

ELSA success stories

These are a few comments about pieces of work ELSAs have been carrying out this year with children who have a wide variety of emotional needs.

Working with feelings

My experiences through ELSA have allowed me to connect, quite quickly, with children who have felt able to share themselves and express themselves positively. I have seen them with more of a positive outlook as they smile that bit more and merge better into school life.

Jane Bleach, Copnor Junior School

Working with anxiety

I worked with a Year 4 girl who was suffering with anxiety due to a parental breakup. We worked initially on "feelings" and followed up with a friendship group to give her more support. The child is now coming into school much happier and her friendship group has widened. Mum came into school to say how pleased she was with the support her daughter had received.

Clare Brunnen, Wimborne Junior School

Working with aggression

Before Mr Bell began the ELSA work, a child in my class would become angry whenever things didn't go the way he wanted them. He would become aggressive and violent towards the other children and damage school property. Since starting the ELSA work Mr Bell has done both 1-1 and small group work with the child. There have been some dramatic differences in his behaviour. Resources such as the "pat on the back book" have had a positive effect on his behaviour in class. He now shows more patience and has not had the serious blowouts that he was prone to before the work started. He now sees that he has to compromise with others and the atmosphere in the class is much happier. He also has a greater sense of pride in his own achievements.

Sarah Harrison, Northern Parade Junior school

Working with anger

Since starting the sessions with the children I have been amazed at how quickly a change has been noticed.

I work with a boy in Year 3 who has been selected for EL due to anger management issues. After just one session of 30 minutes, he returned to his class to complete his English lesson. His teacher approached me later to say that he came back to class a different child. She said he explained to her that he had been with me and talked about his feelings and how nice it had been. He then went on to complete more work in the last 5 minutes of his English lesson than he had done in the 20 minutes before the session.

Sally Walker, Copnor Junior School

Working with friendship

Two little boys argued through all their lessons, this impacted on their learning. With time spent with both boys, we were able to introduce strategies. Both boys ended up as friends.

*Debbie Evans,
Somers Park Primary School*

Working with anger

Working with a Year 3 boy building his self-esteem and his ability to cope with getting angry in class. He is now able to control his emotions much better and his classmates are not so scared of him.

Steve Bell, Northern Parade Junior School

Working with self-esteem

I'm working with a child in Year 6 who has low self-esteem and finds it difficult to interact with others. Over the course of 6 weeks we have built up a good relationship and identified strategies by working together to ensure his school day runs smoothly to minimise his anxieties. He now has improved in his academic work as well as being more social with other children and finds school a little less scary.

Kerry Arnett, Newbridge Junior School

Working with play skills

I have spent half a term working with a small group of infant boys who had difficulty playing happily and appropriately with each other, resulting in one or more of them regularly getting hurt. We explored emotions to allow them to recognise the visual cues from one another which signalled the play was becoming too rough. We then discussed and identified appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and games and they collaboratively created targets for playtimes. Throughout the sessions I implemented a playground positive behaviour reward chart which has raised their awareness of their behaviour and also helped to improve it. We are now coming to the end of our sessions and their teacher is happy that their behaviour has noticeably improved and they now play safely and happily together.

Laura Hine, St Swithun's Catholic Primary School

Working with feelings

I work with a boy who struggles with understanding different emotions and feelings. He could only at first state that he felt happy or sad. Now he is able to use different vocabulary to explain how he is feeling. Although this is only a small step, for him it is a giant leap as he now finds it easier to express and understand his feelings.

Annie Futer, Newbridge Junior School

Working with perseverance

I started work with two Year 3 children initially on Recognising Strengths, then used this springboard to work on Perseverance. We wrote a story for each child on Perseverance after reading "The Enormous Turnip" as a template. We then typed it on computer and added pictures. We acted it out using finger puppets. The teachers have commented on how their Perseverance in their general work has improved and that they are much happier in school.

Denise Reilly, Charles Dickens Junior School

Working across the school

The ELSA project has provided our school with the skills and confidence to deliver an effective and meaningful programme appropriate to the specific needs of our children. The structure of ELSA has meant that our children are getting what they need rather than an overarching broad programme that may or may not be suitable.

Our two ELSAs are enthusiastic, committed and dedicated to making this work within our school as they know it is already having a positive impact on the children they work with. They have covered many different aspects of Emotional Literacy so far; working with Looked After Children; children with ADHD; Attachment Difficulties and Anger Management Difficulties as well as those pupils with extremely low self esteem. Having spoken to a number of the children, I know that they very much enjoy the time with their ELSA and know that they can have conversations about their feelings and emotions that are secure, reassuring and empathetic. The children come away with strategies and confidence to be able to deal with everyday issues and situations within the classroom and the real world environment. One boy who has struggled to come to school commented that he didn't mind going on Wednesdays as he knew he had his special time with his ELSA.

I will definitely be continuing and expanding their allocated 1:1 time in the next academic year in order to widen the number of children that we can make an impact with. Whilst still in the early stages of this project, I believe its impact will be ever increasing for these children, not just in the short term, but in the long term also.

Allyson Roberts, Inclusions Manager at Copnor Junior School

Being an ELSA

The ELSA course has given me more resources and ideas for helping the children. It has highlighted the need to support children in need of emotional literacy. It has been good to share ideas and problems with colleagues.

Clare Brunnen, Wimborne Junior School

I have a greater understanding of the need for social skills and other interventions, all schools should have at least one trained person. Boosted my confidence.

Debbie Evans, Somers Park Primary School

I really enjoy my role as an ELSA. I feel I am only just beginning and want to develop this role so it becomes an important part of the school curriculum.

Annie Futer, Newbridge Junior School

I have really enjoyed this course and the Educational Psychologist inspired me to extend my knowledge further re: attachment issues.

Laura Buchanan, Solent Infant School

If I had started the project earlier I would have been able to deliver more interesting sessions with more specific aims. Although I was already doing a lot of group work, ELSA has given me the ability to think more in depth about what the children's issues are and how to work out a programme to help them.

Steve Bell, Northern Parade Junior School

I feel more confident with what I am planning for the children, as having the group support during training has enabled me to feel less isolated. I love the role!

Lucy Lynch, Craneswater Junior School

Children stop and ask me when are they coming to my 'Special Club' again. You quickly build a relationship with children you had previously not known. I feel privileged to have the trust of the children.

Laura Buchanan, Solent Infant School

I've been able to deal with some current children's needs in a more effective and informed way, helping them at an earlier time, in their school career.

Jane Bleach, Copnor Junior School

I have a better understanding of children's fears and anxieties. I feel more confident with helping children manage their problems.

Annie Futer, Newbridge Junior School

I recognise difficulties children may have with their emotional literacy and the impact this has on all areas of their education. I feel I have a better understanding of these difficulties which has helped me develop ways to help children to learn and progress.

Laura Hine, St Swithun's Catholic Primary School

