
PATHS TO SUCCESS



Public Report 2

November 2013

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The PATHS to Success Project

This five-year project will evaluate the effectiveness of a primary school based intervention called Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS).

PATHS helps children manage their behaviour, understand their emotions and work well with others. It is a 'universal' intervention in which all children in a given class take part. PATHS is supported by a very strong international evidence base. The intervention consists of 131 lessons that cover topics such as identifying and labelling feelings, controlling impulses, reducing stress, and understanding other people's perspectives. It is designed to be delivered by teachers for about one hour per week (usually 3 x 20 minute sessions).

Our main aim is to examine the impact of the PATHS curriculum on the social and emotional wellbeing of children in primary schools in England.

Progress so far

The project is now half way through the second year of the main trial. Milestones met with regard to training and supporting schools with the intervention and the key data collection phases are listed below. All major milestones have been met.

Training

An initial training session was held at the University of Manchester in September 2012 for all teachers of year groups 3, 4 and 5. This training was provided again in September 2013 for teachers of year group 6 and any new teachers in year groups 3, 4 and 5. Additional twilight sessions have been provided for teachers who were unable to attend the main sessions. The twilight sessions have been run in schools by our PATHS Psychologists. Teachers who attended the main sessions have also been able to train their colleagues within the school by with support from the schools' PATHS Psychologist.

Our PATHS Psychologists are also visiting intervention schools to provide implementation support. During the support visits they have been observing PATHS lessons; providing feedback to teachers; modelling PATHS lessons; and, responding to queries. They have also been delivering PATHS information sessions for staff across the whole school (for example lunchtime and playground assistants). In some schools they are delivering information to parents through PATHS parent information evenings.

Outcome Measures

The major milestones for data collection have been met and are detailed below.

Pupil, teacher and parent surveys

Baseline data on pupil outcomes including social and emotional competence and health related quality of life was collected from pupils, parents and teachers in the Summer term 2011/12. Interim data was collected using the same measures in Summer term 2012/13 from 4,051 teacher surveys, 4,189 pupil surveys and 469 parent surveys. Bespoke school feedback

reports using this data have been produced for each school and hard and electronic copies have been sent to each school.

In addition, 16 schools (11 PATHS schools, 5 usual practice schools) completed computerised academic assessments (InCAS), which provided data on the reading and maths attainment for 1,581 pupils. Schools can access the InCAS pupil feedback direct from the InCAS website and instructions on how to do this have been sent to the involved schools.

School surveys

A '*Usual Practice Survey*' was completed to determine the starting point of each school for social and emotional learning (SEL) and related areas. This survey explored the named initiatives, programmes and interventions that schools were already implementing (e.g. SEAL) and specific activities in which social and emotional skills are explicitly taught. One survey per school was completed by the designated PATHS co-ordinator in the school. This was completed at baseline (Summer term 2011/12) and again at interim (Summer term 2012/13). Usual practice surveys have been completed for 36 of the participating schools at both time points.

Teacher implementation surveys

Teachers implementing the PATHS curriculum have completed an '*Implementer Characteristics survey*.' This measures different characteristics that we think might influence the approach taken in implementing the PATHS curriculum, e.g. emotional self-efficacy, teaching efficacy, views on social and emotional learning, and school climate.

In January 2013 teachers completed a '*Factors Affecting Implementation Survey*' to assess the implementation environment and support system at the school, teacher characteristics, the perceived need for PATHS and their general feelings towards the PATHS curriculum and resources. Data was collected for 85 of the 108 teachers.

Fieldwork visits

Schools took part in fieldwork visits, which included a PATHS lesson observation. This was scored quantitatively on the quality of the lesson, fidelity/adherence to the lesson and pupil responsiveness and engagement with the lesson, and an interview exploring their experiences of delivering the PATHS curriculum. In November/December 2012, 36 of the 38 Year 3 teachers were observed from 22 of the 23 PATHS schools. In March 2013, 31 of the 32 Year 4 teachers were observed from all 23 PATHS schools.

PATHS coordinators have also been interviewed from a sub-sample of 11 schools. We have run focus groups and interviewed parents in 6 schools.

Next Steps

- Interim analysis is underway.
- Fieldwork visits to year 6 classes are to take place in November/December 2013 and to year 5 classes in March 2014.
- Pupil focus groups and parent interviews are ongoing.
- Teachers are to complete a '*Teacher Implementation Survey*' in which they will self-report on their own implementation of PATHS, i.e. it will ask them how much of the curriculum they have covered, how faithful to the lessons they feel they have been, and ask them to rate their overall quality of the lessons they delivered. These will take place with year 3, 4 and 5 teachers from November 2013 onwards and with year 6 teachers from April 2014.

- Intervention schools are invited to attend a half-day PATHS training session in early January 2014 – this is for all year 6 teachers and any new teachers.
- Year 6 and any new teachers are to complete the '*Factors Affecting Implementation Survey*' at the January training.
- Final pupil outcome measures are to be collected from pupil, teachers and parents in the Summer term 2013/14.