is vital in maintaining their well-being, resilience and academic outcomes. The current situation with regard to the Covid-19 epidemic has led to children across Scotland being required to stay at home, with schools having been closed abruptly mid-session, until the next school year. It is unclear how NAs will continue to operate during times when children are required to stay at home for prolonged periods.

Moreover, given the possibility that such measures could be imposed again in future, the need for contingency planning and ensuring sustainability in the delivery of NAs is arguably much needed. Equally, there is uncertainty with regard to how NAs will operate when CYP return to school. Indeed, there may be concerns that such unprecedented change and transition in CYP's lives, including socially distancing from their peers, friends and family, could put more children at risk of missing out on key developmental experiences. Furthermore, there may be particular concerns that some children may be more at risk of exposure to a variety of trauma, adversity, neglect, abuse and mental-health difficulties during this time. Therefore, it could be argued that all children may benefit from trauma-informed staff and the application of nurture principles at a whole-school level (Moore, 2020). However, the potential new structure of schools during the recovery phases of Covid-19 could, in turn, lend themselves to such a whole-school approach. For example, reduced class sizes may better reflect the traditional nature of NGs, which consisted of no more than 12 children (Boxall, 2002). Equally, there may be an increased focus on transitions and re-establishing a secure base within schools, with greater structure and predictability. Supporting children and young people's transitions back to school following such events and experiences is arguably vital. Whole-school approaches may include virtual tours of schools, focusing on new structures and routines; as well as actively seeking CYP's views and assessing needs upon returning to school. For example, through surveys, interviews (Moore, 2020) or other methods of communication and consultation appropriate to the needs of individual schools and establishments. Furthermore, it may be beneficial for EPs and school staff to engage with coaching and training on NAs and trauma-informed practice. Regardless of individual approaches adopted by establishments, it is likely that NAs will be at the heart

of many schools' frameworks to support CYP's transition back into school-life.

Conclusion

This review focused solely on the impact of NAs on primary school-aged children. However, whole-school NAs are also being implemented in secondary schools, which is an area of interest that future systematic reviews could investigate. Limiting the search to the UK restricted the scope to evaluate the impact of NAs more widely, in international settings. Also, the researchers discussed whether broader terms related to NAs may have been more relevant within current practice, such as 'trauma-informed' and 'attachment aware'.

The implications for the role of EPs in supporting CYP, schools and establishments, throughout the recovery following the Covid-19 epidemic, will arguably be significant. HM Inspectors found that EPSs may achieve the greatest impact on the outcomes of CYP by contributing to efforts at the whole-systems level (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], as cited by Education Scotland, 2019, p.3). In order to provide effective service delivery at the whole-school level, it may be argued that EPs must be able to identify universal NAs based on reliable and robust evidence, to ensure approaches can be transported and implemented locally, using effective change methodologies. Educa-

tion Scotland's (2016) inclusion of a change methodology framework based on Fixsen et al.'s (2009) core components of implementation science in their ANWSA national guidance document, arguably highlights the increased role EPs may continue to have in the scaling-up of universal, whole-school NAs throughout Scotland.

The researchers concluded that, whilst the studies showed positive impacts of NAs on children's behavioural outcomes, SEBDs and academic engagement; there were limitations in terms of methodology. Moreover, the general paucity of current research in this area, especially with regard to the impact of whole-school NAs on CYP outcomes, led the researchers to conclude that there is a need for more evidence to accurately determine the impact of NAs on primary school-aged children.

Sophie Harker, Bethany Howell, John Niven & Jenny Thorne

Correspondence

John Niven

Trainee Educational Psychologist
Inverclyde Psychological Service
2393846@dundee.ac.uk

Readers interested in the adapted checklist are welcome to contact the authors for further information.

References

- Balisteri, C. (2016). Nurture groups and teacher-child relationships: Exploring the relationships children in nurture groups establish with their teachers and how these differ from the relationships children in mainstream classrooms develop with their teachers. *International Journal of Nurture in Education* Number, 1(2), 15–27.
- Bennathan, M. (1998). The boxall profile: A guide to effective intervention in the education of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. *Handbook for teachers*. NurtureUK.
- Black, C., Eunson, J., Murray, L. et al. (2017). *Behaviour in Scottish schools research 2016*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Boxall, M. (2002). *Nurture groups in school: Principles and practice*. London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Thematic analysis revised – final. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Burns, R.C. & Kaufman, S.H. (1972). *Actions, styles and symbols in kinetic family drawings (K-FD): An interpretative manual*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Cohen, J. (1977). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioural sciences*. London: Routledge.
- Coleman, M. (2020). Leading the change to establish a whole-school nurturing culture. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 25(1), 68–79.

- Cunningham, L.K., Hartwell, B. & Kreppner, J. (2019). Exploring the impact of Nurture Groups on children's social skills: A mixed-methods approach. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35(4), 368–383.
- Dodge, K.A., McClaskey, C.L. & Feldman, E. (1985). Situational approach to the assessment of social competence in children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 53(3), 344–353.
- Downs, S.H. & Black, N. (1998). The feasibility of creating a checklist for the assessment of the methodological quality both of randomised and non-randomised studies of health care interventions. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 52(6), 377–385.
- Education Scotland (2016). *Applying nurture as a whole school approach. A framework to support the Self-Evaluation of nurturing approaches in schools*. Livingstone, UK: Education Scotland.
- Education Scotland (2019). *Educational psychology services in Scotland: Making a difference to excellence and equity for all: Outcomes from inspection evidence 2015 to 2018*. Livingstone, UK: Education Scotland.
- Faupel, A. (Ed.) (2003). *Emotional literacy: Assessment and intervention, Ages 7–11*. Southampton Psychology Service. London, UK: GL Assessment.
- Fixsen, D.L., Blasé, K.A., Naoom, S.F. & Wallace, F. (2009). Core implementation components. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19(5), 531–540.
- Florian, L., Black-Hawkins, K. & Rouse, M. (2017). *Achievement and Inclusion in Schools (2nd ed.)*. Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Fury, G.S. (1996). *The relation between infant attachment history and representations of relationships in school-aged family drawings* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota).
- Fury, G., Carlson, E.A. & Sroufe, A. (1997). Children's representations of attachment relationships in family drawings. *Child development*, 68(6), 1154–1164.
- Goodman, R. (1997). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: a research note. *A Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38(8), 581–586.
- Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M. & de Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: When to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction*, 31(3) 498–501.
- Harrison, L.J., Clarke, L. & Ungerer, J.A. (2007). Children's drawings provide a new perspective on teacher–child relationship quality and school adjustment. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22(1), 55–71.
- Hughes, N.K. & Schlösser, A. (2014). The effectiveness of nurture groups: A systematic review. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 19(4), 386–409.
- Kaufman, B. & Wohl, A. (1992). *Casualties of Childhood*. New York: Bruner/Mazel.
- Kearney, M. & Nowek, G. (2019). Beyond nurture groups to nurturing approaches: A focus on the development of nurture in the Scottish context. *International Journal of Nurture in Education*, 5(1), 12–20.
- Kozleski, E.B. (2017). The uses of qualitative research: Powerful methods to inform evidence-based practice in education. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 42(1), 19–32.
- Knoff, H.M. & Prout, H.T. (1985). *The kinetic drawing system: Family and school*. Los Angeles, CA: Western Psychological Services.
- McKillip, J. (1992). Research without control groups. In F.B. Bryant et al. (Eds.), *Social Psychological Applications to Social Issues, vol 2. Methodological Issues in Applied Social Psychology*. (pp.159–175). Boston, MA: Springer.
- McNicol, S. & Reilly, L. (2018). Applying nurture as a whole school approach. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 35, 44–63.
- Moore, C. (2020, May 5). Supporting post-lockdown education using six principles of nurture. *Ed Psych Insight*. Retrieved from www.epinsight.com/post/supporting-post-lockdown-education-using-the-6-principles-of-nurture?fbclid=IwAR0KhcPwqKWeXkfQcHTdYrO-ad9xEF-DoPjCle5lFY1HeGVzABzllZ24ZsY
- Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J. et al. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *International Journal of Surgery*, 8(5), 336–341.
- National Institute for Health Care and Excellence (2012). *Methods for the development of NICE public health guidance (3rd edn)*. National Institute for Health Care and Excellence. Retrieved from www.nice.org.uk/process/pmg4/chapter/appendix-h-quality-appraisal-checklist-qualitative-studies
- NurtureUK (n.d.). *What we do: History*. Retrieved from www.nurtureuk.org/what-we-do/history
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Pianta, R. (1992). *Child Parent Relationship Scale*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Center for Advanced Studies on Teaching and Learning.
- Sarmah, H.K. & Hazarika, B.B. (2012). Importance of the size of sample and its determination in the context of data related to the schools of greater Guwahati. *International Journal of Applied Mathematics and Statistical Sciences*, 2(1), 33–48.
- Scottish Government (2018). *The Scottish Attainment Challenge: Equality Impact Assessment Results. Scottish Government*. Retrieved from www.gov.scot/publications/equality-impact-assessment-eqia-results-scottish-attainment-challenge/

- Scottish Government (2019). *Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting: Guidance*. Scottish Government. Retrieved from: www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-presumption-provide-education-mainstream-setting/
- Sloan, S., Winter, K., Connolly, P. & Gildea, A. (2020). The effectiveness of nurture groups in improving outcomes for young children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in primary schools: An evaluation of Nurture Group provision in Northern Ireland. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 108, (104619).
- Stone, W., Ruble, L., Coonrod, E. et al. (2010). TRIAD social skills assessment. *Assessing Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, 2–11.
- Symeonidou, C. & Robinson, A. (2018). Scottish teachers' experiences of the effectiveness of nurture groups in supporting autistic children. *The International Journal of Nurture in Education*, 4(1), 45–56.
- Syrnyk, C. (2013). Capturing the nurture approach: Experiences of young pupils with SEBD. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 19, 154–175.
- Vincent, K. (2017). 'It's small steps, but that leads to bigger changes': Evaluation of a nurture group intervention. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 22(4), 303–316.
- Weare, K. (2015). What works in promoting social and emotional wellbeing and responding to mental health problems in schools. Partnership for Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools. Retrieved from: www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Health_wellbeing_docs/ncb_framework_for_promoting_wellbeing_and_responding_to_mental_health_in_schools.pdf
- Williams, J. & Hanke, D. (2007). Do you know what sort of school I want?: Optimum features of school provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. *Good Autism Practice*, 8(2), 51–63.

Evaluating the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's social, emotional and psychological wellbeing: A systematic review

Kirstie Howard, Heather Quinn & Marel Thomson

This systematic review investigated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children and young people's (CYP) social, emotional and psychological wellbeing (SEPW). It reviewed the current research available around the Covid-19 pandemic and how it relates within a Scottish context. Implications for educational psychology practice and future research were explored. Fifteen articles, including a mixture of qualitative/quantitative studies and narrative reviews were quality assessed. All articles were directly related to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on CYP SEPW. The main findings report that SEPW has been impacted in CYP due to Covid-19. While many of the findings indicate a negative impact on CYP SEPW, there were some positive outcomes. This review also highlighted a range of ecological factors that influenced the severity of this impact, including CYP from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, children with additional support needs (ASN) and parental influences. Ways to mitigate negative responses to the pandemic included suitable interventions, parental support, effective multi-agency working and support and training provision for educational professionals. Further research is required to explore the child's voice in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on their SEPW. There is also a need for Scottish research to ensure the specific needs of CYP in Scotland are being met, following the Covid-19 pandemic.

SIGNIFICANT change has occurred for all children due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Brooks et al., 2020). A pandemic is defined as the worldwide spread of a new disease, to which most people do not have immunity (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2010). The impact of changes such as isolation, lockdown and school closures on social, emotional and psychological wellbeing (SEPW) will be greater for children and young people (CYP) (United Nations, 2020).

This review will explore the impact of Covid-19 on CYP's SEPW internationally but focus the implications within a Scottish context. This stems from a gap in current Scottish literature.

SEPW is a multifaceted and dynamic process, influenced by the interaction between an individual's culture and their circumstances (Foregard et al., 2011). This

review considered SEPW as an important construct in supporting CYP interacting with the world and preventing the development of mental difficulties (Kitayama et al., 2020)

The terms emotional wellbeing, social wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and mental health (MH) are often used interchangeably (Trudel-Fitzgerald et al., 2019). The Mental Health Foundation's (2020) definition of MH is based on a deficit model, assuming the absence of mental illness (Macdonald, 2006). For the purpose of this review, the following NICE Pathways (2020) definitions will be used (Table 1 overleaf).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) rejects the within-child deficit model and considers environmental influences on CYP's SEPW, aligning with social constructivism. Educational Psychologists (EPs) use this model as a framework for practice, indicating the importance of their

Table 1. Definitions of SEPW.

Term	Definition and description
Social wellbeing	Having good relationships with others. Does not experience behaviour difficulties: not disruptive, violent or a bully.
Psychological wellbeing	The ability to be autonomous, problem-solve, manage emotions, experience empathy, be resilient and attentive.
Emotional wellbeing	This includes being happy and confident and not anxious or depressed.

Table 2. Search terms.

Impact Terms	Covid-19 Terms	Social and Emotional Wellbeing Terms
'effect'	'Coronavirus'	'social*' and emotion* wellbeing'
'consequences'	'health pandemic'	'socioemotional wellbeing'
'reaction'	'health epidemic'	'social*' and emotion* development*'
'barrier'		'social*' and emotion* growth'
'outcome'		'social*' and emotion* health' 'social*' and emotion* needs' 'mental health' 'psychosocial'

role in supporting CYP's SEPW. Social constructivism is based on the notion that experiences are defined by subjective interpretation rather than the reality of an event itself (Burr, 2018). Therefore, individuals may perceive the same stressor during the pandemic to have a different level of threat (Young et al., 1996).

Research has shown those with strong support networks around them from birth tend to develop more resilience, therefore the impact may be less severe (Gerhardt, 2004). In contrast, those already at a socio-economic disadvantage experienced heightened negative SEPW effects during a previous influenza epidemic (Improvement Service (IS), 2020).

From a social constructivist position, the systematic review considered current literature relating to the pandemic. The following research question was addressed, 'what is the

impact of Covid-19 on CYP's SEPW?'

Method

The articles reviewed were qualitative and quantitative studies and narrative reviews. A comparative approach was used to identify and critically appraise relevant research to provide a more holistic understanding of the impact.

Search strategy

The articles in this review were sourced using a systematic search (Figure 1) in six electronic databases (ERIC, Psych INFO, Psych Articles, Google Scholar, Science Direct and Dundee University Library database). The Boolean search terms 'child* AND health pandemic* AND social wellbeing AND emotional wellbeing AND psychological wellbeing AND Covid-19 AND coronavirus' were input into each database to reveal relevant

Figure 1: Paper identification and screening process.

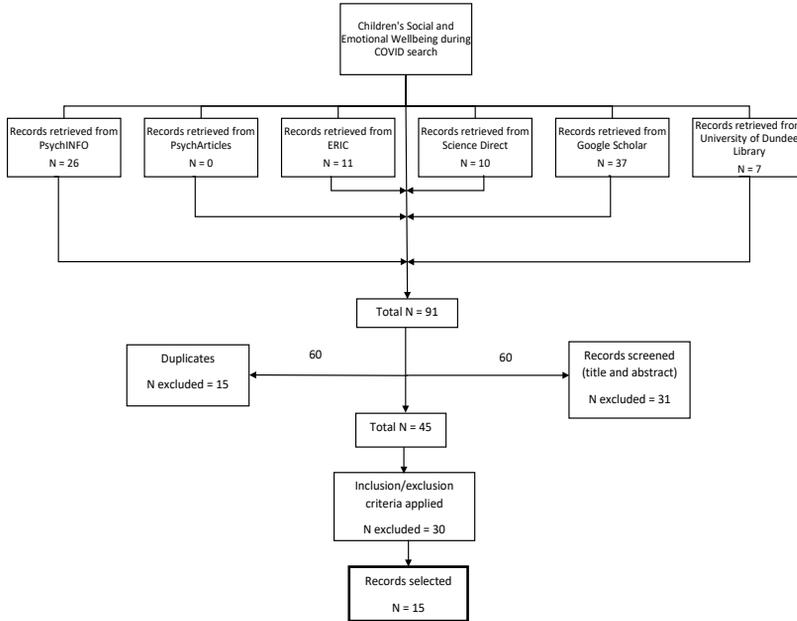


Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Articles focusing on CYP people under 18	Articles not explicit enough at describing SEPW
Articles focusing on SEPW of CYP	Articles acquired that are not journal articles
Articles published in 2020	
Articles focusing of the impact of Coronavirus on SEPW	Articles focusing on adults wellbeing and Coronavirus/ Covid-19
Articles focusing on Coronavirus or Covid-19	Grey literature
Published in a journal	Articles focusing on the efficacy of interventions Articles that are systematic reviews

articles with ‘Covid-19’ in their title. Table 2 outlines the key search terms and synonyms used to supplement the search.

Due to the limited peer reviewed journal articles available, the inclusion criteria ‘peer reviewed’ was relaxed to include narrative reviews (conceptual articles or editorials presented in journals).

The search generated a total of 91 arti-

cles. Excluding 15 duplicates, the articles were screened by title and abstract using the inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table 3), excluding a further 31 articles. The 45 articles left were reviewed in full and screened for eligibility using the inclusion/exclusion criteria, excluding a further 30 articles and leaving a total of 15 articles to review.

The systematic search, including the use

Table 4: Features of selected research articles.

Type of article	Research	Narrative review
Countries of origin	Italy (x2), Spain, UK (x2), China (x2)	USA (x3), China (x3), Europe, UK (x2), unknown (x1)
Methods	Quant x3/qual x3	N/A
Design	Exploratory/Correlational	Articles
Measures	Survey	N/A
Qualitative measures	Open ended questionnaire Dichotomous questionnaire Exploratory content analysis Inductive content analysis	N/A
Identification of Lit	Parent report on CYP Studies carried out their own assessment	Articles relating to children Articles relating to vulnerable children Articles relating to children with an ASN
Age Range	3-18 years	0-18 years
Gender	Male & Female	Male & Female
Total participants	38,709 participants	N/A
Total no. of articles selected	15 (6 research studies + 9 narrative reviews)	

of synonyms of key terms was conducted from 04.05.2020 to 19.05.2020. Table 4 outlines the features of the selected articles.

Data extraction

The 15 selected articles were split into two categories: Research studies and narrative reviews, as the authors hypothesised the research studies would have a greater weight of evidence. By doing this, the clarity and rigor of the comparative approach was enhanced.

The articles were equally split giving each author a mixture of narrative reviews and research studies to extract data from. For research studies, information on the study design, methodology, origin of study, participants and main findings was collected. For narrative review articles, geographical focus,

population characteristics, and main themes were gathered.

Quality assessment

The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) was used to evaluate the qualitative articles (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2018). It is a critical appraisal tool, designed to systematically assess the credibility, validity, relevance and findings of published articles. The Effective Public Health Practice Project (EPHPP) was used as a quality assessment of the quantitative articles (McMaster Evidence-Based Practice Centre, 2010). The checklist includes appraisal of the research question, methodological expertise, data extraction and synthesis and dissemination of results. The Scale for Assessment of Narrative Review Articles (SANRA) was used

Table 5: Quality assessment for qualitative articles using the CASP.

Quality rating	Qualitative paper
Low (0-3)	Toseeb, Asbury, Code, Fox & Deniz (2020)
Medium (3-7)	Pisano, Galimi, & Cerniglia, (2020) Asbury, Fox, Deniz, Code & Toseeb (2020)
High (7-10)	

Table 6: Quality assessment for quantitative articles using the EPHPP.

Quality rating	Quantitative paper
Strong	
Moderate	Orgilés, Morales, Delvecchio, Mazzeschi & Espada (2020)
Weak	Zhang et al. (2020) Wang, Bai, Liang, Qi & He (2020)

Table 7: Quality assessment for narrative review articles using the SANRA.

Narrative review paper	Quality score (Maximum score of 12)
Jiao et al. (2020)	8
Liu, Bao, Huang, Shi & Lu (2020)	4
Golberstein, Wen & Miller (2020)	7
Dalton, Rapa & Stein (2020)	5
Crawley et al. (2020)	9
Narzisi (2020)	5
Goldschmidt (2020)	7
Lee (2020)	4
Van Lancker & Parolin (2020)	9

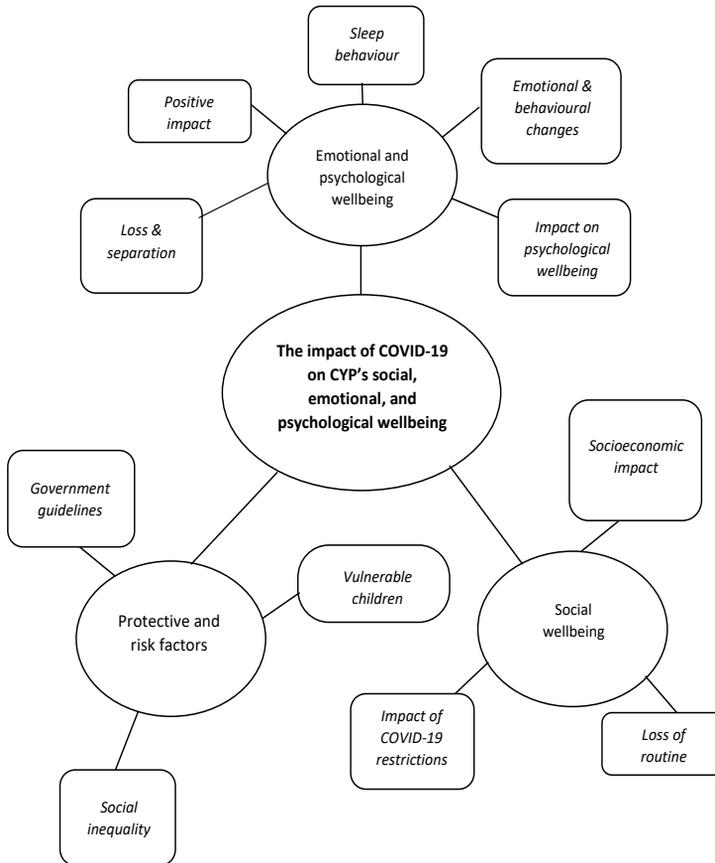
as a quality assessment tool for the narrative review articles (Baethge et al., 2019). It evaluates the following: explanation of review importance, statement of aims, literature search methodology, referencing, scientific reasoning and data presentation.

The contribution of each article was evaluated and quality assessed. Tables 5, 6 and 7 detail the assessment used and the quality assessment score for each article.

Findings

The findings illuminate a range of Covid-19 related factors that may impact CYP SEPW. The quality assessment ratings and generated themes were cross-checked between authors and it was agreed the assigned ratings should be upheld. Based on the ratings, more weight was placed on findings of the higher quality articles. The results from the SANRA assessments showed the narrative reviews scored relatively highly compared to the research studies. Although these articles

Figure 2: Thematic map of the three main themes and corresponding subthemes.



do not contain novel findings, their contributions add value to understanding the impact of Covid-19 on CYP's SEPW. Authors thematically synthesised one data type each to identify key themes (Figure 2).

Social wellbeing

Social distancing, isolation and school closures have caused a loss of routine for children worldwide (Crawley et al., 2020). Several studies reviewed suggested loss of routine may have the greatest impact on CYP with ASN (Ashbury et al., 2020; Toseeb et al., 2020; Lee, 2020). Additionally, such loss of routine and reduced social interaction is suggested to increase ADHD symptoms (Zhang et al., 2020).

Covid-19 restrictions have meant many CYP are isolated from peers, extended family

and familiar faces. This isolation may affect the stress and anxiety experienced by CYP (Pisano et al., 2020; Crawley et al., 2020; Lee, 2020). Use of technology to maintain contact with friends and family was one measure identified as reducing CYP fear and anxiety (Goldschmidt, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Additionally, families were indicated to be spending more time together suggesting some CYP were engaging in more supportive and quality interaction with their caregivers, which is important for social wellbeing (Goldschmidt, 2020). However, some children were partaking in less daily exercise, sleeping more and increasing their screen time due to the restrictions (Orgilés et al., 2020). CYP living in cities were reported by parents to have higher behavioural difficulties during the pandemic than those in

towns and rural settings (Bai et al., 2020). It is argued those in cities have less access to green space, which is evidenced to support the social wellbeing of CYP (Richardson et al., 2017).

The socio-economic impact of the pandemic is suggested to affect CYP of lowest socio-economic status the most (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). Food insecurity and school closures could intensify existing social inequalities and lead to lower academic attainment and increased risks to the social wellbeing of CYP.

Emotional and psychological wellbeing

The findings indicated emotional and behavioural changes in CYP since the beginning of the pandemic (Orgilés et al., 2020; Bai et al., 2020; Jiao et al., 2020). Behavioural changes included increased irritability, intolerance to rules and challenging behaviour. Anxiety was more prevalent in CYP living in high risk areas. Younger children were more likely to manifest anxious behaviours than older children. Most CYP's sleep behaviour was negatively impacted during the pandemic. Conversely, sleeping patterns improved in the ADHD population (Zhang et al., 2020). This may be explained by limited access to ADHD medication, which is associated with trouble sleeping (NHS, 2018).

The literature presents a concern that Covid-19 may worsen CYP pre-existing MH difficulties and increase the risk of CYP developing poor MH (Golberstein et al., 2020; Lee, 2020). Articles highlighted the role schools play in supporting CYP psychological wellbeing from counselling services to school wide nurturing approaches.

The literature discusses the impact of loss and separation during Covid-19 and highlights the importance of monitoring the wellbeing of CYP who have experienced loss and separation in the long term to ensure the negative impact is not enduring (Jiao et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Such long-term adverse effects include risk of developing mood disorders and death by suicide in adulthood.

Studies indicated the positive impact of the pandemic on CYP wellbeing. School closures positively impacted some CYP with ASN who seemed more settled and less anxious, potentially due to a calmer home environment (Ashbury et al., 2020; Toseeb et al., 2020). Some parents observed their children to be more thoughtful and wiser (Pisano et al., 2020), potentially due to increased exposure to nurturing family experiences. This aligns with post-traumatic growth theory which proposes developmental growth occurs following a challenging experience (Kirby, 2020).

Risk and protective factors

Vulnerable children, living in homes with domestic abuse or drug use, are at most risk of the adverse effects of Covid-19 (Lee, 2020; Crawley et al., 2020). CYP with ASN were also identified to be at higher risk of poor SEPW and increased anxiety due to the change and restrictions imposed by Covid-19. Increased parental stress, due to lack of support, was highlighted as a risk factor for ASN (Ashbury et al., 2020). School closures and the concerning low level of these CYP taking up their place in education hubs (Scottish Government, 2020b) means these children are more likely to be exposed to risks and stressors at home.

Social inequality was highlighted as a risk factor for SEPW (Orgiles et al., 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020; Crawley et al., 2020, Bai et al., 2020). Living conditions, access to technology and caregiver's capacity to support CYP learning influenced SEPW while home learning. However, Dalton et al. (2020) and Narsizi (2020) hypothesise positive relationships are strong predictors of SEPW which suggests practitioners should use relationship-based approaches to help mitigate adverse effects on SEPW.

School closures were identified as a key risk factor for CYP SEPW (Zhang et al., 2020; Crawley et al., 2020; Lee, 2020; Toseeb et al., 2020 & Asbury et al., 2020). It is important to acknowledge these restrictions may not have been in the best interests of CYP SEPW.

Discussion

Analysis of the literature found more focus on risk factors than protective factors. This problem-based lens when examining the impact of Covid-19 on SEPW may not be helpful for professionals, when supporting CYP. As EP's framework for practice often use a solution-oriented focus, EPs are well positioned to support CYP, their families and schools. This discussion will focus on three areas where EP involvement could be beneficial.

Intervention

Consideration for environmental changes experienced by CYP during the pandemic, allows for a shift from a within-child view of SEPW. This ecological perspective acknowledges that negative responses of CYP should be considered as a typical reaction to significant changes (Weaver & Wiener, 2020). Buheji et al. (2020) argue children will have experienced lockdown differently and this should be recognised upon returning to school. Professionals should assume all children are vulnerable at this time, regardless of their personal circumstances (Crawley et al., 2020). Recent British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines (2020) outline the importance of schools considering relationships when implementing interventions.

The Compassionate and Connected Classrooms resource (Education Scotland, 2020) has been implemented in Scottish schools to act as a protective factor against the impact of adversity for CYP. This is one of the relationship-based resources available that could be used in supporting CYP SEPW upon returning to school. Other interventions currently promoting positive MH and wellbeing are: Emotion Coaching (Gottman & DeClaire, 1998); Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (McEwan, 2019) and whole-school nurture approaches (Education Scotland, 2016).

Capurso et al. (2020) created the first Covid-19 specific intervention. They proposed a collaborative school re-entry

programme for children in Italy. The intervention was based on promoting coping and resilience strategies, including open discussions and activities regarding the pandemic. It recognised individual circumstances, allowing CYP to process their emotions within a safe space (Theodore cited in Capurso et al., 2020).

Collaborative working

Golberstein et al. (2020) advocates for collaborative working between education and health professionals. This highlights an opportunity for services such as child adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) and the educational psychology service (EPS) to improve multi-agency work.

Recent advice issued by the BPS (2020) places importance on education professionals, parents and children reconnecting with local support services upon returning to school. This supports Van Lancker and Parolin's (2020) call for a collaborative effort to ensure vulnerable children's needs are met. The advice identifies several roles for the EP: assist schools to identify families requiring extra support, work with families who have experienced trauma and loss and provide opportunities for parents to share concerns with the school.

Education professional training and support needs

Liu et al. (2020) highlighted the issue of staff managing their personal wellbeing, while supporting increased CYP's SEPW needs. This will likely impact on their capacity to meet CYP's needs and should be considered prior to reopening schools. The BPS (2020) state staff will need time to plan and reconnect before children return. EPs could provide support sessions to staff, prior to schools reopening, giving them time to reflect on the impact of lockdown.

Many articles highlighted a training need to support education professionals in monitoring CYP needs effectively. Dalton et al. (2020) highlight the need for upskilling

professionals on psychoeducation to recognise normative reactions to Covid-19 and support CYP with coping strategies. This highlights an opportunity for EPs to deliver remote training to professionals prior to schools reopening.

Limitations

Most articles appraised are narrative reviews and do not contribute novel findings to the body of research. Several of the research articles are unpublished, therefore lack the rigor provided by peer review. Most of the research was conducted internationally, meaning cultural differences and the way each country implemented restrictions could have impacted on how children and their parents reacted to the pandemic. Parental stress and anxiety may have amplified the effect of Covid-19 on CYP's SEPW as parents reported emotional and behavioural changes on behalf of their children. Had the children been asked directly, they may have responded differently.

Lastly, the quality assessments were scored subjectively by all authors, so there may be variability in the ratings given. The EPHPP quality assessment tool's strict criteria for component ratings may have reduced its suitability for evaluating the quantitative studies, as due to the research design of studies included in this review, none of them could have achieved the maximum score available.

Implications for future research

A theme throughout all articles was the absence of the child's voice. This highlights a need for future research with CYP to understand their perceptions of how Covid-19 has impacted their SEPW.

There is limited research on the impact of Covid-19 on the SEPW of CYP from different ethnic groups. Research reports that some ethnic groups are at a greater risk of mortality from Covid-19 (Pan et al., 2020). The authors of this review hypothesise that

due to this increase in mortality, there may also be an increase in negative SEPW, highlighting an area for future research.

The long-term effects of pandemics on the SEPW of CYP are under-researched (Lee, 2020). Longitudinal research could highlight the enduring impact of Covid-19 on CYP and provide guidance on how to mitigate negative effects in future pandemics.

The authors found a lack of literature with a Scottish focus. Furthermore, there is limited research investigating the impact Covid-19 on the SEPW of care experienced CYP and other children considered vulnerable by the Scottish Government, highlighting a need for future research to be conducted in Scotland.

Conclusion

This systematic review evaluated the impact of Covid-19 on CYP's SEPW, with a focus on the effect of the pandemic on CYP residing in Scotland. The findings indicated the current pandemic has both negatively and positively impacted on SEPW. However, it cannot be assumed that all CYP will be affected equally. CYP at greater risk of negative SEPW include vulnerable children, those living in poverty and deprivation and those with existing ASN. This demonstrates the impact of ecological influences on SEPW. The EP role was examined in relation to interventions, collaborative working and training and support of teaching professionals. Future research areas are identified, including a need for more research to be conducted looking at the impact of Covid-19 on CYP within the Scottish context and ensuring the child's voice is captured.

Kirstie Howard, Heather Quinn & Marel Thomson

Correspondence

Kirstie Howard

Trainee Educational Psychologist
100008277@dundee.ac.uk

References

- Asbury, K., Fox, L., Deniz, E. et al. (2020). How is Covid-19 affecting the mental health of children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families? *PsyArXiv Preprints*. doi:10.31234/osf.io/seyvd.
- Baethge, C., Goldbeck-Wood, S. & Mertens, S. (2019). SANRA – A scale for the quality assessment of non-empirical articles. *Research integrity and peer review*, 4(1), 5.
- Bai, R., Wang, Z., Liang, J. et al. (2020). The effect of the British Psychological Society (BPS) (2020). Back to school: Using psychological perspectives to support re-engagement and recovery.
- British Psychological Society. Retrieved from: www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-delivers-new-guidance-supporting-psychological-needs-children-they-go-back.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *Understanding children in context: The ecological model of human development* (pp.1–8). Harvard University Press.
- Brooks, S.K., Webster, R.K., Smith, L.E. et al. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8.
- Buheji, M., Hassani, A., Ebrahim, et al. (2020). Children and coping during Covid-19: A scoping review of bio-psycho-social factors. *International Journal of Applied Psychology*, 10(1), 8–15. doi:10.5923/j.ijap.20201001.02.
- Burr, V. (2018). What is social constructionism? In *Social Constructionism* (pp.77–84). doi:10.4324/9781315715421-1.
- Capurso, M., Dennis, J.L., Salmi, L.P. et al. (2020). Empowering children through school re-entry activities after the Covid-19 pandemic. *Continuity in Education*, 1(1), 64–82. doi:10.5334/cie.17
- Crawley, E., Loades, M., Feder, G. et al. (2020). Wider collateral damage to children in the UK because of the social distancing measures designed to reduce the impact of Covid-19 in adults. *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 4(1). doi:10.1136/bmjpo-2020-000701.
- Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) (2018). *CASP Qualitative Checklist*. Retrieved from: <https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/>
- Dalton, L., Rapa, E. & Stein, A. (2020). Protecting the psychological health of children through effective communication about Covid-19. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(5), 346–347. doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30097-3.
- Education Scotland (2016). *Applying nurture as a whole school approach*. Retrieved from <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/inc55ApplyingNurturingApproaches120617.pdf>
- Education Scotland. (2020) *The compassionate and connected classroom and community*. Retrieved from <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/compassionate-and-connected-classroom>
- Forgeard, M.J., Jayawickreme, E., Kern, M.L. & Seligman, M.E. (2011). Doing the right thing: Measuring wellbeing for public policy. *International journal of wellbeing*, 1(1). Retrieved from: <https://internationaljournalofwellbeing.org/index.php/ijow/article/view/15>.
- Gerhardt, S. (2004). *Why love matters: How affection shapes a baby*. East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge.
- Golberstein, E., Wen, H. & Miller, B.F. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) and mental health for children and adolescents. *JAMA pediatrics*. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.1456.
- Goldschmidt, K. (2020). The Covid-19 pandemic: Technology use to support the wellbeing of children. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*. doi:10.1016/j.pedn.2020.04.013
- Gottman, J. & DeClaire, J. (1998). *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Improvement Service (IS) (2020). Poverty Inequality and Covid-19. Retrieved from www.improvementservice.org.uk/___data/assets/pdf_file/0013/16402/Poverty-inequality-and-COVID19-briefing.pdf.
- Jiao, W.Y., Wang, L.N., Liu, J. et al. (2020). Behavioural and emotional disorders in children during the Covid-19 epidemic. *The Journal of Pediatrics*. doi:10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.03.013.
- Kirby, J.N. (2020). Nurturing family environments for children: Compassion-focused parenting as a form of parenting intervention. *Education Sciences*, 10(1), 3. doi:10.3390/educsci10010003.
- Kitayama, S., Hazel, M. & Kurokawa, M. (2020). Culture, emotion and wellbeing: Good feelings in Japan and the United States. *Cognition and Emotion*, 14, 93–124. doi:10.1080/026999300379003.
- Lee, J. (2020). Mental health effects of school closures during Covid-19. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(6), 421. doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30109-7.
- Liu, S., Yang, L., Zhang, C. et al. (2020). Online mental health services in China during the Covid-19 outbreak. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 7(4), e17-e18. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30077-8.
- McEwan, S. (2019). The emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) programme: ELSAs' and children's experiences. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35(3), 289–306. doi:10.1080/02667363.2019.1585332
- MacDonald, G. (2006). What is mental health. In *Mental health promotion: A lifespan approach* (pp.9–11).

- McMaster Evidence-Based Practice Centre (2010). *EPHPP quality assessment tool for quantitative studies*. Retrieved from: https://merst.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/quality-assessment-tool_2010.pdf.
- Mental Health Foundation (2020). What is mental health? *Mental Health Foundation*. Retrieved from www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/about-mental-health/what-mental-health.
- Narzisi, A. (2020). Handle the autism spectrum condition during Coronavirus (Covid-19) stay at home period: Ten tips for helping parents and caregivers of young children. *Brain Science*. doi:10.3390/brainsci10040207.
- NICE Pathways (2020). Social and emotional well-being for children and young people overview. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Retrieved from: <https://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/social-and-emotional-well-being-for-children-and-young-people>.
- Orgilés, M., Morales, A., Delvecchio, E. et al. (2020). Immediate psychological effects of the Covid-19 quarantine in youth from Italy and Spain. *PsyArXiv*. doi:10.31234/osf.io/5bpfz.
- Pan, D., Sze, S., Minhas, J. et al. (2020). The impact of ethnicity on clinical outcomes in Covid-19: A systematic review. *EClinicalMedicine*. Retrieved from doi:10.1016/j.eclinm.2020.100404.
- Pisano, L., Galimi, D. & Cerniglia, L. (2020). A qualitative report on exploratory data on the possible emotional/behavioural correlates of Covid-19 lockdown in 4–10 years children in Italy. *PsyArXiv*. doi:10.31234/osf.io/stwbn.
- Richardson, E., Pearce, J., Shortt, N. & Mitchell, R. (2017). The role of public and private natural space in children's social, emotional and behavioural development in Scotland: A longitudinal study. *Environmental Research*, 158, 729–736. doi:10.1016/j.envres.2017.07.038.
- Scottish Government (2020a). *Coronavirus (Covid-19): School and early learning closures – guidance about key workers and vulnerable children*. Retrieved from www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-guide-schools-early-learning-closures/pages/vulnerable-children/ retrieval date 09/06/20.
- Scottish Government (2020b). *Coronavirus (Covid-19): supporting vulnerable children and young people – data intelligence report*. Retrieved from www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-vulnerable-children-young-people-dataintelligence-report/ retrieval date 09/06/20.
- Toseeb, U., Asbury, K., Code, A. et al. (2020). Supporting families with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities during Covid-19. *PsyArXiv Preprints*. doi:10.31234/osf.io/tm69k.
- Trudel-Fitzgerald, C., Millstein, R.A., von Hippel, C. et al. (2019). Psychological wellbeing as part of the public health debate? Insight into dimensions, interventions, and policy. *BMC public health*, 19(1), 1–11.
- United Nations (UN) (2020). *Policy brief: The impact of Covid-19 on children*. Retrieved from https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/160420_Covid_Children_Policy_Brief.pdf.
- Van Lancker, W. & Parolin, Z. (2020). Covid-19, school closures, and child poverty: A social crisis in the making. *The Lancet, Public Health*. 5(5), e243-e244. doi:10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30084-0
- Weaver, M.S. & Wiener, L. (2020). Applying palliative care principles to communicate with children about Covid-19. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*. doi:10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.03.020.
- World Health Organisation (WHO) (2010). What is a pandemic? World Health Organisation: Diseases. Retrieved from www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/frequently_asked_questions/pandemic/en/.
- Young, K.A., Poland, S. & Griffin, L. (1996). Making psychology in schools indispensable: Our role in crisis intervention. In R. Talley (Ed.). *Making Psychologists in Schools Indispensable: Critical Questions & Emerging Perspectives* (pp.147–152). Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Zhang, J., Shau, L., Yu, H. et al. (2020). Acute stress, behavioural symptoms and mood states among school age children with ADHD during Covid-19 outbreak. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, doi:10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102077

How do children with Autism Spectrum Disorder engage in a play-based pedagogical environment and how do teachers support this?

Ruth Carleton & Hayleigh Spence

Brief abstract

THIS PROJECT aimed to explore how children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis engage within a play-based pedagogical environment (PBPE) and how teachers support children. The rationale for the current project arose from a lack of research in relation to supporting ASD in PBPE. This qualitative inquiry uses a multiple case study design which included teacher interviews and pupil observations within seven Scottish primary schools. The epistemological stance adopted is a social constructionist view, which informs the methodology applied in this research. Inductive thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were carried out for each dataset. The resulting themes were considered in relation to each other, the research questions and the literature review. The analysis reinforced that children with ASD have varying needs therefore engage differently within a PBPE and teachers support children accordingly. Teachers expressed the children with ASD were making progress in self-regulation, peer interaction and independence skills. An overarching theme from the teacher interviews was that teachers felt the PBPE was inclusive and the flexibility within this allowed teachers to more effectively support children with ASD. Further research is required to explore whether these findings apply to all children with additional support needs. As results demonstrate teachers feeling more confident in supporting all pupils' needs this may reduce

the number of requests for assistance to Educational Psychology Services.

General introduction

This article explores a small research study conducted over two Scottish Local Authorities (LA). The first aim of the project was to explore how children in Primary 1 (P1) with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) engage in a play-based pedagogical environment (PBPE) in a mainstream primary school setting. A secondary aim was to collate different strategies put in place by class teachers (CTs) to support children's engagement in a PBPE. This report considers the theoretical background and national context for the project including reference to relevant literature exploring play and ASD. This article will consider the implications for Educational Psychology practice.

Article 31 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that 'Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.' The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was implemented in 2010, which imposed an integrated Early Years curriculum to support children from aged three to the end of P1, which aimed to support effective transitions from early learning and childcare (ELCC) to primary school (The Scottish Government, 2008). *Building the Curriculum 2*, a publication that aims to guide practitioners in successfully implementing the early level of the CfE, emphasises the importance of using play-based approaches

(PBA) across ELCC and P1 to enable children to develop across the four capacities (The Scottish Government, 2007a). This move towards a Play-based Pedagogy (PBP) is in line with other countries where starting school age is later than in the UK. The Scottish campaign 'Upstart' crusades for a change in the ethos of education for 3- to 7-year-olds in order to achieve the Scottish Governments (2008, p.3) aim of giving children 'the best start in life'. The Scottish Government would like to see more play-based education up to the age of 7, when formal schooling would commence. Similarly, the National Play Strategy (Scottish Government, 2013, p.8) promotes free play and aims to ensure Scotland's children have the 'best start in life'. The strategy defines play as: 'behaviour that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated' (The Scottish Government, 2013, p.12). Play can vary in guidance; it can be described as child-initiated in which the child is intrinsically motivated to seek out enjoyable activities or adult-initiated where the adult facilitates and supports play through providing prompts (EEF, 2019). The National Play Strategy (2013) recognises the need for practitioners to allow children to have the time, space and freedom to initiate, plan, lead and conclude their own play. This creates a key role for practitioners to facilitate play experiences and intervene when appropriate to extend children's learning. This is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding.

Play is an activity that is intrinsically motivated, entails active engagement, and results in joyful discovery (Yogman et al., 2018). Play has been described as culturally universal (Lancy, as cited in Jarvis et al., 2014) and 'the universal language of childhood' (Scottish Government, 2013, p.5). Whilst, many theorists agree that play has a purpose, and that play is beneficial for children (Schousboe & Winther-Lindqvist, 2013) there is still debate around the purpose of play. Early research establishes that play is important for many aspects of learning and wellbeing, including social, emotional and cognitive develop-

ment (Piaget, 1962). A meta-analysis review demonstrates the relationship between symbolic play supporting language acquisition (Quinn et al., 2018). Further research suggests that children who spend more time playing have higher levels of problem-solving abilities, an increased working memory capacity and higher curiosity (Ahmad et al., 2016). Jarvis et al. (2014) explore the relationship between play and social development and propose peer collaboration in PBP promotes interconnectedness of children's social, emotional, intellectual and linguistic development. Being involved in play with others can bring about feelings of belonging (Jarvis et al., 2014). Symbolic play has an important role in the development of complex social skills (Pellegrini 2009; The Play Strategy, 2013). Freud (1906) suggested play allows children to re-enact situations, which are familiar to them and make themselves masters of the situation. Vygotsky (1978) furthers this idea by adding that play allows children to practice by imitating others and acting out activities that adults may do. This allows children to develop an understanding of the social and cultural rules and expectations within the society they live and encourages self-regulation, allowing them to regulate their behaviour within these social and cultural rules (Elias & Berk, 2002). During child-led play, children decide what to play, when to start and stop the activity and the rules involved. The negotiation and compromise involved develops social and emotional skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and flexibility (Yogman et al., 2018). In summary, PBA have been shown to be more effective for learning and teaching of young children in comparison to formal teaching approaches (Martlew et al., 2011; Stagnitti et al., 2016; Walsh, et al., 2006). Research suggests that during play children can learn skills and cover the outcomes of the curriculum (Fisher, 2013). Furthermore, during play, the limits of children's learning are determined by their drive and creativity, rather than learning outcomes set by the adult.

Although further research is required to determine the outcomes of PBP on children's skills and development, the literature suggests that teachers are enthusiastic about PBA (Martlew et al., 2011). Teachers also report that they feel the approach is inclusive as it allows all children to access the curriculum and teachers feel they can spend more time supporting children who require additional support and guide and scaffold all children's learning (Martlew et al., 2011). Effective PBP involves a balance of adult-led and child led activities (McInnes et al., 2011). For children with ASD some barriers to play include language problems and problems with social interaction (e.g. theory of mind and interpreting social cues) (Rotheram-Fuller et al., 2010; Camargo et al., 2014). Holmes and Willoughby (2005) looked at the type of play children with ASD engage in and found that they engaged in a lot of functional play, which tended to be either solitary or parallel play. This research suggested that children with ASD do not demonstrate much symbolic or imaginary play, which aligns with other research findings (Baren-Cohen, 1987; Charlop et al., 2018; Jordan, 2003). However, research suggests that by using modelling techniques, children with ASD can develop pretend play skills and generalise these skills to novel, real life situations (Boudreau & D'Entremont, 2010). This has links with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). A research study evaluating the Interactive Play Groups intervention showed that when children with ASD are provided with increased opportunity to play and interact with their peers supported by an adult facilitator, guiding and scaffolding their play and interactions, children displayed increased playing with their peers outside of the intervention; developed increased imaginary play abilities and joint play with others (Wolfberg et al., 2015).

Play pedagogy is important in the current Scottish context, where there is a move towards PBP and a presumption of mainstream by schools initiated by the Scottish Government (Standards in Scotland's schools

Act, 2000, Scottish Government, 2020). It is apparent there is a lack of current research exploring how children with ASD can be supported within a PBP. This project aims to explore how children in P1 with a diagnosis of ASD engage in a PBPE and how teachers support this.

The following research questions will be addressed:

- (1) Do children with ASD engage in child-led play?
- (2) How are children's sensory needs being considered by the pedagogy?
- (3) Are the children with ASD engaging in learning through peer interactions?
- (4) What teaching and learning strategies are teachers using to support engagement with the PBPE for children with ASD?

Outline of the study

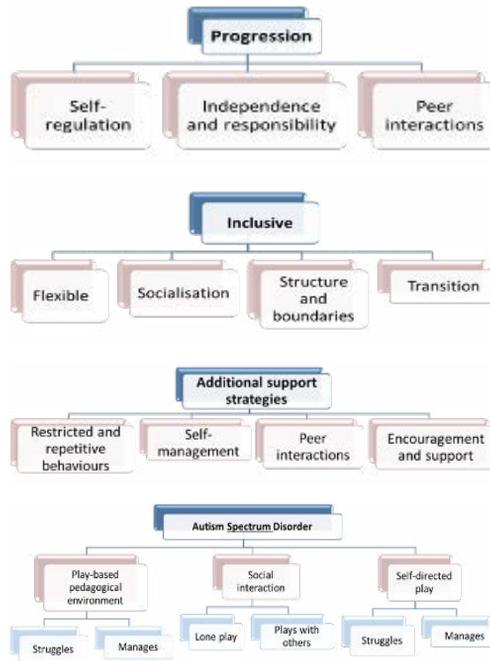
A qualitative, multiple case study approach, informed by a social constructivist perspective was employed to explore how children in Primary 1 (P1) with a diagnosis of ASD engage in a PBPE in a mainstream primary school setting.

The researchers were granted ethical approval from the University Ethics board and followed ethical standards outlined by the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics (The British Psychological Society, 2018) and the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Ethics and Performance.

Participants

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling (Etikan et al., 2016) following a discussion with EPs. Due to the age of the pupils, and the nature of their communication difficulties, participant informed consent was sought via their parents. Inclusion criterion were that child participants were required to have a diagnosis of ASD and in primary 1 or primary 2 of a mainstream school reporting to be implementing PBP. Participants included seven children (five male and two female) and their class teachers across seven schools in two Scottish LAs.

Figure 2: Integrated mind map of pupil thematic analysis.



Methods

Pupil observations and teacher telephone interviews were the methods used to explore the research questions. The narrative and structured observation schedules and interview schedule were designed for the current research to capture child-led play behaviours, learning through play with others, their sensory needs and strategies used by teachers to support children across these areas. Both methods were used to explore the research questions to triangulate the findings. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed ready for inductive thematic analysis using a six-phase framework in line with Braun and Clarke (2006) (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The data from the teacher interviews and pupils’ observations were analysed separately. Following the data analysis, themes from across both datasets were considered against the research questions.

Results

The thematic analysis of the teacher interview data resulted in four main themes, as shown in the final thematic map (Figure 1).

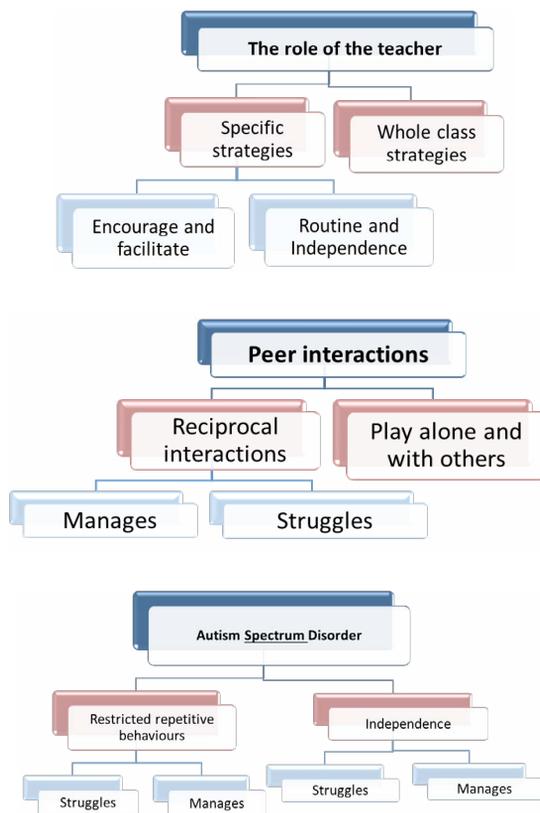
Theme: Progression

It was evident that teachers felt the child in their classroom with ASD was making progress in various areas of their learning and development. Teachers described progress in terms of increased levels of independence and responsibility for managing their own time and learning, increased peer interaction and play and learning with peers, including more initiation of interactions and increased ability to self-regulate.

Theme: Inclusive

A predominant theme was inclusiveness. The approach allowed teachers to support all children more effectively and is inclusive of all children’s needs. Teachers described the approach as being flexible, adaptable and therefore easier to differentiate for all

Figure 2: Final thematic map of pupil observations.



children. Teachers suggested that a PBPE allowed time for supporting pupils with additional support needs in smaller groups or one-to-one. The increased opportunity for peer interaction was described as providing the children with a chance to operate within different peer and social groups within the classrooms at different activities and target tasks, resulting in PBP being viewed as inclusive. Although the approach is highly regarded as child-initiated learning, teachers put structures and boundaries in place for all children, which supports children with ASD to manage within the PBPE.

...children take responsibility for their own learning. So things that would have been purely for a child with autism or a child with other ASN, all the children are now doing. So

whether it's a task board, normally we would give say, child 4 was doing it the previous year we would have given him a board that said you have to do X, Y and Z. All the children are now doing that. So in terms of routine, everything has changed. So I think that's lent itself really well to child 4. It's a no brainer. It's a much better way of teaching. (Child 4, establishment D).

Theme: Additional support strategies

Although the approach was described as lending itself to children's needs, teachers discussed some additional strategies, which they used to support pupils with ASD. Teachers described supporting children's sensory needs, communication difficulties with peers and self-management skills.

However, it was evident that teachers felt that the adaptations and strategies they used to support pupils with ASD were minimal.

Theme: Autism Spectrum Disorder

This theme encapsulates the varying needs and strengths of the children, as described by teachers. Aspects of the PBPE which some children found challenging, although others managed well, were the increased noise levels, high level of independence and responsibility and the high level of peer interaction.

Thematic analysis from the pupil observations provided three main themes, as depicted in Figure 2.

Theme: The role of a teacher

Teachers were identified to be using strategies, which appeared to be tailored to the pupil in their class with ASD. Strategies used were observed to support pupils with their independence and transitions. Whole class strategies, such as ensuring all children were aware of the structure of the day and what resources were available and scaffolding of their play were found to benefit the children with ASD.

Theme: Peer interactions

This theme encapsulates that some children engaged in reciprocal interactions and play with their peers and adults, whilst some children found this challenging. Whilst some children were able to initiate play with others, some children were found to have a lack of social awareness, leading to jarred interactions with other children.

Theme: Autism Spectrum Disorder

From the observations of pupils, the researchers found that pupils had varying needs and strengths therefore responded to the demands of the PBP in different ways. This resulted in some children struggling with aspects such as the high level of self-directed learning and responsibility associated with PBP. For example, staying at the same station for long periods of time and showing rigidity in playing games.

Discussion

Following data analysis, themes across both datasets were considered in relation to the research questions.

1. Do children with ASD engage in child-led play?

Children had varying needs; some children found the high level of independence difficult to manage. This lack of independence to access new learning experiences through exploring new types of play resources and materials may be a barrier to children's learning (Bruce, 2012). Child led play involves children having independence and creativity to learn new things from existing materials (Duncan & Grogan, 2019), therefore, it could be argued that if children are not fully engaging in child-led play, they may not be getting the same learning experiences.

On the other hand, some children had no hesitation in leading their own play and were described to be making progress with regards to their ability to make choices independently and manage their time and learning. Research which explored the benefits of PBP for all children found that, compared to children exposed to more formal classroom direct teaching, children who had been part of the PBP had increased independence skills (Walsh et al., 2006). The current research provides initial evidence that this is also the case for children with ASD.

2. How are children's sensory needs being considered by the pedagogy?

Children presented with and were described to have sensory sensitivities which acted as a barrier to learning within the PBPE. Teachers identified resources such as the use of ear defenders, time out of the play environment with an adult, fidget toys and tactile stimulation using water and sand, which supported children within the PBPE.

3. Are the children with ASD engaging in learning through peer interactions?

Children were found to engage in imaginary

play with peers, reciprocal interactions which led to joint play with peers, having fun with their peers through play and having friendships. Some children displayed using some complex social skills such as compromising with others, sharing resources, and coaching their peers. These findings are inconsistent with the literature which suggests children with ASD rarely play with others (Holmes & Willoughby, 2005) or engage in imaginary play with others (Baren-Cohen, 1987; Charlop et al., 2018; Holmes & Willoughby, 2005; Jordan, 2003). However, this aligns with research suggesting that typically developing peers develop complex social skills through playing with others, negotiation, problem solving, collaboration (Diamond et al., as cited in Yogman et al., 2018). The current research adds to the research base by suggesting that children with ASD are also able to use complex social skills during play with others.

However, it was noted in the pupil observations that some children struggled to engage in successful interactions, with interactions often seeming disjointed or jarred. This finding was only apparent in the pupil observations. It is important to consider that teachers may be unaware of difficulties children are facing with peer interaction within a PBPE. Further research would be required to explore why this difference was found.

4. What teaching and learning strategies are teachers using to support engagement with the PBPE for children with ASD?

Teachers use both individual and whole class strategies to support children with ASD in a PBPE. Teachers referred to strategies aimed to facilitate and support self-management of child-led play, following class routines and building independence. The strategies included: encouragement and prompting, reducing the number of targets, chunking instructions, checking their understanding, tailoring resources to children's interests, preparation for what's happening next, scaffolding learning, encouraging to play with peers by modelling, using social stories

and reminding of social rules. Teachers were aware that they had a specific role in providing additional support to children with ASD, in line with the national GIRFEC approach and The Additional Support for Learning (2004) Act (The Scottish Government, 2009).

From the pupil observations it was apparent that teachers used whole class strategies, which supported the children with ASD. The strategies used for all children included guiding and extending children's learning, explaining the routine and the resources available. An overarching theme apparent in the teacher interviews was that teachers feel the approach lends itself to meeting the needs of all children and allows for inclusion of all children's needs.

Brief conclusions/implications section

A qualitative inquiry was employed to explore how children with ASD engage in a PBPE and how teachers are supporting this. Results showed, some children managed well within the PBPE with little support and teachers expressed the children were making progress in self-regulation, peer interaction and independence skills. However, it was recognised some children do need support with the high level of independence, managing sensory sensitivities and engaging in peer interaction. Teachers were enthusiastic about the approach and felt it was inclusive in supporting children with ASDs needs. These findings from this small-scale project suggest that the PBP is considerate of children with ASD's needs within a mainstream environment.

One implication for EP practice is that the approach allows teachers time to be more flexible in supporting and extending the learning of the children. It was reported teachers know children's triggers and feel more confident in supporting all pupils in their classes' needs. This might be a contributory factor leading to less referral for assistance to the EPS. Furthermore, this research found that a predominant theme, which emerged, was that the approach is

inclusive of all children's needs. This positively aligns with the presumption of mainstreaming (The Scottish Government, 2000). Therefore, it is important for EPs involved in decisions around alternative placements to be aware that the PBP can promote an inclusive approach.

References.

- Ahmad, S., Ch, A. H., Batool, A. et al. (2016). Play and cognitive development: Formal operational perspective of Piaget's Theory. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(28), 72–79.
- Bandura, A. & Walters, R.H. (1977). *Social learning theory (Vol. 1)*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-hall.
- Boudreau, E. & D'Entremont, B. (2010). Improving the pretend play skills of pre-schoolers with autism spectrum disorders: the effects of video modelling. *The Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 22(4), 415–431.
- Bruce, T. (2012). *Early childhood education*. Hachette, UK: Sage Publications.
- Camargo, S.P.H., Rispoli, M., Ganz, J. et al. (2014). A review of the quality of behaviorally-based intervention research to improve social interaction skills of children with ASD in inclusive settings. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 44(9), 2096–2116.
- Charlop, M.H., Lang, R. & Rispoli, M. (2018). *Play and Social Skills for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. West Lafayette, USA: Spring International Publishing.
- Duncan, P. & Grogan, D. (2019). Changing pedagogy in Scottish primary schools: Insights from the exploring pedagogy in Primary 1 (EPP1) project. *SERA Researching Education Bulletin Issue 8, Spring 2019*.
- Education Endowment Foundation (2019). *Play-based learning*.
- Elias, C.L. & Berk, L.E. (2002). Self-regulation in young children: Is there a role for sociodramatic play? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 17(2), 216–238.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. & Alkassim, R.S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American journal of theoretical and applied statistics*, 5(1), 1–4.
- Fisher, J. (2013). *Starting from the child: Teaching and learning in the foundation stage (4th ed.)*. Maidenhead: Open University
- Holmes, E. & Willoughby, T. (2005). Play behaviour of children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 30(3), 156–164.
- Jarvis, P., Newman, S. & Swiniarski, L. (2014). On 'becoming social': The importance of collaborative free play in childhood. *International Journal of Play*, 3(1), 53–68.
- Jordan, R. (2002). *Autism spectrum disorders in the early years: A guide for practitioners and parents*. Stafford: QEd publications.
- Maguire, M. & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide for Learning and Teaching Scholars. *The All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 9(3), 3351–3362.
- Martlew, J., Stephen, C. & Ellis, J. (2011). Play in the primary school classroom? The experience of teachers supporting children's learning through a new pedagogy. *Early Years*, 31(1), 71–83.
- McInnes, K., Howard, J., Miles, G. & Crowley, K. (2011). Differences in practitioners' understanding of play and how this influences pedagogy and children's perceptions of play. *Early Years*, 31(2), 121–133.
- Pellegrini, A. D. (2009). *The role of play in human development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, dreams, and imitation in childhood*. New York: Norton.
- Quinn, S., Donnelly, S. & Kidd, E. (2018). The relationship between symbolic play and language acquisition: A meta-analytic review. *Developmental review*, 49, 121–135.
- Rotheram-Fuller, E., Kasari, C., Chamberlain, B. & Locke, J. (2010). Social involvement of children with autism spectrum disorders in elementary school classrooms. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 51(11), 1227–1234.
- Schousboe, I. & Winther-Lindqvist, D. (Eds.) (2013). *Children's play and development: Cultural-historical perspectives (Vol. 8)*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Stagnitti, K., Bailey, A., Hudspeth Stevenson, E. et al. (2016). An investigation into the effect of play-based instruction on the development of play skills and oral language. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 14(4), 389–406.
- The Scottish Government (2000). *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000*. Retrieved from: www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/contents

Ruth Carleton & Hayleigh Spence

Correspondence

Ruth Carleton

Trainee Educational Psychologist

r.carleton@dundee.ac.uk

- The Scottish Government (2007a). *A curriculum for excellence, Building the curriculum 2: Active learning in the early years*. Retrieved from: <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/btc2.pdf>
- The Scottish Government (2013). *The National Play Strategy*. Retrieved from: www2.gov.scot/resource/0042/00425722.pdf
- The Scottish Government (2020). *Realising the ambition: Being me*. Retrieved from: <https://education.gov.scot/media/3bjpr3wa/realisingtheambition.pdf>
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Walsh, G., Sproule, L., McGuinness, C. et al. (2006). An appropriate curriculum for 4 to 5-year-old children in Northern Ireland: comparing play-based and formal approaches. *Early Years*, 26(2), 201–221. doi:10.1080/09575140600760003
- Wolfberg, P., DeWitt, M., Young, G.S. & Nguyen, T. (2015). Integrated play groups: Promoting symbolic play and social engagement with typical peers in children with ASD across settings. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 45(3), 830–845.
- Yogman, M., Garner, A., Hutchinson, J. et al. (2018). The power of play: Pediatric role in enhancing development in young children. *Pediatrics* 142(3). 119–129.

'Mix it up and keep it lively!': An exploratory study of perceived effects and implementation of The Daily Mile in the North of Scotland

Maggie Eggeling, Vicky Heath, Emma Rait &
Katie Sprang

Young people's physical and mental health is an increasingly prominent issue in Scotland. An increasingly popular physical activity intervention, the Daily Mile (DM) aims to address these concerns. The DM involves pupils jogging or walking approximately one mile each day. This article describes an exploration into the implementation and perceived effects of the DM in a sample of primary schools across three local authorities in the North of Scotland. A mixed methods design was utilised, involving an online teacher survey, followed by pupil and teacher focus groups. The online survey completed by 64 teachers, found that 94 per cent of participants would recommend the DM to another school. Additionally, teachers reported numerous positive effects to pupils' fitness, cognition and mood associated with participation in the DM. These findings were replicated in the focus groups, where teachers discussed the benefits of the DM to pupil health as well as cognition; teachers noted positive changes in pupils' listening and focus with fitness benefits more apparent when done daily. Pupils also perceived health improvements and they valued the freedom of the Daily Mile. An unexpected finding was that the DM can have a markedly positive effect on relationships within the school community and this appeared to be more salient, at times, than physical fitness enhancements. Consequently, the DM may provide an effective way to rebuild social relationships when pupils return to school after the Covid-19 lockdown. Schools can adapt the DM to the current context by incorporating social distancing measures into the DM. This will provide pupils with the time and space to connect with their peers and teachers in a safe way, facilitating nurturing relationships within the school community.

THE DAILY MILE (DM) is a programme for schools that encourages children to leave their classroom for 15 minutes every day to engage in physical activity (PA; The Daily Mile, 2019). The DM was created in Scotland in 2012, where an improvement in pupil's fitness was noted after four weeks of a primary school class walking, jogging or running. Subsequently, the successes of the DM were shared with other schools and the initiative was adopted further throughout Scotland (Ryde et al., 2018). It is recognised that many children do not complete the recommended one hour of physical activity each day and so the DM is considered ideal

for addressing this (Scottish Government, 2011). The DM has backing from the Scottish Government, who in 2017 encouraged educational establishments to participate in the DM, aiming for Scotland to become the first DM nation (Scottish Government, 2017).

It is well established that physical activity is beneficial for the wellbeing and mental health of children, as it can build self-esteem and social skills. Increased PA during school hours is associated with improved psychological, physical and mental wellbeing (Biddle & Asare, 2011). Beyond the understandable health benefits, neuroscience evidence suggests that PA interventions may also be a means for

schools to improve pupils' cognitive ability and academic attainment (Gearin & Fien, 2016). Additionally, PA can have a positive impact on several aspects of brain development in children (Khan & Hillman, 2014). An optimal brain state is required for effective learning and both low and high arousal can have a negative effect on attention and information processing (Oken et al., 2006). An individual's ability to engage in tasks and learn in the classroom fluctuates throughout the day according to fluctuations of brain state (Yoo et al., 2012). Research suggests that a PA break from lessons may increase time on task (TOT) in the classroom (Grieco et al., 2016), with resultant benefits to learning.

The DM appears to have become a successful initiative with many schools choosing to adopt the approach. Ryde et al. (2018) found the factors that led to successful implementation included: Keeping core components of duration, type of activity and frequency as simple as possible, teachers being able to do the DM with their class at a time of day that suited them and a supportive organisational environment. Overall, evidence suggests the DM may be an effective PA intervention in primary schools. However, there is a paucity of research into how schools are implementing the DM in the North of Scotland and the benefits of DM participation to cognition and wellbeing. Additionally, much of the previous research has focused on the effect of the DM on pupil's fitness and body mass index, with additional benefits of the DM such as the effects on cognition and school experience, requiring further research.

Study aims

The purpose of the study was to contribute to the emerging body of research about the DM in Scotland. The broad overarching research questions were:

- How do teachers and pupils perceive the DM impacts pupils' school experience?
- How is the DM currently being implemented in primary schools?
- What are the perceived effects of the DM?

Methodology

A mixed method design was utilised involving two phases, initial collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data using an online survey, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data from teacher and pupil focus groups. The online survey phase took place across three local authorities in the North of Scotland, with the sample consisting of a mixture of rural (66 per cent) and urban (34 per cent) primary schools currently taking part in the DM. The teacher and pupil focus groups took place in two primary schools across two local authorities. Focus groups were held in a rural school; consisting of 50 pupils and three teachers, and a large urban school; consisting of 300 pupils and 17 teachers. Both schools had participated in the DM for at least three years.

Quantitative phase – online survey teachers

Primary schools in the three local authorities registered as participating in the DM were identified using the Daily Mile website (The Daily Mile, 2019). Subsequently, 142 primary schools were identified and invited to take part in the research via email. The email included a link to the online survey for completion by teachers whose class currently take part in the DM. The online survey collected descriptive statistics about the school demographics and the class taught by the teacher, in addition to the teachers' DM implementation practices. The perceived effects of the Daily Mile were rated for the class as a whole using a seven-point Likert scale across five variables: attention, emotion, alertness, mood and fitness. Overall satisfaction with the Daily Mile was determined by asking teachers if they would recommend the Daily Mile to another teacher/school. The survey also included optional free text boxes enabling participants the option to add comments. The online survey was completed by 64 class teachers across the three local authorities, and across the full range of primary school classes.

Figure 1: Integrated mind map of teacher thematic analysis.

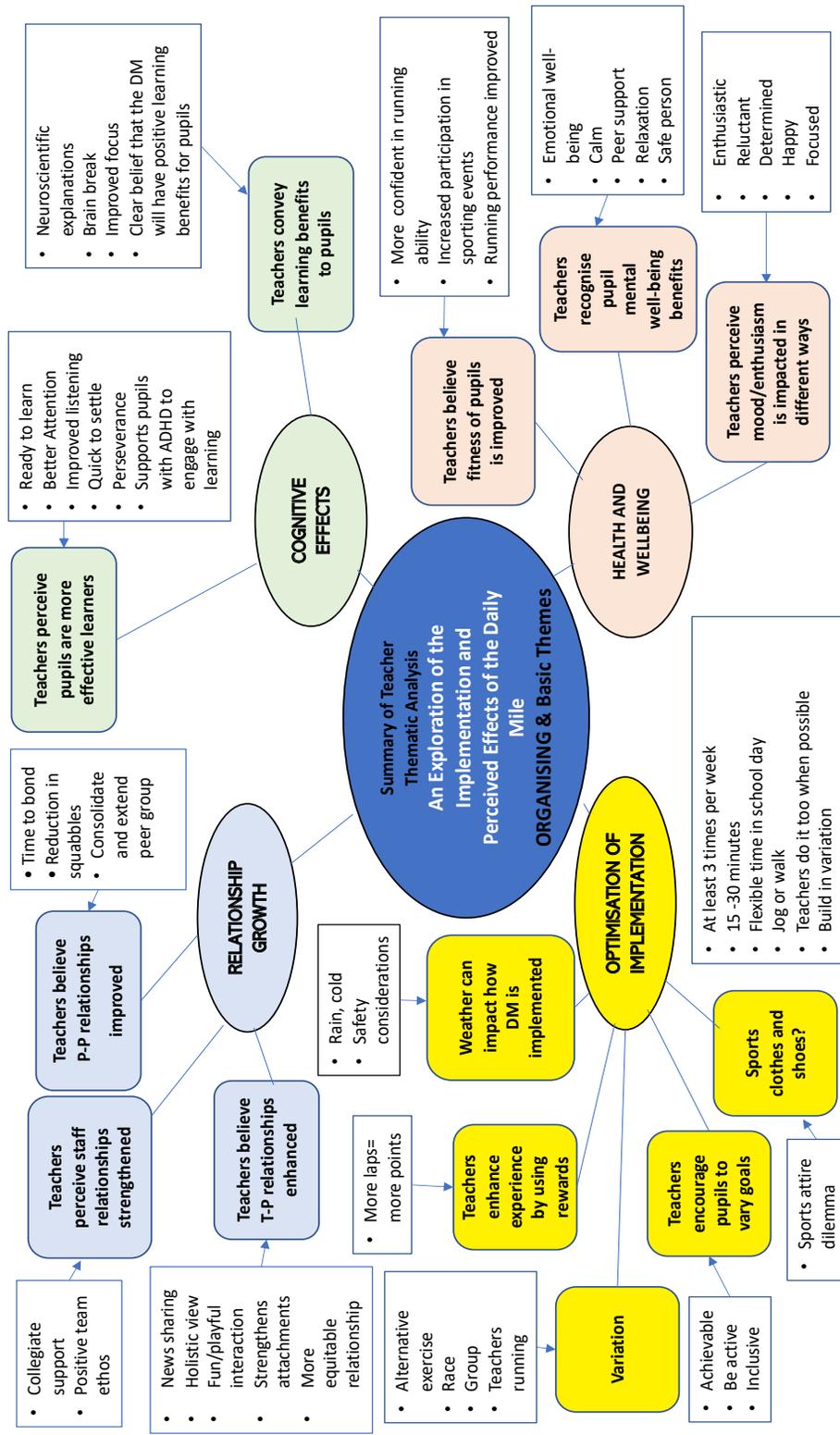
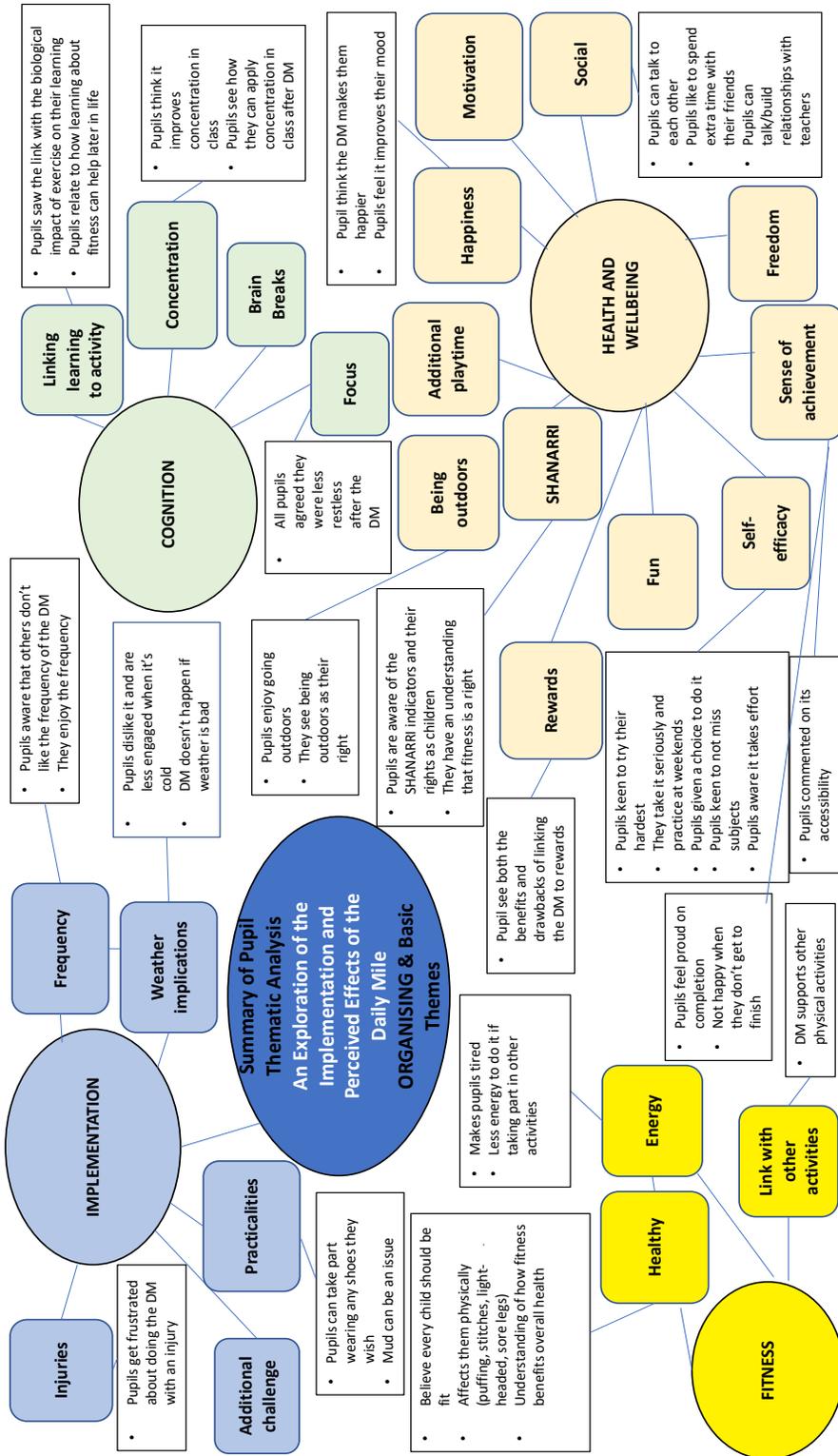


Figure 2: Integrated mind map of pupil thematic analysis.



Qualitative phase – focus groups teachers and pupils

The results of the online survey were used to inform the focus group questions. Focus groups were held in two schools, used a semi-structured schedule and lasted approximately 30 minutes. All participants were fully briefed on the purpose of the research and provided informed consent. In total nine teachers and eight pupils volunteered to participate in the focus groups. The teacher focus groups explored what a typical Daily Mile day was like for the class, what teachers observed before, during and after the DM and what they considered as the main effects for pupils when they do the DM. The pupil focus groups investigated similar areas in addition to exploring how the pupils felt before, during and after the DM. All focus groups were transcribed in their entirety and the transcripts were analysed thematically as described by Corlett (2010).

Results

Results from online survey

Research question: How is the Daily Mile currently being implemented?

The majority of participants (43 per cent) indicated that their class completes the DM three times each week. Several participants commented that their classes completed the DM on the days that they do not have PE. There was a large variation in the time of day the schools were completing the DM.

Research question: What are the perceived effects of the Daily Mile?

Participants considered the DM to have the greatest effect on emotion, with 94 per cent of teachers indicating the DM has a positive effect on pupil mood. Similarly, 91 per cent of teacher participants indicated the DM has a positive effect on levels of alertness. When considering the negative effects, 11 per cent of teachers indicated pupils in their class are unenthusiastic about the DM, and five per cent indicated the DM as having a negative

effect on pupil's attention. Overall, 88 per cent of participants rated the DM as having an overall perceived positive effect on pupils.

Results – Focus groups

Thematic analysis of the teacher focus groups transcripts revealed four organising themes and 13 supporting basic themes. The four organising themes were relationship growth, cognitive effects, optimisation of implementation and health and wellbeing. Similar organising themes emerged for the pupils though relationship growth did not emerge as a separate theme. Integrated mind maps for the teacher (Figure 1) and pupil (Figure 2) analysis are shown on the previous page and above.

Summary of qualitative findings

Both schools usually do the DM three times a week though one school preferred to do it early in the day whereas the other chose the afternoon. Duration of the DM varied between 15 to 30 minutes. It was usual for most pupils to run in their school shoes; however, it was common in one school for the pupils to change into sports shoes. The teachers also shared that when they ran the DM this appeared to increase pupils' motivation to engage with the DM: 'Pupils were 100 per cent so much more enthused if staff ran with them' (Teacher A). Both schools tended not to do the DM on days when their class had PE.

Teachers perceived that doing the DM had a positive impact on health and wellbeing both for their pupils and also for themselves as illustrated by observations that groups of pupils wanted to improve their sporting performance by running more laps and that: 'We (staff) were much fitter and probably less stressed, probably the healthiest that we have ever been' (Teacher B) and it was a 'feel good factor' (Teacher A). It was notable that in both schools some pupils were reluctant to do the DM. Pupils too noticed benefits to their wellbeing noting that it made them feel happier and by commenting: 'It's kind

of like you forget everything else' (Pupil A).

Teachers recognised several cognitive effects, exemplified by Teacher C who believed that the DM made a 'huge difference, a huge difference' to their learning by recounting her observation that pupils would often be able to independently master work after doing the DM. In both schools, teachers perceived improvements in attention, listening skills, alertness and academic work rate and they attributed this to the DM. Interestingly, one teacher also believed that a pupil with additional support needs was able to focus better and engage better with his work after doing the DM. Pupils also commented that it was beneficial to learning, with Pupil B stating: 'it just helps me with my thinking and learning' however they also suggested their engagement with learning after the DM was more influenced by the subject.

Teachers commented overwhelmingly about how the DM positively affected relationships, specifically supporting relationship growth for the school community. There were sometimes a few 'squabbles' however overall teachers perceived pupil and staff relationships improved and this attributed to the DM. Teacher D valued 'the bonding time with them because you get to know them and hear about other news'. Some pupils used the DM to seek out the security of their teacher and would 'stick' by the teacher's side for a chat about their concerns.

Whilst the DM has simple implementation steps, it is clear that schools considered ways to optimise implementation in their local context. This included using a reward system and differentiating meaningful and achievable goals for pupils. There was also the perception that routinely doing the same thing could become a 'chore' and so innovations such as skipping to 'mix it up and keep it lively' (Teacher B) were regarded as enhancements. Pupils themselves also would use the DM to play, e.g. cops and robbers, as opposed to just running or walking. A dilemma for teachers was the tension between wearing sports attire and minimising the time taken to do the DM,

particularly if they took part; it was problematic for them if they did the DM in sportswear and the pupils were in uniform to minimise impact on curricular time. The pupils were mainly concerned about the negative experience of doing the DM in inclement weather stating that in the rain the DM was 'not fun'.

Discussion

Data collected using the online survey was triangulated with data obtained through pupil and teacher focus groups. The key findings suggest that the perceived effects of the DM can be summarised within three emerging themes; health and wellbeing, cognition and relationships.

Health and wellbeing

Results suggest that the DM can have a positive effect on health and wellbeing for both pupils and teachers. Findings from the online survey suggest that teachers consider the DM to have a positive effect on pupil fitness-levels. Pupils in the focus groups were also aware of this positive effect, commenting that the DM made them feel healthier and had a positive effect on their performance in sport and other physical activity.

The findings also appear to demonstrate a positive effect between the DM and pupil's mental health. Results from the online survey showed that 94 per cent of participants consider the DM to have a positive effect on pupil mood. Teachers in the focus group also recognised improvements to behaviour after completing the DM, commenting that both pupils and teachers themselves were calmer and had a sense of a 'feel good factor'. Pupils said the DM made them happy and allowed them to 'forget everything else', it gave them a sense of achievement and they were more motivated to do other things afterwards. Having a sense of achievement, being more motivated and feeling good could indicate pupils developing high self-esteem.

Cognition

Resulting findings from the online survey demonstrate that overall teachers perceive the DM to have a positive effect on pupil's attention and levels of alertness. These findings were replicated across the focus groups, with both pupils and teachers commenting on positive effects from DM participation. Results also suggest the DM can be used as a break to increase alertness when pupils are fatigued during lessons and that a noticeable difference in time on task is noticed when pupils have not done the DM that day.

Relationships

Results from all phases of this research suggest that the DM has a positive effect on relationships. The DM can provide the opportunity for pupil to interact with peers out-with their own class, facilitating social development. Similarly, teachers value the opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships with their pupils during the DM, by using the time to walk with them and chat about any difficulties. This effect appears to be most prevalent when the pupils are walking the DM rather than running. This finding has relevance for the way the DM is implemented in schools and highlights additional benefits that can be gained from walking the DM.

Implications for educational psychology practice

Educational psychologists can apply these findings to practice by recommending the DM as both a physical activity intervention and social relationships intervention. The DM may be particularly beneficial when pupils return to school after the Covid-19 pandemic.

As pupils return to school after a period of lockdown it will be more important than ever for pupils and teachers to rebuild relationships with their school community. Walking the DM may be an effective way for teachers to rebuild and strengthen nurturing relationships with pupils. As the transmission rate for Covid-19 is reportedly lower outdoors, the DM may also provide

a safer environment for pupils to catch up with their friends, thus supporting their well-being and rebuilding social relationships.

Schools can come up with inventive ways to adapt the DM to the current context. For example, a DM route that adheres to social distancing could be marked out around the playground by using different coloured tape to create two parallel lines, e.g. a blue line and a red line, two metres apart. Pupils could be put into pairs and allocated to the red or blue team. Pupils could then walk around either the red or blue DM route that corresponds to their team's colour, whilst being challenged to walk at the same pace as their partner from the other team who is walking along the adjacent line. Each pair could obtain a house point for successfully sticking to their own route and matching their walking speed to their partners. This would help the pupils to adhere to social distancing in a fun way whilst facilitating social interaction with their peers.

Alternatively, pupils could walk in pairs each holding an end of a length of string cut to the recommended social distance. This would help create a visual reminder for pupils to stay a safe distance from their peers, whilst also helping them to feel physically connected to each other. For both games, teachers could join in by pairing up with different pupils.

Similarly, some pupils may find it difficult to adapt to the classroom environment after being at home for several months. EPs can recommend the DM as a physical activity intervention to allow pupils to have a break from sitting at their desks and get outside. The structured movement break provided by the DM may help pupils adapt to being back in the classroom environment. This may be particularly helpful in the current context when social distancing may prevent pupils engaging in their usual playground activities. Overall, EPs could recommend the DM to schools as an intervention that provides pupils with the time and space to have a break from their classrooms and connect with their peers and teachers in a safe way.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore teachers' and pupils' perceived effects of the DM and implementation of the DM in primary schools. Findings suggest that teachers and pupils perceive the DM to have positive effects on health and wellbeing, cognition and relationships. Schools are optimising implementation of the DM by adapting the DM core principles to their specific school context. Overall, findings suggest that educational psychologists might consider the DM as an effective intervention that supports the development of children and young people's attention, alertness and readiness to learn. Importantly, the DM also appears to support the development of social interaction

skills and strengthen relationships within the school community. The DM can be used to rebuild social relationships when pupils return to school after the Covid-19 lockdown. Schools can come up with inventive ways to adapt the DM to the current context by incorporating social distancing measures into the DM in a fun way.

**Maggie Eggeling, Vicky Heath,
Emma Rait & Katie Sprang**

Correspondence

Emma Rait

Highland Psychological Service
emma.rait@highland.gov.uk

References

- Biddle, S. J. & Asare, M. (2011). Physical activity and mental health in children and adolescents: A review of reviews. *British journal of sports medicine*, 45(11), 886–895.
- Corlett, L. (2010). *Collaborative Peer Support (CPS): An exploration of the collaborative process facilitating the development of peer support in educational psychology training and practice* (unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle.
- Gearin, B.M. & Fien, H. (2016). Translating the neuroscience of physical activity to education, trends in neuroscience and education. *Urban & Fischer*, 5(1), 12–19. doi:10.1016/J.TINE.2016.02.001.
- Grieco, L.A., Jowers E.M., Errisuriz, V.L. & Bartholomew, J.B. (2016). Physically active vs sedentary academic lessons: A dose response study for elementary student time on task, *Preventive Medicine*, 89, 98–103. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2016.05.021.
- Khan, N.A. & Hillman, C.H. (2014) The relation of childhood physical activity and aerobic fitness to brain function and cognition: A review, *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 26(2), 138–146. doi:10.1123/pes.2013-0125.
- Oken, B.S., Salinsky, M.C. & Elsas, S.M. (2006). Vigilance, alertness, or sustained attention: physiological basis and measurement, clinical neurophysiology. *Elsevier*, 117(9), 1885–1901. doi:10.1016/J.CLINPH.2006.01.017.
- Ryde, G.C., Booth, J.N., Brooks, N.E. et al. (2018). The Daily Mile: What factors are associated with its implementation success? *Plos One*, 13(10), 1–14. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0204988.
- The Daily Mile UK (2019). Retrieved from: <https://thedailymile.co.uk/participation-map/>.
- Scottish Government (2011). *Physical activity guidelines for children and young people (5–18 years)*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Retrieved from www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Documents/children-and-young-people-5-18-years.pdf
- Scottish Government (2017, August 25). *Scotland: a Daily Mile nation*. (Press release). Retrieved from: www.gov.scot/news/scotland-a-daily-mile-nation/.
- Yoo, J.J., Hinds, O., Ofen, N. et al. (2012). When the brain is prepared to learn: Enhancing human learning using realtime fMRI. *Neuroimage*, 59(1), 846–852.

An exploration of the use of ABL_e by educational psychologists to promote universal inclusive practice in primary school classrooms in one local authority in Scotland

Megan Ayliffe, Caroline Gos & Gwen Hobbs

In Scotland, an increasing amount of emphasis is being placed on creating inclusive learning environments to meet the needs of all learners. An inclusion pedagogy requires a focus on all children in a classroom and a rejection of deterministic beliefs of ability. The current study examined the use of Addressing Barriers to Learning (ABL_e), an inclusive practice resource developed and promoted by Dundee City Council Educational Psychology Service (DEPS). 11 educational psychologists (EPs) took part in a survey exploring their views surrounding the impact and process of using ABL_e. Qualitative thematic analysis identified three key themes (Staff engagement, role of the EP, future needs) and six sub-themes (staff resistance, within-child conceptualisations, professional dialogue, evidencing impact, accessibility and format, and staged approach to implementation). The findings suggest that successful implementation of ABL_e is facilitated by the collaborative coaching of inclusive pedagogy and functional links to the National Practice Model.

Inclusive practice in Scotland

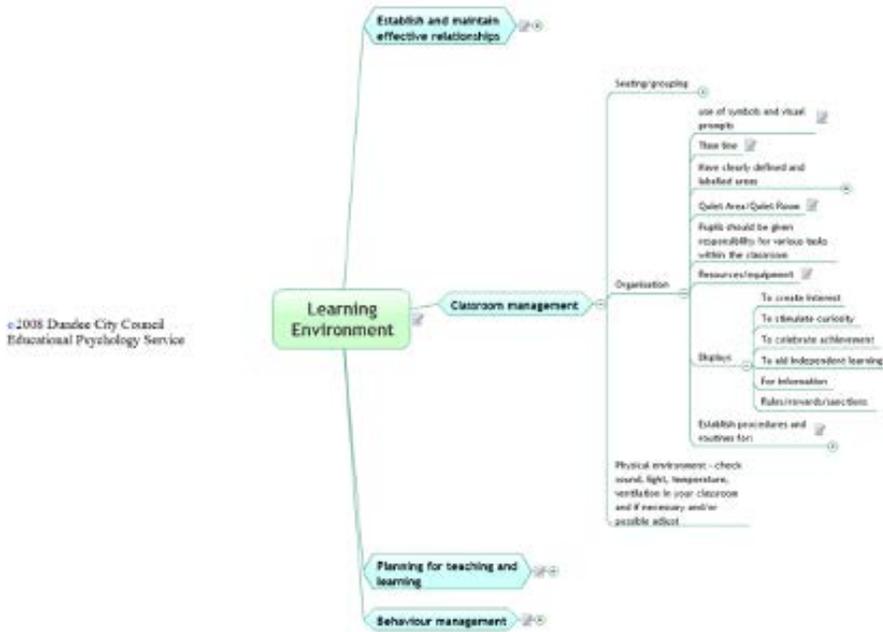
SINCE devolution in 1999, Scotland's government has been focused on building a society based on a sense of egalitarianism (Watson, 2010). Inclusion is considered the central goal of Scottish society and education has been key in promoting this (Watson, 2010).

One of the first acts to be passed by the Scottish Executive was the Standards in Scotland's Schools (2000) Act which incorporated the principle of the Salamanca Statement into Scottish legislation (Barrett et al., 2015; UNESCO, 1994). The Standards in Scotland's Schools (2000) Act set out the 'presumption of mainstreaming' which ensured that all children, regardless of experience, ability or preference should be educated within a mainstream school unless there was evidence that they should not be (Watson, 2010).

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004), changed the language that Scotland uses regarding disability with 'additional support needs' (ASN) replacing 'special education needs' (SEN). This suggests that additional needs are not due to a problem within-child but due to the interaction between the child and the learning environment (Ferguson, 2008; Watson, 2010). The term SEN organises people into a grid-like structure of various, permanent disabilities whereas ASN can capture all children who require varying degrees of additional support for long or short periods of time (Watson, 2010). This shift in understanding requires staff to consider adapting the school environment to meet the needs of children and to be inclusive in their practice (Watson, 2010).

In Scotland 'getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)' forms the basis of assess-

Figure 1: ABL_e learning environment map (Dundee City Council, 2013b).



ment, planning, and action for professionals working with children (Scottish Government, 2018). By using the shared language of the model, multi-agency working can be more effective with a focus on the well-being indicators – safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, responsible, respected, and included (SHANARRI) (Tisdall & Davis, 2015). This approach is outlined by the Child and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) and embeds the rights of children in the way practitioners work to ensure that children and young people get the support they need as early as possible and at the right time (Tisdall & Davis, 2015). In education, GIRFEC supports the process of inclusion by putting children at the centre of the planning process (Barrett et al., 2015).

Addressing Barriers to Learning (ABL_e) (Dundee City Council, 2011a)

ABL_e is a web-based resource that can be accessed by all education staff. It can be used to support individual children as well as entire classes. ABL_e is a problem-solving tool used to facilitate discussions about needs and barriers

to learning, as well as a planning tool for interventions. The process is a series of questions used to describe, assess, plan and review, discussed in a collaborative conversation that ideally includes families, pupils and staff. The website includes sections on general guidance and using ABL_e in practice, including worked examples (Dundee City Council, 2011b, 2013a).

This is also supported by interactive mind maps. The learning environment map examines aspects at the universal class level provision and suggests aspects that can be modified to better suit the needs of all children (See Figure 1). The learner map examines possible barriers to an individual child's learning and provides prompts for possible supports. For each of these potential barriers there is a checklist to enable users to focus their observations as well as ideas for interventions that may help overcome the barriers to learning. The tool is designed to be flexible, allowing practitioners who feel stuck to use the problem-solving process and mind maps to frame their discussions until they become unstuck.

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes.

Theme	Sub-theme
Staff engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff resistance • Within-child conceptualisations
Role of the educational psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of professional dialogue • Evidencing impact
Future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility and format • Staged approach to implementation

Aims of the study

The current study aimed to use an online survey to explore how EPs in Dundee Educational Psychology Service (DEPS) use ABLe to assess, analyse and inform changes to inclusive practice in primary school classrooms. There were three research questions that were explored: the extent to which EPs used ABLe to promote inclusive practice at the universal class level; EPs’ views of the impact of using ABLe on inclusive practice in the primary school classroom; and EPs’ perspectives of the process of using ABLe.

Method

During May 2020, trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) created and distributed online questionnaires to EPs from DEPS. Questionnaire questions explored EPs’ views surrounding the use and impact of ABLe across primary schools in Dundee. Demographic information was not collected within the questionnaire. The final sample consisted of 11 EPs and the response rate was 11 out of 12 EPs (91.67 per cent).

Ethics

Ethical approval for the current study was granted from University of Dundee Research and Ethics Committee in May 2020 and *The BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct* (British Psychological Society, 2018) was adhered to throughout.

Data analysis and ontological assumptions

A qualitative design was employed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006),

for the identification, analysis and reporting of themes. As such, a critical realist stance was adopted for this study, which recognises the layered and complex nature of reality (Danermark et al., 2019). Significant themes and sub-themes were generated. The themes were continuously refined until three overarching themes and eight sub-themes were generated. Two sub-themes (from respective broader themes) were merged into existing sub-themes, as they were inadequately supported alone.

Results

The analysis generated three themes and six sub-themes. These are illustrated in Table 1.

Staff engagement

EPs expressed the importance of staff engagement with ABLe at all levels of the school system. Participants expressed that they believe that the learner map is being used more heavily than the learning environment map. This finding suggests that within-child conceptualisations are predominant with the use of ABLe, rather than a focus on the learning environment.

Staff resistance

EPs perceived that a barrier to the effective implementation of ABLe is staff resistance towards using the ABLe in its intended form, this intended form being to promote universal inclusive practice. EPs suggest that there are mismatches in priorities when implementing intervention plans such as ABLe.

Participant 9:

The school, despite my attempts, were actually wanting a behaviour policy but to call it an ABLe plan. Staff were resistant.

Interestingly, findings emphasise the critical role of the teacher taking ownership of the ABLe process for the development and sustainability of their inclusive practice. EPs suggest that their role involves facilitating the use of ABLe and empowering teachers to apply consistent changes to their classroom environment.

Participant 10:

EPs don't use ABLe, they can facilitate the use of ABLe but it is the teachers who need to use it.

Within-child conceptualisations

There was a pattern expressed between EPs which highlighted that whilst staff do engage with the tool, the prevailing perspective is one in which issues are seen to be located within the child as an individual, as opposed to in the wider environment.

Participant 5:

Challenges usually are around changing the focus from within child thinking to adapting the environment to support all learners.

There was a sense that it is critical to support school staff to adopt a consistent and balanced perspective when using ABLe. Whilst it is important to understand the individual needs of learners within a classroom, it is also important to support teachers to recognise the significance of creating an inclusive classroom environment as a starting point. Participants broadly suggested that these challenges may have roots in the process of using the tool; the learner map encourages analysis of individual needs and

it is difficult to enforce the balanced use of the learner map and the learning environment map.

Role of the educational psychologist

This theme encompasses the EPs' perceptions of their role, in relation to supporting school staff to use ABLe. Further, this theme explores challenges related to the ways in which practice tools can be evaluated and the role that the EP plays in the evaluation of the impact of ABLe. EPs also discussed the positive impact of coaching approaches on the CT's understanding of the relevance of ABLe strategies for promoting inclusive practice.

The importance of professional dialogue

EPs expressed that professional dialogue facilitates the effective implementation of ABLe. Key points reflected the positive impact of promoting ABLe within whole-school contexts, such as staff training and the value of conceptualising ABLe strategies for class groups rather than individual children, was positively reflected upon.

Participant 11:

Doing it as a whole school, teachers saw the relevance of the strategies for other groups of children. We discussed how these could be implemented in a practical way at a whole class/school level.

EPs suggest that effective practice often relies on EPs having the opportunity to coach the class teacher (CT) whereby EPs are able to offer a reflective and supportive space to promote CT implementation of ABLe. There is a general sense that CT ownership and confidence in independent implementation is the desired final outcome, but more direct input and coaching with EPs should precede this.

Participant 12:

I use it all the time, I find that I need to coach staff, in order for them to use it independently and for them to see the benefits of it.

Evidencing impact

EPs reported that evidencing the impact of the implementation of ABLe is multi-faceted, and several perspectives are required. EPs reported that evidence gathered from multiple sources, where several professionals are involved, can be collected as 'evidence', and then discussed at Team Around the Child (TATC) meetings. EPs suggest that schools prioritise evidencing impact on individual children rather than universal changes in classroom environment.

Participant 3:

Through regular evaluation with the CT, parent and child (report), observations and involvement in extended review.

Future needs

This overarching theme reflects EPs perceptions that further development of the ABLe tool is important to the service. The ABLe tool is a useful and insightful resource that sparks professional dialogue, but in line with developing educational psychology practice, it could benefit from being reviewed. A recurring sub-theme relates to the importance of greater accessibility in terms of ABLe's visual presentation, as well as issues pertaining to having access to technology when meeting teachers for consultations. Perspectives regarding adopting a staged approach to ABLe implementation are discussed.

Accessibility and format

EPs suggested that the accessibility and format of ABLe is 'outdated', and therefore may be hindering implementation. Findings suggest that a lack of access to

computers and laptops during consultations often prevents the EP from being able to promote the use of ABLe, and to begin coaching CT's through its use. It was identified that in future, a redeveloped ABLe would benefit from being more succinct, and for staff members to be able to access resources easily, such as through the use of a tablet device app.

Participant 6:

If we used the maps more during consultations – lack of computer/internet can prevent this as well as time to have in-depth discussion with the most appropriate staff.

Participant 2:

I would like to change how it is accessed. Is it possible to create an app for example?

Staged approach to implementation

EPs reflected their views regarding the perceived benefits of using a staged approach to implementation. Specifically, EPs expressed that a staged approach would involve ABLe being used as part of a city-wide intervention model, which considers appropriate levels of intervention, depending on the needs of the children and young people. These levels would provide a clear outline of when changes should be implemented and reviewed, in relation to the social context, as well as national frameworks such as Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

Participant 10:

I would like ABLe to be tailored to fit within one overall staged approach which shows how it fits with nurture and the National Practice Model. Less fragmentation would help.

Implications

Staff engagement

Implementation science examines what makes an effective intervention (Kelly, 2012a). Management structure, staff competencies and school culture impact on the successful implementation of a programme or intervention (Bertram et al., 2015). Participants identified both communication difficulties between staff at different management levels and lack of clarity around responsibilities as barriers to implementation. Secondly, staff competence was raised, with many participants suggesting there was a lack of understanding of ABLe in some cases and intervention fatigue in others. Thirdly, participants referred to a school culture that focused on exhibited behaviour rather than looking for underlying needs and universal inclusion practices. This accords with Wilson et al. (2016) who found that to support teachers to assume positive attitudes about inclusion, an inclusive whole school environment and a climate that fosters inclusion is important. Whole-school and individual self-assessment about school climate can be an effective way to drive change (Kelly, 2012b).

The findings of the current study support the idea that a within-child conceptualisation impacts inclusive practice. CTs should continue to commit to finding ways of focusing on meeting the needs of all the children in their class by finding strategies that work well with in meeting the needs of all (Florian, 2012; Sharma et al., 2012). Reflective teaching, such as that supported by ABLe, can encourage teachers to move from a within-child view to an inclusive focus (Pantić & Florian, 2015). However, the barriers to implementation mean that ABLe is often being used without fidelity (Blase et al., 2012). CTs could be directed to the general guidance and using ABLe in practice sections of the website (Dundee City Council, 2011b, 2013a).

EP role

Respondents recognise the benefits of training and coaching to improve the efficacy of ABLe. This accords with findings that even after high quality training, practical in-situ coaching is required to enable teachers to change their practice (Blase et al., 2012).

Analysis revealed inconsistency in evidencing impact and a lack of clarity about what that evidence should consist of, reflecting wider literature about the difficulty in evidencing inclusive practice (Florian, 2012). While CTs should be encouraged to continue to develop their evidencing of their inclusive practices, EPs have a role in helping schools develop their evidence gathering and analysis methods (Kelly, 2012b). Reflecting on teaching craft and teacher self-efficacy are useful evidencing methods (Florian, 2012; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Wilson et al., 2016).

Future needs

Participants express a clear desire to update ABLe to make it more accessible both in terms of visual format and digital access. Participants sought clear links to evidence, epistemology, and ideas behind ABLe. By providing these links, teachers' commitment, ownership and effective use of ABLe could be increased (Kelly, 2012b). Drawing explicit links between ABLe and GIRFEC will increase its functionality (Kelly, 2012b).

Implications for practice

For DEPS, the main implication from this study is a need to redevelop ABLe. It could be reformatted to be visually and digitally user-friendly. A within-child viewpoint leads CTs' to prefer the learner map and checklists aspects of the tool. The existence of a learner map could indicate to CTs that the within-child view is the dominant factor, or the most convenient factor to consider when meeting the needs of children and young people. If CTs are to be encouraged to look for ways to overcome barriers to learning by

finding learning environment strategies that work for all children, those barriers could be incorporated into one inclusive learning environment map. Including explicit links to rationales and to the national practice framework (Scottish Government, 2018) would enhance it.

Sustainability can be built by making use of implementation science frameworks, such as involving class teachers in the redevelopment and re-implementation of ABLe, or a staged training protocol (Kelly, 2012b). Parental involvement in developing and maintaining inclusive practice is also key (Falkmer et al., 2015).

Work has been done to address teachers' understanding of and attitude towards the concept of inclusion in initial teacher training (Florian, 2012). This needs to be sustained and embedded through ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) for individual teachers and school development. This should further include an emphasis on reflective pedagogy (Pantić & Florian, 2015) and inclusive self-efficacy (Symeonidou, 2017; Wilson et al., 2016).

Areas for future research

The views of CTs, other teachers, profes-

sionals and parents who use ABLe should be sought. Future research examining CTs' and senior teachers' views about ABLe could be triangulated with the views of the EPs to get a richer picture of the benefits and barriers to the use of ABLe in day to day practice and sustainability of the intervention.

Implementation science is a relatively young discipline and has concentrated on the development, implementation, and maintenance of new programmes. The study of a redevelopment and re-implementation of ABLe, in an area where stakeholders' range of experience with the original tool varies, would be interesting.

Examining the relative impacts of initial training, CPD and influence of school culture, could provide insight into the best way to continue to support teachers to shift their attitudes beyond within-child viewpoints.

Megan Ayliffe, Caroline Gos & Gwen Hobbs

Correspondence

Caroline Gos

Trainee Educational Psychologist
cgos@dundee.ac.uk

References

- Barrett, L., Beaton, M., Head, G. et al. (2015). Developing inclusive practice in Scotland: The national framework for inclusion. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 33(3), 180–187. doi:10.1080/02643944.2015.1070896
- Bertram, R., Blase, K., Fixsen, D. & Parrish, D. (2015). Improving programmes and outcomes: Implementation frameworks and organisation change. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 25(4), 477–487. doi:10.1177/1049731514537687
- Blase, K.A., Van Dyke, M., Fixsen, D.L. & Wallace Bailey, F. (2012). Implementation science key concepts, themes, and evidence for practitioners in educational psychology. In B. Kelly, D. Perkins, B. Topping & K. J. Topping (Eds.), *Handbook of Implementation Science for Psychology in Education* (pp.13–34). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139013949.003
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- British Psychological Society (2018). *Code of ethics and conduct* (online). Leicester: The British Psychological Society. Retrieved from www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf
- Danermark, B., Ekström, M. & Karlsson, J.C. (2019). *Explaining society: Critical realism in the social sciences*. London: Routledge.
- Dundee City Council (2011a). *ABLe: Addressing barriers to learning*. Retrieved from www.ableschools.org.uk
- Dundee City Council (2011b). *ABLe: Addressing barriers to learning: General guidance*. Retrieved from: www.ableschools.org.uk/able_gen_guidance
- Dundee City Council (2013a). *ABLe: Addressing barriers to learning: ABLe in practice*. Retrieved from www.ableschools.org.uk/able_practice

- Dundee City Council (2013b) *ABLe: Addressing barriers to learning: Resources*. Retrieved from www.ableschools.org.uk/able_resources
- Falkmer, M., Anderson, K., Joosten, A. & Falkmer, T. (2015). Parents' perspectives on inclusive schools for children with autism spectrum conditions. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 62(1), 1–23.
- Ferguson, D.L. (2008). International trends in inclusive education: The continuing challenge to teach each one and everyone. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 23(2), 109–120. doi:10.1080/08856250801946236
- Florian, L. & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(5), 813–828. doi:10.1080/01411926.2010.501096
- Florian, L. (2012). Preparing teachers to work in inclusive classrooms: Key lessons for the professional development of teacher educators from Scotland's inclusive practice project. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 63(4), 275–285. doi:10.1177/0022487112447112
- Kelly, B. (2012 a). Implementation science for psychology in education. In B. Kelly, D. Perkins, B. Topping & K.J. Topping, (Eds.) *Handbook of Implementation Science for Psychology in Education* (pp.13–34). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139013949.003
- Kelly, B. (2012b). Implementation science and enhancing delivery and practice in school psychology services. In B. Kelly, D. Perkins, B. Topping & K.J. Topping, *Handbook of Implementation Science for Psychology in Education* (pp.111–131). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139013949.003
- Pantić, N. & Florian, L. (2015). Developing teachers as agents of inclusion and social justice. *Education Inquiry: Special Issue: Teacher Education Policies and Developments in Europe*, 6(3), 333–351. doi:10.3402/edui.v6.27311
- Scottish Government (2018). *Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)*. Retrieved from www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/
- Sharma, U., Loreman, T. & Forlin, C. (2012). Measuring teacher efficacy to implement inclusive practices. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 12(1), 12–21. doi:10.1111/j.1471-3802.2011.01200.x
- Symeonidou, S. (2017). Initial teacher education for inclusion: A review of the literature. *Disability & Society*, 32(3), 401–422. doi:10.1080/09687599.2017.1298992
- Tisdall, E.K.M. & Davis, J.M. (2015). Children's rights and wellbeing: Tensions within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. In E.A.B. Smith (Ed.), *Enhancing children's rights: Connecting research policy and practice*. (pp.214–227). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- UNESCO (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Watson, C. (2010). Educational policy in Scotland: Inclusion and the control society. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 31(1), 93–104. doi:10.1080/01596300903465443
- Wilson, C., Woolfson, L.M., Durkin, K. & Elliott, M.A. (2016). The impact of social cognitive and personality factors on teachers' reported inclusive behaviour. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86(3), 461–480. doi:10.1111/bjep.12118

A systematic review of practitioners' perceptions of supporting inclusion in a UK mainstream primary context

Ciara Brady, Ainsley McLarty & Rebecca Rankin

Inclusion is a key priority in education and evidence has suggested that practitioners have a key role in implementing inclusion policies and legislation within educational establishments. Exploring perceptions held by practitioners of inclusion would be beneficial to understanding how practitioners support this. The current systematic review looked to explore the body of research within the United Kingdom (UK) around practitioner perceptions on supporting inclusion within the mainstream primary context. Thematic synthesis was undertaken which presented four overarching themes. Potential implications for EP practice are explored. As the UK education context is an area where little research has been conducted regarding practitioner perceptions of inclusion, recommendations have been made for future research to ensure inclusion can be successfully supported.

1. Introduction

INCLUSION is a multifaceted concept underpinning many policies and initiatives in education (Ball et al., 2012). The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) increased the emphasis on inclusive education (Haug, 2017), meaning governments should enrol all children in regular education unless there were valid reasons otherwise (Smith & Thomas, 2006). It has been ratified across Europe (Watkins et al., 2009). Inclusive education aims to create environments where all children are appropriately supported to fully participate and achieve their potential (Gaad, 2004).

The devolution of education systems in the UK has shaped differing approaches to the delivery of inclusive education (Andrews & Mycock, 2007). In 2019, the number of children identified with additional support needs (ASN) in the UK increased for the third consecutive year (Department for Education, 2019). Most children with ASN attend mainstream education, with less than 10 per cent attending specialist provision (Mencap, 2019). Therefore, teachers may need to adjust strategies to accommodate

individual learning needs and take on the dynamic role of an inclusive practitioner (Kortman, 2001).

When exploring inclusion, it is necessary to consider the perceptions of those who are important to its implementation. This includes teachers, teaching assistants (TAs), school leaders, Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), ASN Coordinators and external agencies (Baker & Zigmond, 1995). Perceptions of inclusion are likely to influence behaviour and actions, and ultimately how practitioners implement inclusive practice (Monsen et al., 2014).

The current literature review focuses on perceptions of all in-school practitioners who bear the responsibility supporting inclusion. As the researchers work within the UK education context, the aim was to understand practitioners' perceptions of inclusion within this. Thematic synthesis was employed to answer the research question: what does the research suggest about practitioners' perceptions of supporting inclusion within a UK mainstream primary setting?

2. Methodology

The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre approach (EPPI-Centre, 2010) was used as a framework. Databases used were the University of Dundee Library Database, the British Education Index and the Education Resources Information Centre. Following screening and assessment for eligibility, 10 studies remained to contribute data. EPPI-Centre weight of evidence judgements (EPPI-Centre, 2010) were used to evaluate the papers. Papers were rated from one (excellent) to four (inadequate) on methodological quality, methodological relevance and topic relevance. Due to the limited research, studies rated as satisfactory were included to gain a broader scope of literature. Thematic synthesis was used to analyse the data (Harden, 2010). Ten descriptive themes emerged, which were aggregated into four overarching contextual themes.

The research process was governed by the Health and Care Professions Council *Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics* (Health and Care Professions Council, 2012); the British Psychological Society *Code of Ethics and Conduct* (British Psychological Society, 2009), and the University of Dundee's Research Ethics Committee Protocols (University of Dundee, n.d.).

3. Results

3.1 Practitioner factors

3.1.1 Self-efficacy

Woolfson and Brady (2009) found that practitioners with greater self-efficacy were more likely to view children's difficulties as extrinsic and capable of being influenced and mitigated for by the practitioner. MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013) found that greater self-efficacy also predicted a sense of competence regarding behaviour control and increased the likelihood of practitioners being more inclusive. This was reflected in McGregor and Campbell (2001).

3.1.2 Attitudes

In McGregor and Campbell (2001), specialist teachers perceived attitudes of mainstream teachers as key to inclusion in mainstream educational settings. Hind et al. (2019) found that the longer a practitioner had spent in the profession, the less inclusive their attitudes became. A similar result was shown by MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013). Gibb et al. (2007) found differing perceptions of the concept of inclusion to impact on practitioners' attitudes. This theme was similarly reported by Glazzard (2011).

3.1.3 Practice

Gibb et al. (2007) found that practitioners perceived adaptability of practice to individual pupils' needs as a key facilitator of inclusion. In Wilde and Avramidis (2011), practitioners reported that strategies maximising functional integration were most effective in promoting inclusion. Functional integration refers to children with ASN having some participation in mainstream classes, the wider school and community activities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). In Glazzard (2011), some practitioners reported unwillingness to adapt their practice, as they perceived their role as solely to provide education. Kendal (2019) found that differentiated teaching was crucial to effective inclusion. Rose (2001) reported practitioners acknowledged the importance of adaptive practice but felt this demanded more time.

3.2 Resource factors

3.2.1 Classroom resources

Glazzard (2011), found that resource availability was identified by practitioners as key to inclusion. Kendal (2019) reported similar findings, where a lack of specific resources was a barrier to supporting inclusion. Furthermore, some practitioners identified a funding tension around perceived essential and non-essential resources, which impacted on their ability to support inclusion. Gibb et al. (2007) reported a similar outcome.

Specialist and mainstream staff identified access to practical and knowledge-based resources from training events as key to facilitating successful inclusion. Hind et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of material resources such as technology, lesson plans and activities being available to practitioners to promote learning for all children.

The availability of TA support was reported as key for practitioners in facilitating inclusion. Rose (2001) reported the importance of classroom support and provision of additional staffing. Practitioners identified TAs as beneficial for individual children and the whole class to access the curriculum. Wilde and Avramidis (2011) and Glazzard (2011) reported that practitioners noted the importance of TAs in facilitating inclusion, for example by supporting with tasks, but highlighted this support should be within the classroom to avoid social segregation. Hind et al. (2019) and Kendal (2019) reported the benefit of additional staff in the classroom, however this was subject to funding.

3.2.2 Training and development resources

Hind et al. (2019) reported the importance of training to understand the range of emotional and behavioural difficulties children can experience. Additional training in appropriate teaching strategies and interventions to meet the needs of children with ASN would support successful inclusion (Wilde & Avramidis, 2011). Gibb et al. (2007) and Kendal (2019) found that practitioners felt a lack of knowledge and strategies impacted on their ability to be inclusive. Practitioners also noted the impact of insufficient initial teacher training (Glazzard, 2011; Rose, 2011).

3.3 Establishment Factors

3.3.1 The Role of Leadership

Woolfson and Macfarlane (2013) found senior management were crucial in communicating expectations of inclusive practice to staff. Teachers who held higher views of senior management expectations acted more inclusively. Glazzard (2011)

and Hind et al. (2019) found that the more support practitioners received from senior management, the more positive their attitudes were towards inclusion. In contrast, Smith and Broomhead (2019) found practitioners viewed members of senior management undertaking additional roles such as SENCo as a barrier due to creating a conflict in their role between school development and promoting inclusive practice.

3.3.2 Whole establishment approach

Practitioners reported the importance of an inclusive school ethos (Gibb et al., 2007; Kendal, 2019). Whole school ethos in terms of enhancing staff collaboration and joint problem-solving was perceived positively (Wilde & Avramidis, 2011). Peer acceptance between practitioners was found to be a feature of inclusive establishments (Gibb et al., 2007; Kendal, 2019). Kendal (2019) reported that practitioners viewed working collaboratively with outside agencies as essential to supporting inclusion. Similarly, Gibb et al. (2007) found practitioners valued partnership working between specialist and mainstream staff.

3.3.3 Type of provision

McGregor and Campbell (2001) found that specialist staff perceived the mainstream environment to be a potential barrier for some children. This was also reported in Rose (2001) where practitioners perceived classrooms as inaccessible, toilet facilities as unsuitable, and the environment overstimulating. Similarly, Glazzard (2011) found practitioners felt external placements and ASN provisions could support children better and that keeping children in mainstream schools could be detrimental.

3.4 Factors external to establishment

3.4.1 The role of family

Gibb et al. (2007) reported parental anxiety as a barrier to inclusion, due to concerns around their child's needs not being met. Practitioners viewed collaboration with

families, specialist and mainstream staff as key to inclusion. This was reflected in Kendal (2019). In Glazzard (2011), practitioners noted concerns from both families of children with ASN and of other children. For example, practitioners believed both groups experienced concern around the potential detriment to their child's education. Rose (2001) found that practitioners were concerned that parents would be anxious about an 'influx' of children with complex needs.

3.4.2 National curriculum

Kendal (2019) reported that practitioners perceived the National Curriculum as a potential barrier to learning. They felt confidence and self-esteem could be negatively impacted if children were unable to meet learning objectives at the required pace. Testing was also perceived as a barrier. McGregor and Campbell (2001) reported that specialist practitioners believed much of the curriculum was manageable for children with autism spectrum condition if delivered differently. Glazzard (2011) reported attainment as a tension with inclusion, as schools and teachers were held accountable for results.

4. Discussion

4.1 Findings

The findings suggested that higher self-efficacy would increase inclusive practice. Bandura (1977) indicates that self-efficacy predicts performance, which would support this. Self-efficacy beliefs around inclusive practice and experience of inclusive practice appear mutually beneficial. The research suggested that attitudes became less inclusive the longer practitioners had been in the profession. It appears with more experience, practitioners felt more competent in inclusive practice, but less willing to engage with it. This raises questions around how to gain the self-efficacy benefits of greater experience of inclusive practice without the negative impacts on attitudes. Perhaps a deeper understanding is required to investigate

what aspects of practitioners' experiences are having this detrimental impact. Practitioners perceived adaptability of practice to be a key facilitator. The complexity of inclusive practice is highlighted by Florian (2012), explaining that some practices cannot be categorised as inclusive or exclusive, as this is determined by the context of application.

The impact of resource availability to support inclusion has been similarly reported in wider literature (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). This review found practitioners identified the importance of practical and knowledge-based material resources as key, though dependent on funding availability. This resulted in tension around perceptions of essential and non-essential resources, impacting on practitioners' abilities to fully respond to a range of needs. This aligns with previous literature where a lack of resources has undermined teachers' development of inclusive education (Skarbrevik, 2005, as cited in Lindsay, 2007).

Practitioners deemed the TA role critical to support inclusion. Wider literature also notes the role of TAs, with their contribution being key (Takala 2007). Practitioners believed this support should be short-term and within the classroom, to prevent the possibility of exclusion. Da Fonte and Capizzi (2015) found it was important for teachers to promote joint planning with the TA.

The shortage of quality training on different ASN topics has been viewed as negatively impacting practitioners' confidence to support inclusion. It was found that practitioners who attend training consisting of a comprehensive input of ASN topics, had increased inclusive attitudes and practice towards inclusion. (Glashan et al., 2004). This review highlighted the opportunity training provides in enabling collaboration between practitioners at establishment level, as well as with families. This links with the development of whole establishment approaches which also emerged from this review, highlighting the importance of a shared commitment to inclusion (Shevlin et al., 2012).

The review found the more support practitioners received within their establishment, the more positive their attitudes were towards inclusion. Similar findings report that leadership is considered important in the implementation of inclusion (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013). A whole school approach was viewed as significant, with wider literature reflecting this. (Shevlin et al., 2013). Partnership working with mainstream and specialist school staff was considered beneficial for receiving advice and sharing strategies. Literature states mainstream teachers view specialist teachers as important contributors to making learning more accessible (Clough & Lindsey, 2003).

Practitioners felt the physical environment of mainstream may be inappropriate for some children due to accessibility. Croll and Moses (2000) reported that professionals rated specialist schools as more inclusive of children with severe physical or learning impairments than mainstream due to inadequate resources in mainstream settings

The role of family was perceived as a key factor in implementing inclusion. Practitioners noted that families of children with ASN had concerns about how their child's needs would be met within mainstream. Elkins et al. (2003) indicated parents of children with ASN still favoured mainstream placement over specialist provision. If families have concerns around their children's inclusion in mainstream, but favour this, it would be beneficial to consider how this could be made less concerning. Bennett et al. (1997) identified parents felt best supported when effective collaboration occurred, and practitioners displayed positive attitudes towards inclusion. This triangulates with practitioners' perceptions reported previously regarding importance of practitioner attitudes. This review also found practitioners had concerns around the opinions of parents of other children, feeling that some believed their children would be detrimentally impacted by children with ASN. The final theme to emerge was the National Curriculum. Testing and learning object-

ives were perceived as a potential barrier as they could impact children's self-esteem and confidence. Ross and Broh (2000) found that experiencing academic success was beneficial to children's self-esteem. The review found some practitioners perceived the curriculum to be suitable if appropriately adapted to suit each child's needs. If this is the case, it may be possible to adapt it to ensure all children are able to experience academic success.

4.2 Limitations

Though the literature review was conducted systematically, relevant literature may have been missed or rejected based on qualitative judgements. Limited papers relevant to the research question were returned by the literature search, due to a decision to limit the geographical scope to the UK. This allowed for maximum generalisability within the UK context. It is recognised that themes were based on the researchers' judgements which could be interpreted differently. This is considered a limitation of thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Many of the papers included were qualitative, resulting in small sample sizes, therefore results cannot be fully generalised. As the research question related to practitioner perceptions, qualitative research was considered appropriate to explore this (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006).

4.3 Implications

Due to limited UK-based literature, researchers should continue to explore UK practitioner perceptions to gain a deeper understanding of what supports inclusion and further translation of inclusive policy into practice. Findings around the relationship between self-efficacy and inclusive practice largely related to teachers. However, all practitioners have significant roles to play in implementing inclusion, thus future research should examine self-efficacy of all practitioners. The review found practitioners with more experience had more negative attitudes towards inclusion. It may be that

specific elements of practitioners' experiences create this effect and should be investigated further to mitigate their impact.

Practitioners perceived negative attitudes towards inclusion as a significant barrier. EPs may not be able to effect attitudinal change, however, could support self-efficacy and positive attitudes towards inclusion. Practitioners perceived insufficient classroom resources as another barrier, which raises a question about the implications of this for EP practice, as establishments may wish to increase direct individual work. However, greater impact to overcome this challenge could be achieved systemically, through supporting leadership and whole school approaches, where inclusion interventions are being implemented. EPs could add value with an understanding of implementation science (Kelly, 2013). Parental anxiety was perceived as a barrier by practitioners. EPs are uniquely placed to support parents, in their understanding of the surrounding systems and facilitating effective partnership working between

education staff and families, which in turn may help reduce anxiety.

5. Conclusion

This systematic review looked to investigate literature to answer the research question: 'what does the research suggest about practitioners' perceptions of supporting inclusion in a UK mainstream primary context?' UK practitioner perceptions should continue to be addressed in future research, to contribute further to the research base and support inclusion. EPs were identified as key facilitators in supporting and embedding inclusive practice, suggesting that this should remain part of their practice.

**Ciara Brady, Ainsley McLarty &
Rebecca Rankin**

Correspondence

Rebecca Rankin
Trainee Educational Psychologist
120010228@dundee.ac.uk

References

- Andrews, R. & Mycock, A. (2007). Citizenship education in the UK: Devolution, diversity and divergence. *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, 3(1), 73–88.
- Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P. & Burden, R. (2000). A survey into mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school in one local education authority. *Educational Psychology*, 20(2), 191–211.
- Avramidis, E. & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17(2), 129–147.
- Baker, J.M. & Zigmond, N. (1995). The meaning and practice of inclusion for students with learning disabilities: Themes and implications from the five cases. *The Journal of Special Education*, 29(2), 163–180.
- Ball, S.J., Maguire, M. & Braun, A. (2012). How schools do policy. *Policy enactments in secondary schools*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191–215.
- Bennett, T., Deluca, D. & Bruns, D. (1997). Putting inclusion into practice: Perspectives of teachers and parents. *Exceptional Children*, 64(1), 115–131.
- Clough, P. & Lindsay, G. (2003). *Integration and the support service: Changing roles in special education*. Routledge.
- Croll, P. & Moses, D. (2000). Ideologies and utopias: Education professionals' views of inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 15(1), 1–12.
- Crouch, M. & McKenzie, H. (2006). The logic of small samples in interview-based qualitative research. *Social Science Information*, 45(4), 483–499 doi:10.1177/0539018406069584
- Da Fonte, M.A. & Capizzi, A.M. (2015). Working collaboratively with support staff for inclusive education. *Working with teaching assistants and other support staff for inclusive education*, 195–218.
- Department for Education (2019). Special educational needs in England, Jan 2019. Retrieved from: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2019
- Elkins, J., Van Kraayenoord, C.E. & Jobling, A. (2003). Parents' attitudes to inclusion of their children with special needs. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 3(2), 122–129.
- Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (2010). *EPPI Centre Methods for Conducting Systematic Reviews*. London: Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.
- Florian, L. (2012). Preparing teachers to work in inclusive classrooms: Key lessons for the professional development of teacher educators from Scotland's inclusive practice project. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 63(4), 275–285.
- Gaad, E. (2004). Cross-cultural perspectives on the effect of cultural attitudes towards inclusion for children with intellectual disabilities. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 8(3), 311–328.
- Gibb, K., Tunbridge, D., Chua, A. & Frederickson, N. (2007). Pathways to inclusion: Moving from special school to mainstream. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 23(2), 109–127.
- Glashan, L., Mackay, G. & Grieve, A. (2004). Teachers' experience of support in the mainstream education of pupils with autism. *Improving Schools*, 7(1), 49–60.
- Glazzard, J. (2011). Perceptions of the barriers to effective inclusion in one primary school: Voices of teachers and teaching assistants. *Support for learning*, 26(2), 56–63.
- Harden, A. (2010). Mixed-methods systematic reviews: integrating quantitative and qualitative findings. *Focus*, 2010(25), 1–8.
- Haug, P. (2017). Understanding inclusive education: ideals and reality. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 19(3), 206–217.
- Hind, K., Larkin, R. & Dunn, A.K. (2019). Assessing teacher opinion on the inclusion of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties into mainstream school classes. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 66(4), 424–437.
- Hoppey, D. & McLeskey, J. (2013). A case study of principal leadership in an effective inclusive school. *The Journal of Special Education*, 46(4), 245–256.
- Kelly, B. (2013). Implementing implementation science: Reviewing the quest to develop methods and frameworks for effective implementation. *Journal of Neurology Psychology*, 1(1), 5.
- Kendal, L. (2019). Supporting all children to reach their potential: Practitioner perspectives on creating an inclusive school environment. *Education 3-13*, 47(6), 678–691.
- Kortman, W. (2001). The indispensable role of special education. In *AASE 2001: Unity and diversity within special education: 25th national conference* (pp.1–10). AASE.
- Lindsay, G. (2007). Educational psychology and the effectiveness of inclusive education/mainstreaming. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(1), 1–24.

- MacFarlane, K. & Woolfson, L.M. (2013). Teacher attitudes and behaviour toward the inclusion of children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in mainstream schools: An application of the theory of planned behaviour. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 29, 46–52.
- McGregor, E.M. & Campbell, E. (2001). The attitudes of teachers in Scotland to the integration of children with autism into mainstream schools. *Autism*, 5(2), 189–207.
- Mencap (n.d). *Children: research and statistics*. Retrieved from: www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics/children-research-and-statistics
- Monsen, J.J., Ewing, D.L. & Kwoka, M. (2014). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, perceived adequacy of support and classroom learning environment. *Learning Environments Research*, 17(1), 113–126.
- Peebles, J. & Mendaglio, S. (2014). The impact of direct experience on preservice teachers' self-efficacy for teaching in inclusive classrooms. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(12), 1321–1336.
- Rose, R. (2001). Primary school teacher perceptions of the conditions required to include pupils with special educational needs. *Educational Review*, 53(2), 147–156.
- Shevlin, M., Winter, E. & Flynn, P. (2013). Developing inclusive practice: Teacher perceptions of opportunities and constraints in the Republic of Ireland. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(10), 1119–1133.
- Smith, M.D. & Broomhead, K.E. (2019). Time, expertise and status: Barriers faced by mainstream primary school SENCos in the pursuit of providing effective provision for children with SEND. *Support for Learning*, 34(1), 54–70. doi:10.1111/1467-9604.12237
- Smith, A. & Thomas, N. (2006). Including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in national curriculum physical education: A brief review. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 21(1), 69–83.
- Takala, M. (2007). The work of classroom assistants in special and mainstream education in Finland. *British Journal of Special Education*, 34(1), 50–57.
- Thomas, J. & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC medical research methodology*, 8(1), 45.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (1994). *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Paris: UNESCO
- University of Dundee (n.d.). *Research Governance and Policy Handbook*. Retrieved from www.dundee.ac.uk/research/governance-policy/
- Watkins, A., D'Alessio, S. & Kyriazopoulou, M. (2009) Inclusive Education. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 4(3), 229–232.
- Wilde, A. & Avramidis, E. (2011). Mixed feelings: Towards a continuum of inclusive pedagogies. *Education 3–13*, 39(1), 83–101.
- Woolfson, L.M. & Brady, K. (2009). An investigation of factors impacting on mainstream teachers' beliefs about teaching students with learning difficulties. *Educational Psychology*, 29(2), 221–238.

Practitioner enquiry: Supporting peer relationships by taking an online cooperative learning approach with upper-primary age pupils

Jenny Fraser-Smith, Mark Jones, Isabel Martland,
Alan McHardy & Robert Quigley

Education delivery had to evolve during the Covid-19 pandemic as children could no longer have face-to-face contact with peers and teachers, as formal education would previously have allowed. Due to this a practitioner enquiry approach was adopted, to determine whether online cooperative learning would increase peer connections, reduce loneliness, and make education less boring/ more engaging. Five academic weeks into lockdown, 16 pupils from primary six and seven took part in a cooperative learning task using Google Meet for video conferencing (N=16). Pupils were asked questions about their experiences which were analysed using content analysis. Prior to the task, pupils commented about their experience of lockdown with the most frequent comments about boredom, missing friends and family, and worry. Following the task, the most common responses were about seeing and talking to friends, enjoyment and wishing to use Google Meet again. Areas for future research are considered and implications for practice for schools, psychological services and the wider authority are explored.

DURING LOCKDOWN it became apparent to practitioners that some children were feeling lonely as they missed having contact with their peers and teacher(s), pupil engagement with school work was at times low (Cullinane & Montacute, 2020), and there were concerns regarding pupil's health and wellbeing (Save the children, n.d.; Wang et al., 2020; Weale, 2020). Relationships with peers, parents, and teachers are known to be crucial for children to develop positive wellbeing (Gadermann et al., 2016). Goswami (2012) concludes friendships are important for children's wellbeing, as social reinforcement from friends influences their wellbeing and friends provide a source of social and emotional support. Orben et al. (2020) state socialising is a basic human need, and that adolescents (defined as aged 10–24) can keenly feel a lack of social interaction.

Negative effects of being isolated include: Low mood, depression, boredom, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (Brooks et al., 2020; Sprang & Silman 2013). Brooks et al., (2020, p.918) recommend ways to mitigate the psychological effects of quarantine with one being to 'reduce the boredom and increase the communication'. Brooks et al. (2020) suggest forming support networks and feeling connected to others can provide individuals with a shared experience which can be empowering and supportive. Orben et al. (2020) advise digital communication might reduce the impact of social distancing on adolescents and encourage researchers to investigate this. According to Ofcom (2019) teenagers are more likely to game online with their friends, where they can also speak with one another, and have social media accounts (most have a minimum age requirement of 13 years). The focus for this enquiry was

children aged between 10–11 years old, as reports suggested that it was this age group of children who had minimal peer contact. Schools could have a role to play in being able to provide stimulating tasks to reduce boredom as well as offering a place (albeit virtually) for relationships to be maintained and even new friendships created.

During lockdown the Scottish Government stated ‘learning and teaching should continue remotely. This may be done by provision of learning packs, at the point of school closures and on a regular basis as appropriate, using technological solutions and other forms of communication,’ (J. Swinney, personal communication, March 19, 2020). Scottish teachers reported barriers to providing resources remotely including low pupil attendance (32 per cent) and low pupil participation (61 per cent) (EIS, 2020). Cullinane and Montacute (2020) found that only three per cent of teachers in England hosted online classes and four per cent had offered an audio/video call with pupils. A possible explanation for this low frequency was ‘not enough guidance on how to tailor lessons for online learning’, as reported by 27 per cent of Scottish teachers (EIS, 2020). Although research has referred to online classes, there is no reference to online peer group work specifically, which is a gap this project aims to address. The authors discussed how digital tools could be used to encourage interaction between peers and options to support collaboration were considered with the outcome that cooperative learning was selected as the approach to use.

Cooperative learning defined as ‘the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximise their own and each other’s learning’ (Johnson & Johnson, 2018, p.62), has a strong evidence base for improving pupil attainment (Nastasi & Clements, 1991), increasing motivation (Slavin, 1995) and offering social benefits (Gillies, 2004; Johnson et al., 2000). Research suggests five factors are key in effective

cooperative learning, namely: positive interdependence, face-to-face-interaction, individual accountability, teaching of social skills and quality of group processing (Johnson et al., 1991). These factors link with learning theories with the most cited ones including: motivation, social cohesion, cognitive, developmental, social learning and constructivism (Slavin, 2011; Tran, 2013). It is beyond the scope of this article to explore these learning theories in more depth.

The aim of this enquiry was to see if cooperative learning could be replicated online and if this would;

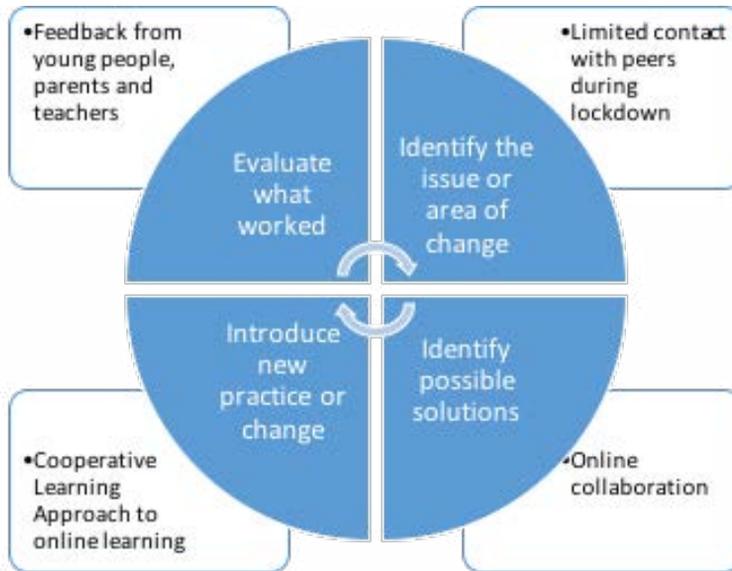
- Increase connection between peers.
- Reduce feelings of loneliness/increase wellbeing.
- Make education tasks less boring/more engaging.

Method

Practitioner enquiry (see Figure 1) was used to plan and trial taking a cooperative learning approach to online learning with 16 primary six and seven pupils. Practitioner enquiry ‘promotes a process led, capacity building enquiry approach to professional learning and school development’ (GTCS cited in LA, n.d). The research team comprised of a primary class teacher, two Educational Psychologists, the lead for the council’s Digital Development Team, and a Head Teacher who is the authority’s Cooperative Learning trainer. The team discussed how digital tools could be used to encourage interaction between peers using a cooperative learning methodology. Fortunately, the authority had provided all pupils from P6 through to secondary age a Chromebook with access to the Google Suite, which includes a video conferencing feature called Google Meet.

From a group of 83, 16 pupils volunteered for the cooperative learning project and parents/carers provided further consent for their involvement. Pupils were asked to indicate their feelings on ‘Life in Lockdown’ using a Padlet before the lesson. For the

Figure 1: Amended – Practitioner enquiry in LA: An introductory guide.



lesson, the pupil's met their teacher using Google Meet where they received instructions. Pupils were allocated to a breakout group and the links were available on their Google Classroom. There was 100 per cent attendance and therefore each group had four pupils for the 10-minute task. Staff supporting the groups involved the school's senior leadership team, an Educational Psychologist, and four teachers so the staff:pupil ratio was high allowing for extra technical and emotional support if required. There were four roles for pupils; reporter, time keeper, encourager and task manager. The group started with an icebreaker and then children shared one skill or thing they had learned during lockdown, the child who got up earliest started sharing first. On completion of the task the pupils returned to the main meeting area and to feedback. The following day, a Padlet was used to gain feedback and included the following question; 'Following our co-operative learning task consider 'How do you feel now?' Each Google Meet was recorded and consent was gained for these recordings to be used for future training purposes and for sharing good practice. Retrospective consent from all

involved was gained to produce this article.

The data was analysed using content analysis which involved identifying concepts and these were combined generating categories. Inter-rater checks were adopted for reliability of the analysis.

Findings

Prior to the cooperative learning activity, pupils submitted comments in response to 'how are you feeling about life in Lockdown?'. Figure 2 is a dot matrix chart illustrating the 14 categories emerging from the content analysis and there was 98 per cent inter-rater agreement. There was a total of 37 comments with the most common being about boredom, missing friends and family, and worry. They also reported feeling isolated, depressed, lonely and helpless. Yet they had learned new things, despite changes in concentration and their sense of time. Some reported self-isolating as a family and noticing how others had deviated from the government guidance. For the pupils, this had been the first opportunity they had to interact with each other in over a month; 'I have not seen my friends for seven weeks'. Children reported to their parents a range

Figure 2: Frequency of categories pre the cooperative learning activity.

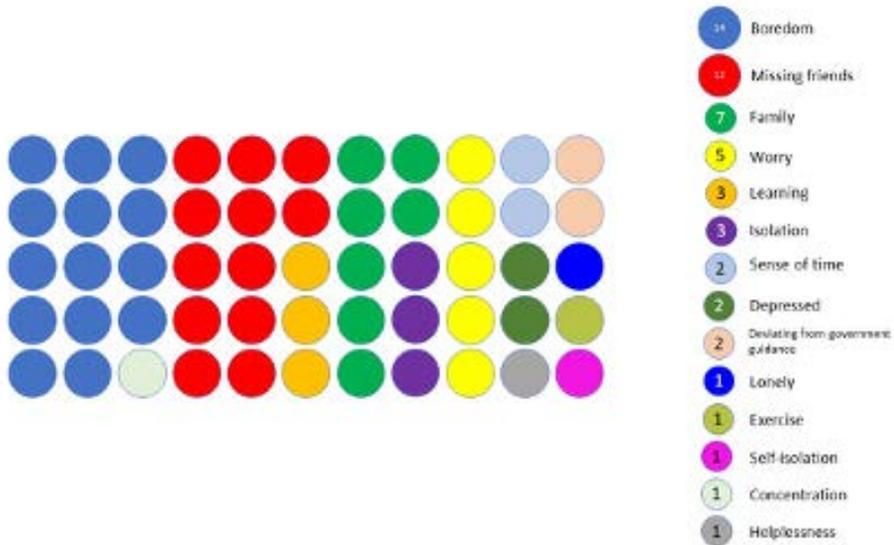
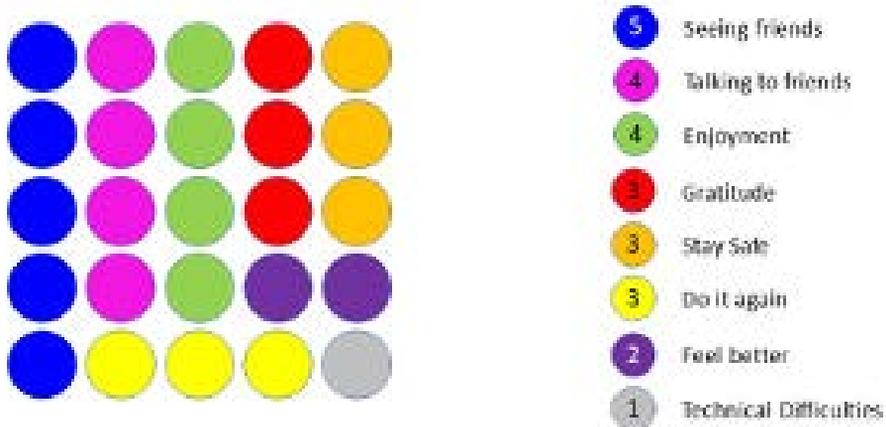


Figure 3: Frequency of categories post the cooperative learning activity.



of emotions (e.g. excited, anxious) about ‘seeing’ their friends and teachers over Google Meet.

Following the cooperative learning activity, pupils submitted comments in response to ‘How do you feel now?’ Figure 3 is a dot matrix chart illustrating the eight categories emerging from the content analysis and there was 100 per cent inter-rater agreement. From the 13 comments, the most

common were about; seeing and talking to friends, enjoyment and wishing to ‘do it [Google Meet] again’. They also reported gratitude for the opportunity, asking others to ‘stay safe’ and noting a technical difficulty. Pupils reported that they felt ‘much happier’ that they had been able to interact with their peers and teachers. They reported to their teacher that they enjoyed having a purpose and focus for the meet.

Several of the parents commented verbally to the class teacher, how much happier the pupils were after participating in the Google Meet, particularly those who were struggling with missing school and their peers. Staff who took part in the activity found the experience very positive. During lockdown, teachers missed the interaction with their pupils. One teacher simply commented, 'Wow, that was brilliant.' Another stated that, 'this could be a really effective way to provide that one-to-one contact with our classes during this time, something the parents are now beginning to ask for their children.'

Discussion

Summary of findings

In pre-Padlet comments many pupils mentioned feeling bored which agrees with Brooks et al. (2020) research that boredom is an effect of quarantine. Several pupils mentioned missing friends, which corresponds with studies highlighting the importance of friendships (Gadermann et al., 2016; Goswami, 2012; Orben et al., 2020). Consistent with research such as Weale (2020) suggesting that children may have poor mental health during lockdown, some children's comments mentioned they felt lonely, depressed and worried.

The post-Padlet comments showed pupils were keen to use Google Meet again and a few of the pupils reported that this approach had been helpful to their wellbeing e.g. 'I feel happier', 'It really helped me and made me feel better about the situation we are in', which supports Brookes et al. (2020) finding that social networks can provide a supportive and empowering experience. Several pupils mentioned they enjoyed 'talking to friends' which confirms the importance of friendships (Gadermann et al., 2016; Goswami, 2012; Orben et al., 2020). Throughout the Google Meet all pupils had their cameras on, which may have replicated – using a virtual platform – the idea of face-to-face interaction, one of the five key factors necessary for cooperative learning (Johnson et al., 1991). The pupils

reported enjoying 'seeing friends' and their comments indicate they found the task engaging, as they were asking for it to be repeated. An area for future research could be to determine whether the pupils found the peer contact engaging, or the task, or both. Also, further research is needed to investigate whether cooperative learning is as effective virtually as in the classroom.

Three key factors for the successful implementation of this enquiry were identified. Firstly, supportive leadership, from the schools Senior Leadership team. Secondly, the class teacher, who delivered the lesson, was skilled and knowledgeable in both cooperative learning and technology. Thirdly, pupil's having access to technology and the skills to use this successfully. Cooperative learning involves both a learning target and a social target. From this experience, the addition of a third could be a digital target.

Limitations

As the pupils involved in the project were self-selecting, this group of pupils may have had some similar features of their lockdown experience (e.g. missing friends, increased worry) compared with a wider pupil population, which motivated them to engage in the project. Future research may consider using a control group to investigate comparisons between pupils' experiences of face-to-face versus online peer contact, and online learning versus classroom tasks. The sample is small, and caution should be taken with generalisation of these findings. Real world research meant that consent was sought throughout the project and retrospective consent was gained when the decision was taken to disseminate the findings wider than the school context.

Future research

An area for further exploration is to compare online experiences of different age groups (younger than P6, and in secondary settings), taking account of peer-relationships requirements and ICT skills. Younger children

may cope better with a think-pair-share activity, than a group of four. Comparisons between structured and unstructured online tasks could be made to determine if both give similar outcomes in terms of peer-relationships, attainment and wellbeing.

There are a range of reasons a young person may be unable to access their education in a school building, such as illness or school non-attendance. Taking a cooperative learning approach to learning could ensure access to a peer group and therefore potential development of social competence. Further research could compare the development of social skills and social competence between those online and those in person.

Practitioners are mindful of the physical and sensory needs of their learners when planning a cooperative learning task using one stay, three stray. This can mean that the same learners are asked to 'stay' while their peers move around the class. Holding the groups online lends itself to equal access to the roles within cooperative learning.

Implications for practice (School)

Following this enquiry, the senior leadership of the school decided that Google Meet would become part of the regular timetable. For the remainder of the school year, all classes began engaging in two Google Meet sessions per week with their teacher. These were used purely to meet health, wellbeing, social and emotional needs for the pupils and staff through a variety of simple tasks, including some collaborative activities. Also, staff engaged in 'virtual' coffee breaks regularly too.

Implications for practice (Psychological Service)

Following this enquiry, a similar online cooperative learning approach was taken with adult learners undertaking a leadership programme titled Lead On. Furthermore, the team meetings held by the Psychological Service took a cooperative learning approach to revisiting their purpose and values. Also, virtual 'voice on the table' had been used throughout the services Improvement Groups to build teams.

Implications for Practice (Authority)

Cooperative learning online has been referred to during Google Suite training sessions with education staff, identifying it as a way to facilitate engagement during Lock-down. Also, it has been highlighted in wider contexts including during inter-authority dialogue to exemplify how video conferencing tools can be used beyond traditional ways such as 'checking in' or for 'whole class teaching'. This model could offer the authority futureproofing and flexibility in offering education when staff are absent, and lessons can be taken by an equivalent subject specialist in a different school, for staff training, to support P7 to S1 transition and to support blended learning.

**Jenny Fraser-Smith, Mark Jones,
Isabel Martland, Alan McHardy &
Robert Quigley**

Correspondence

Jenny Fraser-Smith
Educational Psychologist
Highland Psychological Service
Jenny.Fraser-Smith@highland.gov.uk

Acknowledgment

Thank you to all the pupils and the supporting staff who took part in this project.

References

- Brooks, S.K., Webster, R.K., Smith, L.E. et al. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: rapid review of the evidence. *The Lancet*. Retrieved July 20, 2020. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30460-8
- Cullinane, C. & Montacute, R. (2020). Research Brief: April 2020: Covid-19 and social mobility impact brief# 1: School Shutdown. Sutton Trust. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Impact-Brief-School-Shutdown.pdf
- EIS – The Educational Institute of Scotland Teaching (2020). During the Covid-19 Shutdown. Retrieved July 30, 2020, from www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/corona/SurveyResults.pdf
- Gadermann, A.M., Guhn, M., Schonert-Reichl, K.A. et al. (2016). A population-based study of children's wellbeing and health: The relative importance of social relationships, health-related activities, and income. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17(5), 1847–1872.
- Gillies, R.M. (2004). The effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students during small group learning. *Learning and instruction*, 14(2), 197–213.
- Goswami, H. (2012). Social relationships and children's subjective wellbeing. *Social Indicators Research*, 107(3), 575–588.
- Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R.T. (2018). Cooperative learning: The Foundation for Active Learning. In S.M. Brito (Eds.), *Active Learning: Beyond the future*. doi:10.5772/intechopen.81086
- Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, R.T. & Smith, K.A. (1991). *Active Learning: Cooperation in the college classroom*. doi:10.5926/arepj1962.47.0_29
- Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T. & Stanne, M.B. (2000). *Cooperative learning methods: A meta-analysis*. University of Minnesota.
- LA (n.d). Practitioner Enquiry in LA: An introductory guide. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/sac76-practitioner-enquiry-guide.pdf
- Nastasi, B.K. & Clements, D.H. (1991). Research on cooperative learning: Implications for practice. *School Psychology Review*, 20(1), 110–131.
- Ofcom (2019). *Children and parents: Media use and attitudes report*. London: Ofcom.
- Orben, A., Tomova, L. & Blakemore, S.J. (2020). The effects of social deprivation on adolescent social development and mental health. *The Lancet child and adolescent mental health*. Retrieved July 20, 2020. doi:10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30186-3
- Save the Children (n.d.). Children at risk of lasting psychological distress from coronavirus lockdown. Save the Children. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from www.savethechildren.net/news/%E2%80%98children-risk-lasting-psychological-distress-coronavirus-lockdown%E2%80%99-save-children
- Slavin, R.E. (1995). *Cooperative learning: Theory, research, and practice (2nd ed.)*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Slavin, R.E. (2011). Instruction based on cooperative learning. *Handbook of research on learning and instruction*, 4.
- Sprang, G. & Silman, M. (2013). Posttraumatic stress disorder in parents and youth after health-related disasters. *Disaster medicine and public health preparedness*, 7(1), 105–110.
- Swinney, J. (2020, March 19th). Letter to Local Authority Chief Executives and Directors of Education. Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. Scottish Government. St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG. Retrieved July 20, 2020, from www.careinspectorate.com/images/COVID-19_-_Letter_from_Deputy_First_Minister_to_Local_Authorities_-_School_ELC_Closures_-_19032020.pdf
- The General Teaching Council for Scotland (2016). *Practitioner Enquiry*. Retrieved October 21, 2016, from www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update/research-practitioner-enquiry/practitioner-enquiry/practitioner-enquiry.aspx cited in LA (n.d). Practitioner enquiry in LA: An Introductory Guide. Retrieved from https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/practitioner-enquiry-in-east-dunbartonshire-council
- Tran, V.D. (2013). Theoretical perspectives underlying the application of cooperative learning in classrooms. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 2(4), 101–115.
- Wang, G., Zhang, Y., Zhao, J. & Jiang, F. (2020). Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the Covid-19 outbreak. *The Lancet*, 395 (10228), 945–947.
- Weale, S. (2020). Prioritise play when schools reopen, say mental health experts, *The Guardian*, Retrieved July 20, 2020, from www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/07/prioritise-play-when-schools-reopen-say-mental-health-experts-coronavirus-lockdown



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

BE THE FIRST TO BE KNOWN

UPCOMING BPS CONFERENCE & EVENTS
CPD OPPORTUNITIES
POLICY UPDATES



**SIGN UP BY LOGGING IN AT: [BPS.ORG.UK/USER/LOGIN](https://bps.org.uk/user/login)
AND GO TO THE PREFERENCES SECTION.**

Guidelines for Contributors

Educational Psychology in Scotland

Educational Psychology in Scotland is the publication of the British Psychological Society's Scottish Division of Education Psychology. The publication focuses on practice issues relevant to the profession of educational psychology and is not peer reviewed.

Educational Psychology in Scotland is produced by an Editorial Team, which currently has the following members: Dr Sharon Brown, Karen Findlay and Lynne Fernie.

Contributors should refer to the following guidelines:

1. Articles

- Guidelines** Brief abstract.
General Introduction – setting working in context.
Brief description and outline of your work. There is no need for tables and statistics.
Brief conclusions/implications section.
References.
Contact details – email address.
- Words** Preferably no more than 1000–2500 (plus references).
5000 words is the absolute maximum and is rarely required.
Please state word count.

A note on confidentiality: No school or individual should ever be identifiable. It is not necessary to anonymise the authority as this is usually identifiable through the author contact details.

2. Course Updates from Dundee/Strathclyde

- Guidelines** Updated information about staff changes, curriculum developments, innovative practice, etc.
Contact details – email address.
- Words** 150 (300 max)

3. News from Services

- Guidelines** Information about local Educational Psychological Service initiatives or changes.
Contact details – email address.
- Words** 150 max

4. Opinions/letters to the Editor

- Guidelines** Personal opinions and thoughts about current issues for the profession and for general discussion.
Contact details – email address.
- Words** 300 max (references not expected to be included)

5. Review of Resources

- Guidelines** Sharing thoughts about any professional resources (e.g. book, video, film) which could be recommended to colleagues.
Contact details – email address.
- Words** 100 max

6. Update from SDEP Executive

- Guidelines** Information about relevant professional issues being addressed by the Executive.
Contact details – email address.
- Words** 100 max

Please send an electronic copy of your article to any member of the Editorial Team (see inside front cover for contact details). If we need to make amendments to your contribution we will contact you directly about this.

Please note: The views expressed in articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors.

Contents

- 1 **Editorial**
Lynne Fernie
- 2 **Scottish Division of Educational Psychology**
Alison Crawford
- 3 **Dundee MSc Educational Psychology Course Update**
Beth Hannah
- 4 **Strathclyde DEdPSy update**
Clare Daly
- 6 **Response to Covid-19: How do schools support children following a crisis?**
Rose Bangs, Emma Ní Bhrádaigh, Christie Brown & Eoin Keane
- 13 **Wellbeing in a digital world: What can EPs do?**
Jordan Ford, Eilidh MacIver & Leisa Randall
- 19 **What worked within an external SEBN provision and utilising how to support re-engagement post Covid-19**
Lynne Fernie
- 24 **The effectiveness of nurturing approaches on primary-aged children in the UK: A systematic review**
Sophie Harker, Bethany Howell, John Niven & Jenny Thorne
- 40 **Evaluating the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's social, emotional and psychological wellbeing: A systematic review**
Kirstie Howard, Heather Quinn & Marel Thomson
- 51 **How do children with Autism Spectrum Disorder engage in a play-based pedagogical environment and how do teachers support this?**
Ruth Carleton & Hayleigh Spence
- 60 **'Mix it up and keep it lively!': An exploratory study of perceived effects and implementation of The Daily Mile in the North of Scotland**
Maggie Eggeling, Vicky Heath, Emma Rait & Katie Sprang
- 68 **An exploration of the use of ABL by educational psychologists to promote universal inclusive practice in primary school classrooms in one local authority in Scotland**
Megan Ayliffe, Caroline Gos & Gwen Hobbs
- 76 **A systematic review of practitioners' perceptions of supporting inclusion in a UK mainstream primary context**
Ciara Brady, Ainsley McLarty & Rebecca Rankin
- 84 **Practitioner enquiry: Supporting peer relationships by taking an online cooperative learning approach with upper-primary age pupils**
Jenny Fraser-Smith, Mark Jones, Isabel Martland, Alan McHardy & Robert Quigley

St Andrews House, 48 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7DR, UK
Tel: 0116 254 9568 Fax: 0116 247 0787
Email: info@bps.org.uk www.bps.org.uk