

**SOUTH WEST**  
Educational  
Improvement  
Collaborative



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# Enhancing Opportunities

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**Final Evaluation Report**  
**15 Nov 2022**

# Our pilot programme for interrupted learners across the South West Educational Improvement Collaborative

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## Context

The **Enhancing Opportunities** programme was designed to meet the needs of a very specific group of pupils in S1 – S3 of secondary who, post Covid, had not been able to re-engage with their learning in school – a group sometimes referred to as “interrupted learners”.

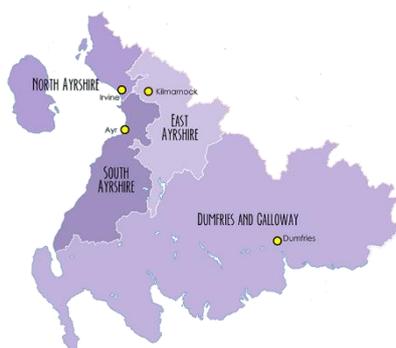
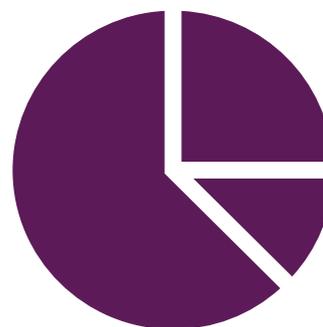
The vision for the pilot was to see if working with a dedicated teacher using an online delivery platform across the four SWEIC local authorities could work in helping to kickstart a recovery for these young people. The ultimate aim was to help transition pupils back to school. It was hoped that the learning from the pilot would help each of the four authorities consider their response to young people in similar positions in their own areas. The initial brief was discussed and agreed by the four Inclusion Leads from each local authority.



## Evaluating the pilot

Evaluation activity included:

- ▣ Analysis of data for the pilot group
- ▣ Feedback from pupil – surveys and comments
- ▣ Feedback from parent/carer – surveys and comments
- ▣ Feedback from our Enhancing Opportunities (EO) teacher
- ▣ Feedback from base schools – surveys and comments



A total of 10 pupils were engaged in the programme between April and October 2022. The cohort were made up of 3 pupils each from Dumfries and Galloway, and East Ayrshire, plus 4 pupils from South Ayrshire. No referrals were made from North Ayrshire.

Referrals identified many reasons why pupils in the pilot group were not engaged in school provision, these included:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| ▣ Physical health fears  | ▣ Self-harming                            |
| ▣ Mental health concerns | ▣ Caring for family members (Young Carer) |
| ▣ Bullying               | ▣ Disability                              |
| ▣ Anxiety                | ▣ Bereavement                             |
| ▣ Self esteem            |   |
| ▣ Relationship issues    |   |

## Snapshot of the cohort

**5 pupils have already returned to school (at least part time)**

**9 have negotiated personal targets with their teacher**

**9 have submitted personal projects on a subject of their choice**

**5 engaged in summer holiday activity provided by the EO teacher**



- 2 would like to return to school but this has not happened yet
- 2 have engaged with their school's own virtual learning offer (based on this model)
- 1 dropped out of the programme fairly quickly but the remaining 9 have engaged in regular 1:1 sessions with the teacher
- 1 unlikely to return to school but has a positive plan to engage with College (pupil currently in S4)
- 9 young people met the EO teacher face to face as part of an induction programme (despite challenges of geographical spread)
- 8 have engaged in group sessions with the teacher and peers (in 2 groups)
- 7 have engaged in fun sessions (literacy and numeracy games, listening and talking)
- 3 have taken part in fitness sessions online with a dance teacher
- 8 were confident in accessing the programme on the Microsoft Teams digital platform (1 needed ongoing IT support)
- 1 school invited the EO teacher to two TAC meetings, 2 other requests for information were received
- 5 pupils engaged directly with the EO teacher regarding transition planning at end of the pilot
- All base schools, and where possible parents/carers were contacted re transition/end of the programme

## What engagement/learning looked like

An example of the activities covered by pupils taking part in this programme can be viewed in Appendix 1 at the end of this evaluation. This was shared with base schools, and parents/carers.

## Stakeholder Voice

We carried out surveys with pupils, parents/carers and base schools. Appendices 2 – 4 at the end of this evaluation show the results of this consultation.

## Parent/Carer Feedback (names redacted)

- 🌈 “Can’t quite believe how close to the end of term we are. We are starting to make plans moving forward. X has very much enjoyed and benefited from this online forum, and we just wondered where it goes from here. X is worlds away from where she was when she started the programme, and we would have hoped for her to return to school but as time goes on, we feel that this is unlikely to happen. We just wondered if this platform is likely to continue or not as we need to inform the school of our plans?”
- 🌈 “I meant to email you last week after the Child's Plan meeting to thank you for your lovely words about X. We have experienced such difficult times and it was heart-warming to hear comments such as yours, which remind me of the boy he used to be before anxiety took hold of him. I'm confident we'll see that boy again though!”
- 🌈 “Just wanted to send you an email to say I'm really pleased X is doing well in his online lessons. I have tried to take a back seat and let him organise himself.”
- 🌈 “Good morning. Just looking for a wee update. X seems to be enjoying the sessions and from what she says is interacting more in group video calls and even chats about some of the other students. We feel X has made some progress and is benefiting from these sessions. She quite often chats about what has been done or to be done.”

## Pupil Feedback - a snapshot of comments



“I enjoyed this learning programme because it is a great way to help young people like me, to build on confidence and communication skills.”

“I have always had an interest in learning different things but for the last few years I have struggled to fit into a school environment. So therefore, during lockdown I felt much happier and always completed my work and had great feedback from the teachers. Unfortunately, after returning to school in S3, I found it difficult to settle back in and has caused a lot of anxiety for me.”



“This programme has helped me understand that I am not alone and that others are going through similar situations. The friendly approach from Miss McWilliam made me feel comfortable and welcomed and I look forward to the days when I have an online call, not only with Miss McWilliam but with the others in the group. I am delighted that this programme is continuing after the summer holidays for a bit longer.”

“I have really enjoyed my online learning over the past few months, it has helped me in lots of ways like being more confident talking to people, interacting with others. Every week me and Miss McWilliam set small targets for me, every week I have managed to go out, starting with just going out to me back garden, and now I can manage to go out in my street.”



“I’ve not been to school for the past year because my dad died in December 2020. I did go to school for a few months after my dad died, but just last year I started to become anxious about going out. I think I was just keeping it all in for a while after my dad died then it just hit me, but because of the online learning I feel much better about going out and talking to others about my feelings. It’s really good for people who are not at school for personal reasons.”

“The online learning has been amazing for me; it’s been great fun. I really enjoyed doing my personal project and my theme park project and on Fridays I love the fun sessions and also my Tuesday sessions. I enjoy talking to Miss McWilliam on Tuesdays, the work has been very enjoyable also.”



## Enhancing Opportunities Teacher Feedback

Our Enhancing Opportunities teacher was asked to reflect on her experience:

### My highlights...

- 🌈 I have met amazing young people and I will never forget being your online teacher.
- 🌈 I have tried to be the best teacher I can be for all my young people.
- 🌈 Sharing in your successes – when you meet a target or push yourself – I was so happy for you!
- 🌈 When all came together in a group, I was so proud of you all.
- 🌈 Fun sessions were really fun – we laughed a lot!!
- 🌈 Zoo Challenge – this was great fun. I was really impressed with how creative you all were and delighted that all of your zoos made a profit.

### My challenges...

- 🌈 IT/teams have made some things difficult to deliver.
- 🌈 I can’t help my young people as much as I would have liked to.
- 🌈 Our learning has come to an end – I wish I had more time with you all

### What I will take away from my online learning experience...

- 🌈 I can support others even over a computer.
- 🌈 Lots of young people have similar worries and anxieties.
- 🌈 I have helped almost all my young people to realise how amazing they are!
- 🌈 I have watched you all grow into increasingly confident and capable online learners.
- 🌈 You have raised my awareness of some of the difficulties young people face/anxieties they experience in relation to school.

## Winding up the pilot (Sep/Oct 22)

-  The Enhancing Opportunities teacher continued to engage with the pupils throughout the summer holidays in 2022 and for the first few weeks of the new term.
-  The teacher prepared pupils for the end of the programme and was in contact with key staff in the base schools re transition / plans for next steps for these young people.
-  The “i-Sgoil” offer for interrupted learners has been shared with all schools across the SWEIC (although this is currently full for secondary pupils).
-  The Enhancing Opportunities teacher has been involved in finalising this evaluation.

## Overall review and recommendations

-  There does appear to be a small but significant group of pupils and young people across the SWEIC who could be regarded as “interrupted learners” – a group whose needs may not always have been met effectively through support from base schools despite efforts to do so.
-  There appears to be a growing focus on increased absence rates and scrutiny regarding these young people. There is a need for schools and local authorities to quantify the numbers affected and consider how best to support them.
-  Any future provision needs to be clear from the outset on the nature of the target group and who should be referred / accepted on to online programmes.
-  The online delivery model has worked in terms of re-engaging pupils with some learning activity and has developed their skills in working digitally.
-  The live, online delivery model re-engaged pupils with regular routines of engaging with learning at set points in the day/week – this was well received by young people and parents.
-  Having a dedicated teacher has allowed trust to be built with the individual learners – this has come through very strongly – the importance of a trusting relationship with a key professional cannot be overemphasised.
-  The dedicated teacher has engaged regularly with most of the parents in the pilot group – most have felt well supported in addressing the issues faced by their child.

For a number of parents ongoing regular contact with the EO teacher provided them an opportunity to share their challenges and context.

- ✚ It has been difficult to ensure pupils have access to appropriate IT equipment / connectivity to engage with the programme (2 parents had to buy a laptop), and 2 pupils were unable to access You Tube videos re well-being – this had a negative impact on the programme.
- ✚ The levels of anxiety of some pupils within the group were significantly more ‘deep seated’ than was originally anticipated – some struggled even to leave the house let alone go back to school.
- ✚ The initial priority to focus on health and wellbeing / resilience / establishing trusting relationships took much longer than initially anticipated but was critical in providing a conducive environment for learning.
- ✚ Pupils affected were capable and willing/keen to learn – but going in to school was a considerable barrier for some.
- ✚ It seemed that very little work was provided by base school in terms of work to supplement the activities delivered in the pilot.
- ✚ Maintaining effective 2-way communication with base schools was a major issue with variability in base school contact, in some instances there was no response from key professionals. It is not clear whether base schools sought information about progress when planning child at the centre meetings. Key roles and responsibilities of the programme provider and the base schools need to be agreed at the outset.
- ✚ Some of those not yet contemplating a return to traditional schooling have just started S4 – there is a real danger of them not achieving any formal qualifications before leaving school. Online learning maybe their best hope and should be explored by the base schools.
- ✚ Communication and engagement between EO programme staff, inclusion leads at authority level and the base schools has been difficult and limited in impact.
- ✚ One school has put in place a similar model and has sought advice from our EO teacher re approach – a member of their staff engaged with the EO teacher pilot to see what was working well. It may be worth sharing their experience more widely.
- ✚ I-sgoil may offer some support but places for any senior phase are extremely limited.

## Appendices

Appendix 1 – [Parent/Carer and School Update](#)

Appendix 2 – [Pupil Feedback](#)

Appendix 3 – [Parent/Carer Feedback](#)

Appendix 4 – [Base school Feedback](#)

## Appendix 1



## @SWConnects Virtual Learning Campus Parent/Carer & School Update

As we near the end of term, we would like to share more of our learning with you and wish you all a wonderful holiday!

### Relationships

We have continued to form good relationships with Miss McWilliam and enjoy our individual sessions together. We spend some time catching up and then we talk about our individual targets, learning tasks and wellbeing activities.

We are more comfortable in group sessions and are enjoying getting to know each other. We are excited to continue to get to know our new virtual friends.



### Personal Interest Project

We deepened our knowledge of our topic and strengthened our research skills. Our information was presented in our own words in a clear and organised way. We added in some aspects of numeracy using graphs, charts and money. We also incorporated lots of non-fiction text features including bullet points, headings, diagram and photographs.

We presented our information using Powerpoint and made our slides colourful and attractive to read. Some of us even presented our projects to Miss McWilliam - she was very impressed with our presentation skills!

### Fitness Sessions

We enjoyed moving and grooving with Zara our visiting Dance Teacher.

We had great fun but we were exhausted afterwards!



### Reflecting on our Learning



Each week we continue to complete a journal page to reflect upon the main points of our learning. We think about the things that have gone well and identify any areas we might need help with. We found this quite tricky at first but Miss McWilliam helps us if we need it.

### Fun Fridays!

**FUN! FUN! FUN!**

We continued to enjoy our fun sessions each Friday. We get together to play word games such as *Boggle*, *Categories* and *Double Ditto* and have a laugh at each others answers. We are developing our language skills each week and are getting better at the games we play. It is a great way to get to know our peers too!

### Theme Park Challenge

We became director of our very own Theme Park. We designed our own park; adding rollercoasters, rides, shops, and scenery and made sure we didn't run out of money! We then calculated our visitor spending and running costs to find out how much profit we had made overall.



### Wellbeing Activities

We have explored lots of wellbeing activities that can help us when we are feeling anxious as they teach us to how to manage our thoughts, relax and be mindful.

We have also tried out strategies and activities such as **Positive Self Talk**, **3 Good Things** and **Wellbeing Bingo** to help us focus on the positives and take care of our own wellbeing.



### Continuing our Learning



We are delighted that our virtual programme has been extended and we are looking forward to continuing our online learning until mid-September. Miss McWilliam has also arranged to check in with us over the summer as she knows that we will miss her!

If you would like to know more or have any questions, you can contact Miss McWilliam by email at [SWEICSWConnects.EnhancingOpp@glowmail.org.uk](mailto:SWEICSWConnects.EnhancingOpp@glowmail.org.uk)

# Appendix 2

## @SouthWest Connects- Pupil Feedback Enhancing Opportunities Pilot

1. I have enjoyed taking part in the Enhancing opportunities programme?

[More Details](#)



2. By Participating in the programme, do you think you have a better understanding of your own health wellbeing?

[More Details](#)



3. Can you suggest 3 things we can do to maintain or improve our own health and wellbeing?

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Responses
1		I think everything is ok.
2		Communicate with others exercise and get fresh air outside get enough sleep.
3		get some fresh air socialize do something you enjoy
4		Self care, going out walks, doing things we like and that make us happy.
5		sleep, exercise and eat healthy.

4. Do you think you will try using mindfulness activities in the future to improve your wellbeing if you are not feeling so good?

[More Details](#)



5. What key messages have you taken from your involvement in the programme?

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Responses
1		My positive self talk, I can do this, everything is going to be ok, it's really easy.
2		you are not alone and there is always a way to fix your worries and problems you can do anything if you put your mind to it
3		that its okay to be anxious and to feel the way we do but that there's ways we can solve it, maybe not permanently but at least for that moment.
4		That I can ask for help if I need it.
5		not the only one feeling anxious about school

6. How did you find the induction visit from Miss [redacted]

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Responses
1		I didn't feel up to a visit, but I really enjoyed speaking to Miss [redacted] over the past few weeks.
2		it was a great way to get to know my online teacher
3		I felt at ease and it made me happy to see what the programme would be like.
4		It was nice meeting her in person
5		the visit helped

7. I find the 1:1 sessions in terms of length are...

[More Details](#)



8. The groups sessions...

[More Details](#)



9. If you attended the fun sessions, how did you find these?

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Responses
1		Great, I really like the Friday fun sessions, I love the games.
2		Great to communicate and understand that there are others in a similar situation as yourself
3		I think they are a good way to finish off the week and spend some time with others in some shape and form.
4		I like them
5		funny

10. I feel like my learning was personal to me

[More Details](#)



11. I was able to access help or support if I needed it.

[More Details](#)



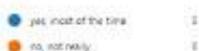
12. I am making progress in my learning

[More Details](#)



13. I shared my learning and progress with my parent/carer

[More Details](#)



14. I feel safe in the sessions

[View Details](#)



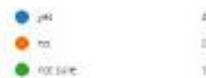
15. I have access to the IT required to let me take part (laptop/tablet, microphone, camera)

[View Details](#)



16. I have developed my ICT skills and ability to work digitally

[View Details](#)



17. Someone from my base school has checked in to see how I am getting on

[View Details](#)



18. I feel comfortable about going back to school for sports sessions in the near future

[View Details](#)



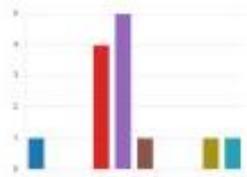
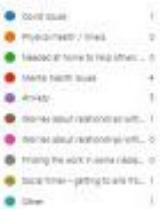
19. I have benefited from being part of the programme

[View Details](#)



20. Why did you find going to school challenging - tick all that you think apply to you

[View Details](#)



21. In your own words tell us what worked well in the programme

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		The times of my sessions was perfect.
2		I think everything in the programme worked really well, just how it was all set up and the way I feel comfortable with the programme.
3		I like that in some ways we are learning without even realising it and the programme is very well organized.
4		The actual online meetings worked really well.
5		the 1 on 1 sessions and fun sessions.

22. What suggestions do you have to make the programme even better?

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		Nothing, I think it's perfect.
2		Nothing.
3		
4		I don't really have any suggestions for it.
5		Nothing is fine.

23. If you had to explain to a stranger what the programme was about in one or two sentences - what would you say?

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		It's for people who are off school struggling with personal issues. It's a great way of communicating with others.
2		A great way to improve your mental health and wellbeing, allows you to be in touch with others if you feel alone.
3		An online home learning programme to help students who aren't comfortable with school at the moment.
4		It's a less stressful way to do all school things, it's fun and challenging.
5		There is 1 on 1 sessions and even fun sessions.



16. In your own words tell us what didn't work or was difficult?

5 Responses

ID #	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	[redacted] is willing to learn and would have engaged in more learning, in particular some of the core subjects.
2	anonymous	not sure there was anything.
3	anonymous	My son wasn't able to join the group session due to his anxiety.
4	anonymous	She was not confident working the technology.
5	anonymous	Nothing, he said everything was perfect.
6	anonymous	We think it worked very well indeed no issues or difficulties here.

17. What suggestions do you have to improve the programme?

6 Responses

ID #	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Additional sessions or additional work.
2	anonymous	Perhaps a physical meet up, so that all children would know who each other is but obviously not all would feel comfortable with this.
3	anonymous	Longer sessions perhaps? More curriculum areas eg maths?
4	anonymous	Maybe a little focus on maths would be beneficial.
5	anonymous	Nothing, from what [redacted] has told me everything sounds good.
6	anonymous	Possibly more lessons if it was ever a viable option.

18. If you had to explain to a stranger what the programme was about in one or two sentences - what would you say?

7 Responses

1	anonymous	Online well being sessions for teenagers unable to cope with the school environment.
2	anonymous	Delive learning for life skills and confidence building.
3	anonymous	Programme to help young people who are struggling with attending school.
4	anonymous	An opportunity for those who are unable to access education to learn online with a tutor.
5	anonymous	The programme increases teens confidence and supports their wellbeing, as well as learning and engaging in education.
6	anonymous	It's for interacting with others, and helps people who are struggling with going to school.
7	anonymous	We have described it as home schooling for our anxious daughter, she feels more relaxed at home when in lessons making her learning a better experience for her.

# Appendix 4

## @SouthWest Connects- Base School Feedback Enhancing Opportunities Pilot

1. Pupil x has enjoyed taking part in the Enhancing opportunities programme

View Details

Strongly Agree	2
Agree	1
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



2. The induction visits / contacts between the school and the teacher worked well

View Details

Strongly Agree	3
Agree	0
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



3. The amount of time on the telephone and frequency across the week was about right

View Details

Strongly Agree	1
Agree	0
Not Sure	1
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



4. Pupil x has appropriate access to the IT required to let them take part - (laptop or PC, microphone, camera)

View Details

Strongly Agree	2
Agree	1
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



5. Pupil x has developed their ICT skills and ability to work digitally

View Details

Strongly Agree	0
Agree	2
Not Sure	1
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



6. I have requested and received feedback from the teacher about attendance and engagement with the programme

View Details

Strongly Agree	0
Agree	1
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



7. I have made contact with the pupil / family to see how the programme is working

View Details

Strongly Agree	1
Agree	2
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



8. Pupil x has benefitted from being part of the programme

View Details

Strongly Agree	2
Agree	1
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



9. Pupil x is likely to re-engage with school in the near future

View Details

Strongly agree	0
Agree	1
Not Sure	1
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



10. The individual needs of pupil x have been supported

View Details

Strongly agree	2
Agree	1
Not Sure	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0



11. If you wish to expand on any of the answers please use the box below:

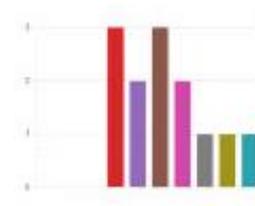
2 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		I think this opportunity has been excellent for our pupil and hope that it is able to continue. More information on this would be appreciated.
2		N/A

12. Why did the pupil find going to school challenging in the past, please tick all that you think apply:

View Details

Cost issues	0
Physical needs / issues	0
Freedom of time to meet others	0
Friends / health issues	0
Anxiety	0
Where pupil relationships with...	0
Where adult relationships with...	0
Prising the pupil in some cases...	0
Sole times - getting to and fro...	0
Other	0



13. In your own words tell us what worked well in the programme

3 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		The pupil had a major barrier to education removed, and has been comfortable attending education at home. They couldn't access education at an appropriate level on terms and the bespoke level that SWC can provide has helped to get them into a positive routine.
2		Pupil has engaged well to the best of my knowledge. Staff members was very approachable and communicated well in setup phase.
3		Pupil engaged fully with a new way of learning.

14. In your own words tell us what didn't work or was difficult?

3 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		A bit more communication from SWC teacher and also from myself to ensure I have an up to date understanding of where the pupil is and how we progress to getting them back in school would be beneficial.
2		More regular updates would be useful. They were provided when requested, but could we maybe get an email sent periodically updating on attendance and progress?
3		ICT access

15. What suggestions you have about improvements about the programme?

2 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		Access for more pupils.
2		See above

16. If you had to explain to a stranger what the programme was about in one or two sentences - what would you say?

3 Responses

ID #	Name	Response
1		An bespoke online school aimed at school refusers, so support re-connecting with education.
2		Engaging pupils in a virtual learning experience as they find it difficult to attend school. Works best for pupils who want to attend school, but find it really difficult.
3		This is a great way to reengage pupils. It is a fantastic resource.