

Educational Professional Studies Assignment carried out by Jenny Litten (PGCE student, Exeter University, 2012)

What could be, and have been, the benefits of introducing Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) to St. Andrew's C of E VA Primary School?

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What could be, and have been, the benefits of introducing Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) to St. Andrew's C of E VA Primary School?

Introduction

St. Andrew's C of E VA Primary School is a small rural school with 171 pupils in 7 classes, from reception to Year 6. As well as the class teachers there are 8 teaching assistants (TAs) working with the pupils in the school. Two of the TAs have recently completed training from Dorset County Council to become Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). They will use this training to work with specific pupils within the school to help their emotional and behavioural development. The ELSAs will provide sessions that work on the individual needs each pupil has. These sessions will be designed to help children develop their ability to recognise, understand and manage their emotions to help them towards a positive outcome.

Background

What is Emotional Literacy?

Emotional Literacy is a term used frequently in education in the UK and is seen to be similar (although not identical) to the term emotional intelligence. The topic of emotional intelligence was popularised by Daniel Goleman's book (Emotional Intelligence) in 1995 and shortly after, in 1997, a book about emotional literacy written by Steiner and Perry (Achieving Emotional Literacy) was published. Goleman's book in particular helped to bring these ideas and concepts into the mainstream. Both books are cited in literature about emotional literacy and were also notable because they focused on the practical use and application of emotional intelligence and emotional literacy.

A useful and succinct definition of emotional literacy comes from Peter Sharp (at the time an educational psychologist in Southampton) who defines it as:

'the ability to recognise, understand, handle, and appropriately express their emotions' (Sharp 2000)

Emotional literacy seems to be a more helpful term as it alludes to the capability to learn and grow in our ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions. It can also avoid the more complicated aspects involved in defining and measuring intelligence which are highlighted in a paper by Qualter et al. (2007), which reviews the research of emotional intelligence and its educational implications.

Emotional literacy has become all the more relevant to the realm of education following the introduction of the Every Child Matters programme with its five outcomes for children, 'Being Healthy', 'Staying Safe', 'Enjoying and Achieving' 'Making a Positive Contribution' and 'Achieving Economic Wellbeing'. This programme along with legislation in the Education and Inspections Act 2006, make it clear that there needs to be a holistic approach to the development of children in schools, not solely an academic one. Schools need to be concerned about the physical, mental and emotional well-being of pupils. These five outcomes have since been incorporated into the Ofsted school inspections so every school will be expected to contribute to the development of children with regard to the five outcomes.

Emotional Literacy programmes can contribute to schools' provision to meet these outcomes. As pointed out by Qualter et al. (2007) p.11:

'All of these aims (*within the Every Child Matters Framework**) and more can be linked by literature to the development of emotional intelligence' (* italics my addition)

In view of the growing move towards a more holistic approach to education, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now Department for Education) developed and introduced Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) to primary schools in 2005.

'SEAL is a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that are thought to underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, and emotional wellbeing' (DCSF, 2005 cited by Humphrey et al. 2008)

SEAL is reported to be used in 80% of primary schools in England (in November 2008) (Humphrey et al. 2008). The programme has 3 levels or "waves of intervention" which are; a whole-school approach, small group interventions and individual interventions. Emotional Literacy can be used at all three of these levels and ELSA work is aimed at the third level, individualised interventions (Bravery and Harris 2009). Research in 2003 by Weare and Gray into 'What Works in Developing Children's Emotional and Social Competence and Wellbeing' found that:

'There is strong international evidence to suggest that a whole school approach is vital in effectively promoting emotional and social competence and wellbeing.'
(Weare and Gray 2003)

This would support the developed structure of SEAL with its three levels and suggest schools introducing ELSA need to have an existing programme or policies which provide whole school and small group approaches to developing the emotional literacy of pupils, something which St Andrew's has.

Development of the ELSA project

The ELSA project was developed by Sheila Burton, an educational psychologist working for Southampton Local Education Authority. It started as a pilot project in 2003 training only 5 individuals as ELSAs who visited pupils in primary schools once referrals were made. It evolved into training people within primary schools who already worked as support staff in the school (either teaching assistants (TAs) or learning support assistants) to become equipped as ELSAs. ELSAs deliver programmes of support which are specifically designed for individual pupils who have various social and emotional needs (Burton 2008).

Now each person who is becoming an ELSA goes through training sessions provided by Educational Psychologists working for the Local Education Authority. The Educational Psychologists use teaching materials and manuals created by Sheila Burton (e.g.: ELSA Trainers' Manual published 2009). The training for ELSAs is 5 full days attended during a term then Educational Psychologists provide follow up support including visits to the ELSAs in their school each half term. Additional support for ELSAs is created in the form of a local network meeting where they meet with people from their training course and discuss their work (Bravery and Harris 2009). Both supervision and ELSA networks meetings can provide on-going additional training as well as ELSA conferences. (Burton 2008).

The training includes both psychological theory and practical application (Burton 2008) and covers topics such as:

'Identifying, handling and expressing emotions and feelings, anger and anxiety management, self-esteem, social skills and friendships' (Guidelines for Good Practice in the use of School-Based ELSAs 2003)

Topics that deal with more difficult situations such as loss and bereavement, parental separation, and attachment are also covered (Burton 2008) and this was one of the reasons that St. Andrew's Primary School was interested in training two TAs to become ELSAs.

Following the training ELSAs begin work with pupils in their school identified as those who could potentially benefit from having sessions. The type of difficulties a pupil might be dealing with could include low self-esteem, parental separation, bereavement, selective mutism, angry outbursts, anxiety, school absence and social / friendship issues (Burton 2008).

Sessions with a pupil will generally be weekly and for a minimum of one half-term. Session content would be adapted based on the age and needs of the pupil. Sessions are intended to be '...proactive and planned, rather than reactive to specific incidents. It is most helpful when clear and achievable outcome targets are identified in advance which allow an ELSA to know that a specific intervention can be drawn to a close.' (Burton 2008 p.44). Having ELSAs based in schools does mean that pupils

are not limited to seeing ELSAs only at specific times and days but they are available for informal support if problems do occur for a pupil, even after the period of intervention. (Burton 2008)

It is a testament to the success of ELSA that it has achieved rapid growth over the last few years since being developed as a school-based programme in 2004. As of April 2012 there are 13 Local Authorities with ELSA networks within the UK. (www.elsanetwork.org)

What are the potential benefits of programmes that develop pupil's emotional literacy and specifically the ELSA project?

Something Daniel Goleman's book highlighted was concerns about the impact of low emotional intelligence upon children and the increased levels of loneliness, aggression, anger, worry and depression (Coppock 2007). Improving emotional literacy can also improve the mental health of a child. '...emotionally literate children are less likely to experience mental health problems and, if they develop them, are less likely to suffer long term.' (Mental Health Foundation 1998, cited by Coppock 2007). A study into emotional literacy levels of pupils in Malaysian secondary schools also found a correlation between low levels of emotional literacy and poor mental health (Liau 2003 cited by Burton 2008).

As well as improving mental health and emotional wellbeing, school-based programmes that increase pupils' emotional literacy are linked to reduced rates of substance abuse (drug and tobacco use) and violence. (Battistich et al. 2000 and Trinidad et al. 2002 both cited by Carnwell and Baker 2007)

One of the aims of the introduction of school-based emotional literacy programmes in Southampton was to tackle issues of pupil absence and exclusions (Sharp 2000) and research has found the correlation of low emotional intelligence with increased levels of truancy and exclusion (Petrides et al. cited by Perry et al. (2008)). According to Perry et al. (2008 p.28) 'Examples of the useful preventative qualities of improved emotional literacy abound.' 'Prevention' being the reduction of exclusions and lowered risks of future substance abuse and mental health problems.

Evidence of benefits to academic performance from increased emotional literacy is a more contentious area of research. This may be due to the difficulty in separating out contributing factors towards academic achievement and isolating emotional literacy as the primary factor for improved academic achievement. Perry et al. suggest the research is 'inconsistent at best' (Perry et al. 2008 p.28), giving examples of studies that provide evidence for both sides of the argument. Weare & Gray's 2003 research report lists 'greater educational and work success' among the many benefits of developing pupils' emotional literacy however they did not cite any studies that explicitly showed links between emotional literacy and academic achievement.

Studies were more generalised and related to 'improved attendance, higher motivation and higher morale' (Durlak, 1995; Durlak and Wells 1997; US Government's General Accounting Office 1995; Catalano 2003, all cited by Weare and Gray 2003). I would concur with comments by Qualter et al. (2007) that there is a need for more research into these areas.

There is growing evidence about the effects of emotion on learning and it would appear logical to deduce that pupils with higher levels of emotional wellbeing will be more receptive to learning than pupils with low levels. Sheila Burton quotes a study by Kassem (2002) that argues the case for considering the emotional state of the classroom. She explains the developments in our understanding of how the brain works and that our emotional responses are faster than our rational responses and therefore affect our processing and decision making, which in turn would influence learning (Burton 2008). It will be interesting to see how research into learning and emotions might help shape the development and effectiveness of emotional literacy programmes in the future.

One area where research consistently shows benefits from emotional literacy programmes is pupils' emotional wellbeing, social skills and behaviour. Work by Carnwell and Baker (2007), Burton (2008) and Bravery and Harris (2009) specifically look at emotional literacy programmes that involve support assistants working in schools in the UK so they are particularly relevant sources of research. They all report benefits relating to the emotional wellbeing and behaviour of pupils who were involved in programmes. Carnwell and Baker (2007) reported pupils' increase in social skills resulting in improved relationships and that 'many became less disruptive in class, having learnt to manage their frustration and anger.'

Work by Sheila Burton (2008) and Bravery and Harris (2009) provide research into how ELSA work is benefiting schools.

The benefits to pupils from working with ELSAs are consistent with research into the benefits of other emotional literacy programmes. Teachers and ELSAs report improvements in pupils' confidence, self-esteem, understanding and management of emotions, behaviour and social skills (Burton 2008, Bravery and Harris 2009). Both included many comments from interviews with Headteachers and ELSAs about the changes and benefits they were seeing in pupils from working with an ELSA. Two examples are the following comments from a Headteacher and an ELSA:

"Individual students report feeling safer and more secure and confident in the wider school environment" (Bravery and Harris 2009 p.17)

"Individuals we've worked with have disturbing behaviour in class and now they are better in class. Children feel safer and more in control of their emotions and have a better emotional language". (Bravery and Harris p.18)

In her research Burton found that pupils were reporting the value of having a 'safe place' where they can express their feelings and pupils could identify ways in which they had been helped, such as increasing in confidence and learning to manage their emotions (Burton 2008). Burton included some use of analysis of pupils before and after intervention using the PASS (Pupil Attitude to Self and School) rating scale. This showed some notable and in one case remarkable changes in pupils ratings of factors such as 'Feelings about school', 'Attitude to Attendance' and 'Attitude to work demands.' However the sample size of the survey was only 6 pupils. The author explained the limitations preventing a larger survey of pupils, hoping in future to produce more in-depth pupil evaluation as part of analysis into the effectiveness of ELSA (Burton 2008).

Improvements in pupils' attendance was something Headteachers and ELSAs commented on when discussing the impact of ELSA work, both in terms of a reduction in exclusions due to behavioural problems and increased attendance by pupils who had low attendance due to negative feelings towards school (Bravery and Harris 2009).

Educational Psychologists are reported to be enthusiastic about ELSA work and 'the benefits of knowing that there are skilled staff in schools that can carry out recommendations with regard to specific pupils.' (Burton 2008 p.48) This is also beneficial as it 'gives greater accessibility to support for larger numbers of young people.' (Burton 2008 p.48). ELSA work can enable educational psychologists to prioritise work with pupils with more severe or difficult needs, whilst knowing that there is support and provision for pupils with less severe needs. (Burton 2008) This can also mean schools are able to offer support to pupils at an earlier stage rather than being totally dependent on external resources.

ELSAs also experience benefits, Bravery and Harris (2009) found that many ELSAs felt the training empowered them to support pupils and gave them a role that they felt was valued within the school. Burton's research showed all ELSAs interviewed felt the training had 'helped them to support vulnerable pupils.' (Burton 2008 p.45) The provision of half termly supervision with Educational Psychologists and meetings with other ELSA workers as part of an ELSA network is also worth mentioning as this helps overcome concerns highlighted by both Carnwell and Baker (2007) and Weare and Gray (2003) about adequate support for staff providing emotional literacy support work to pupils.

ELSA work is one of few school-based programmes that are designed to work with individual pupils, which is particularly useful for pupils who are too shy or too disruptive to benefit from small group work. Understandably more programmes involve small group work with the view to maximising the number of pupils involved and addressing the limits of staff time and resources. In Bravery and Harris' (2009) research ELSAs and Headteachers reported positive impacts on individuals with a much higher percentage rating than positive impact on the whole school. Showing

the positive impact of ELSA work is much more noticeable at the individual level, as would be expected.

Whilst the researchers themselves might have a bias given their involvement in creating or delivering ELSA training, when reading their research into the impact of ELSA the two things that stand out are the consistency with which Headteachers and ELSAs make positive comments about how the programme has helped their school and secondly the stories of individual pupils and the difference ELSA work has made to them. This positive response to ELSA work would help explain the rapid growth in uptake of ELSA training by schools.

Information gathering

Interviews were the best form of information gathering as they allowed me to gather the greatest amount of information about the ELSA project in this school. Questions were prepared before the interview and occasionally added to or adjusted during the interview, if I wanted to follow up on comments made by interviewees. This allowed a flexibility and depth that questionnaires would not have allowed for, so although interviewees might be influenced by the interviewer to some degree (e.g.: giving answers they think the interviewer is looking for) this was still the most preferable method. Full copies of the transcripts of interviews can be found in the appendix.

Interviews with the Head Teacher and two teaching assistants working as ELSAs was carried out during January and early February 2012, following a half term of ELSA work with pupils and the first two group supervision sessions with other ELSAs and an Educational Psychologist from Dorset County Council.

Interviews with pupils were not carried out as pupils had not fully completed their series of ELSA sessions. There was consideration of measuring the emotional literacy levels of pupils but after investigation into reliable tools to do this, the limits of time and the financial cost of tools were prohibitive to carrying this out.

Short interviews with the class teachers of pupils the ELSAs were working with were also carried out.

In addition to these interviews with staff at St. Andrew's, I was also able to ask some questions of Shelia Burton through e-mail correspondence.

ELSA at St Andrew's Primary school

Two TAs started training in September 2011 completing it within the half term. This builds on the provision existing in the school in terms of Silver SEAL, PSHE work and a whole school approach to emotional literacy as evidenced in a recent Ofsted report where 'the extent to which pupils feel safe' was given the highest rating

(Ofsted report 2011). This will increase the benefits seen as 'ELSA work thrives most within a whole school approach to emotional literacy.' (S. Burton pers.comm 5th January 2012 – see appendix)

In November 2011 after the half term break the newly trained ELSAs started to work with two Year 5 pupils (a boy and girl) and one Year 4 pupil. In December and January they started working with two Year 1 pupils (a boy and girl) and one Year 3 pupil.

Findings

Following interviews with staff it is apparent there have already been some benefits to pupils from introduction of the ELSAs work. Both pupils in Year 5 were struggling with issues that mostly related to their home life and so some improvements were not observed first hand but were reported to the ELSAs from the pupils or their family. The Year 5 boy has told the ELSAs the work is helping as he now has strategies that he can use at home to help with anger management and his Mum has told them he is now better and calmer at home. His class teacher said 'He's now much more positive and recently received star pupil (weekly award) because he's starting to work with more focus. Home is reporting a better week as well and his friendships seem more secure, he's generally happier. There has definitely been some changes.' Whilst the class teacher felt work with the Year 5 girl was making slower progress as she had more variation in her emotional wellbeing, it was noted by the Headteacher that since starting the ELSA work there have been no reports of disruptive behaviour. Prior to this there had been incidents with name calling, stealing and jealousy.

Although ELSAs themselves were less able to observe changes and benefits for the Year 5 pupils (as they either don't see the behaviour as it occurs at home or they work in another classroom to the pupil) both the class teacher and Headteacher were able to talk about changes in the pupils, how they had benefited from the ELSAs' work and perhaps this is a better source of evidence as it is more objective.

One pupil where both ELSAs and the class teacher were able to see changes was the Year 1 boy. He had been referred due to concerns over his self-esteem and negative attitudes. They both commented that he is now happier, more easy-going and more willing to do things in class. A lunchtime supervisor had asked the class teacher 'Is he alright? He's been smiling all week.'

These observable changes in some of the pupils are evidence of the impact introducing ELSAs is already having. Staff were unable to comment on changes for other pupils as the work with them had only recently begun or in one case it was a more complex issue and again mostly related to home life.

Having coping strategies was a benefit for pupils that Sheila Burton mentioned in her e-mail correspondence and was evident in the work at St Andrew's, the Year 5 boy reported this to the ELSAs as something that was helping him at home.

Another benefit to pupils that Sheila mentioned was interacting more successfully with others (peers and adults). This was seen in the Year 5 boy. This led to my interest in the impact of ELSA on other pupils in the class. As mentioned, Bravery and Harris' report showed Headteachers reporting positive impact on individuals with higher frequency than for the whole school.

I asked both class teachers if changes in the pupils ELSAs worked with have impacted other pupils in the class. In Year 1 the class teacher commented that there has been less moaning about the Year 1 boy from other pupils. In Year 5 the class teacher commented that the friendships with other pupils have improved for both the girl and the boy. 'The boy they are working with has been a much better friend.' He is even using his friendship skills to help another pupil who is struggling with friendship issues. Given more time I think the impact ELSA work has to other pupils in the class would be a very interesting area to research in more depth. It could provide more evidence for the impact on the whole school.

Another less researched area of benefit came out of interviews with class teachers, which was the positive impact on the relationship between school and home. The Year 5 teacher commented that the family of the Year 5 boy feel more supported and been grateful for the ELSA work, building the relationship between home and school. 'Parents are more inclined to listen to school's feedback as we are giving them support'. The Headteacher commented on going to an ELSA for ideas to pass on to a parent who was concerned about her 2 girls' sibling rivalry. Again with more time this would be an interesting area to research and highlight benefits to the school as well as individual pupils. However it would require a high level of trust between the researcher, school and parents due to the sensitive nature of topics involved.

During the interview with the Headteacher it was obvious she valued the increased ability to respond to pupils' needs that ELSA work provided (consistent with findings by Bravery and Harris 2009). ELSA work both increases the speed at which they can respond and the expertise they have to address pupils' learning needs. 'There are pupils who have gone through the school (and on to other schools) who I think I wish we could have offered this to them as it would have made such a difference.'

The Year 5 class teacher also felt the benefits of increased provision as he wasn't needing to take time out to respond to the emotional needs of his pupils which can be a barrier to learning. 'You know there is an outlet for that child to work with an adult so you don't worry about them as much as they have that support.'

It was evident the Headteacher valued the work ELSAs were doing and although they were already highly valued TAs this added to their skills and ability through investing in their professional development and developing parts of their job they

enjoy. Both the ELSAs themselves and the Headteacher saw having two people trained as a positive decision to aid their confidence in their new work and also between them they worked in both Key Stage 1 and 2, so they could work with pupils of any age. Both ELSAs commented that this training had provided them with skills and training in areas they had not been able to cover in previous courses (such as Silver SEAL) such as bereavement and separation. They felt this training had given them the ability to approach more sensitive topics whereas before they would not have known where to start or what to do. Both the Headteacher and ELSAs said it has increased their ability to help the children they work with, which is consistent with findings by Burton (2008) and Bravery and Harris (2009).

Within St. Andrew's there is evidence of seeing three of the benefits to schools that Sheila Burton mentioned in her e-mail. 'Access to prompt (internal) support for pupils in need', (the Year 1 boy had said 'I'm not special' and the next day an ELSA was able to do some work with him.) 'increased confidence of ELSAs in supporting needy pupils' and 'increased confidence for school in managing their difficulties from within their own resources.'

As well as being able to identify these various areas of benefit for pupils, staff and school, there were also areas identified where changes might increase the benefits of ELSA work. As with many aspects of school life, finding time was identified as an issue for ELSA work. Currently the ELSAs use assembly time to have sessions with pupils and although this can provide a regular time slot for pupils it does limit the amount of work they are able to do without using their TA classroom time. It also means they lose time to do work that is part of their TA role such as sorting books, photocopying and extra numeracy or literacy work with pupils. As the Headteacher pointed out there is an issue with lack of time 'because it's always taking time from one thing to give to another.'

Another issue is the lack of a dedicated room for ELSA work, something that is advised in the 'Guidelines for Good Practice in Use of School-Based ELSAs'. The school has recently undergone new building work and had not known about the need for an ELSA room at the start of the school year. Both the need for a dedicated room and time in the TAs' schedules to be set aside for ELSA work are things that the Headteacher and ELSAs look to address in the coming school year, when changes are easier to implement. Addressing these could increase the benefits they would see from ELSA work.

The ELSAs were also aware of the need to talk to the staff about their work, to increase awareness and understanding. This would help staff understand the need for regular time away from the classroom for both them and pupils they are working with. At the time of interviews it was something the ELSAs hoped to address by talking about their work in a staff meeting, 'We'd like to talk to the staff about ELSA so they understand exactly what it is.' Increased awareness and cohesion with all staff could help the ELSA work fit more easily into the school timetable.

Losing TA time in the classroom has probably been the biggest cost to the school of introducing ELSA work. The financial cost of training for the school was funded by the Dorset County Council and was one of the reasons the Headteacher chose ELSA training.

Supervision is another aspect of the ELSA work that is important to implementing good practice. Both ELSAs were very enthusiastic about their supervision sessions (which actually combine meeting with an Educational Psychologist and people from their training course into one meeting) and appeared to get more from these meetings than the initial training, probably because they were now putting their skills into practice. They valued these sessions which help provide both confidence in their new skills and a place where they would be able to gain ideas, help and support if needed. As mentioned this addresses the concerns raised by Weare and Gray (2003) and Carnwell and Baker (2007) about adequate support for staff providing emotional literacy support work to pupils.

Having been through the process of introducing ELSA work to their school, I asked the Headteacher if she would recommend it to another school.

‘Yes because it introduces a whole new area of expertise that everybody can tap into.’ ‘It’s increased our capacity to deal with children’s needs and quickly.’

Both ELSAs agreed they would recommend the training to people who were interested and thought ‘all schools, especially all secondary schools should have ELSAs. It seems the emotional side of things is becoming more important in schools.’

One of Sheila Burton’s suggestions as to why ELSA work has grown so rapidly is that ‘once schools use ELSA they recognise the benefits and sustain the provision’. This is something I can see happening at St. Andrew’s School already and would anticipate increasing as they start to work with pupils where changes would be more observable and evident in the classroom.

Conclusions and evaluation

Staff I interviewed are already able to report some benefits for pupils, staff and school from the introduction of ELSA work. These include pupils appearing happier, having support available and learning coping strategies to help them manage their emotions, consistent with findings by Burton (2008) and Bravery and Harris (2009). Benefits to staff and the school include an increased ability to address and meet children’s needs without reliance on outside resources, professional development for the TAs which has also helped plan for the future (one TA spends time working with a pupil who will leave the school in 2013) and building positive relationships between home and school. There is a downside of losing TA time in the classroom, however,

it is worth noting that one teacher said they are saving time, not needing to take time out to deal with pupils' emotional needs.

Some areas of the ELSA work still need development and the interviews have been helpful in identifying action that can be implemented in the coming year, such as timetabling for the ELSA work and allocating a dedicated room. I think both the ELSAs and Headteacher found it useful to reflect on the work through answering my questions. For example, the ELSAs were more aware of the need to talk to the whole staff to increase their awareness and understanding of their ELSA work.

As with many interviews, the timing of the interview and influence of the interviewer may affect some answers given but this was the best approach for the study given the limited time frame for research and interviews. Given more time, I would have liked to follow the ELSA work over a longer period, perhaps reviewing the school's work at yearly intervals.

Interviewing parents of pupils involved to follow up their observations and how this work has helped their children and helped to build relationship between them and the school would have been a good addition to my research had this been possible. I would also like to have assessed the impact on pupils using tools that would measure the emotional literacy of pupils and their attitudes towards school, learning and themselves (such as the PASS rating scale). It would be interesting to see pupils' progression in their academic abilities over a time period where they were working with the ELSAs but given the complexity of attributing improvements to specific factors I would be reluctant to draw many conclusions from any results and I would also be aware of the very small sample size I would be working with.

Lastly, I would have liked to evaluate the impact on the other pupils in class as this could show how ELSA work not only benefits the individual pupils but those they share a classroom with. Demonstrating the wider impact of ELSA work, could show how it can have benefits for the whole school. To do this I would need more time and resources.

In terms of my own professional development this study has helped increase my awareness of the contributions colleagues can make to pupils development and wellbeing, the benefits of specialist support and how to identify pupils in need of support. It has also given me a greater appreciation for the challenges involved in implementing new programmes and the importance of policies and procedures to help implement best practice. In addition I hope I have increased my ability to deal with pupils in a way that promotes their emotional literacy and wellbeing.

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