Relational Inclusion: A Primary Pilot

In collaboration with Victorious Academies, Tameside Pupil Referral Service and The Laurel Trust

Relational Inclusion Primary Project:

Victorious Multi-Academies Trust

'What difference to suspension, attendance and attitudes to self and school can be made through the adoption of the principles of relational inclusion? A 3-11 case study of ten schools within an LA in Greater Manchester.'

Karen Burns CEO- Victorious Multi-Academies Trust

Anthony Benedict- CEO Ambition Community Trust

Sonja Evason – Relational Inclusion Trainer and Therapist

Leanne Frankish- Victorious MAT Relational Inclusion Lead

Relational Inclusion Champions: Jennie Clarke, Rebecca Jackson, Nathan Roberts, Clare Dangerfield, Michael Ellis, Kim Hodgson, Jo Hartley, Victoria Holland, Luke Moss, Karen Williams, Bindya Mistry, Amy Harris, Sarah Blake.

Contents

Acknowledgements

The Victorious Academies Trust and Tameside Pupil Referral Service would like to thank Margaret Roger and Bill Goddard and the Laurel Trust for believing in us and backing our first part funded research pilot. We would like to thank Dr Stephen Albone for helping us analyse our data and find outcomes we probably would have missed and Louise Astbury for acting as our external data evaluator. Finally, we would like to thank SHiFT for letting us use the image which shows *Tameside as a village*. Without the input of these people, the research would not have been as successful.

Project Leaders

Karen Burns CEO- Victorious Multi-Academies Trust

Karen has been working in education for over 25 years and was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Carillion Academies Trust in 2016 She subsequently decoupled sponsorship from Carillion and created a new entity, Victorious Academies Trust, which is now a medium sized Trust currently consisting of a group of 13 primary schools in Tameside and Derbyshire and with further schools under application to join.

Karen works across the wider regional and national system, supporting and facilitating training and also attending round table discussions for educational organisations. She supports other Trusts regionally and nationally and has a mentoring role for newly appointed CEOs on behalf of the DFE. At a local level Karen is the school improvement partner for several schools outside of the Trust.

Karen facilitates training across the UK delivering NPQH and NPQEL programmes and has been a keynote speaker and/or Chair at several national conferences. She is a member of the advisory board for the Multi Academy Trust Association.

Karen is the Chair of the Tameside Schools' Forum Committee and is a Trustee at White Rose Academies Trust and a member of the Achievement and Improvement Committee for the Challenge Academy Trust. She also sits on the North West Regions DFE Advisory Board and is a partner of the Foundation for Education Development.

Anthony Benedict- CEO Ambition Community Trust

Anthony has been a qualified teacher for 27 years. He started his career as an English teacher and has worked in five different authorities and held senior roles, predominantly in secondary education, in six different schools. He is the CEO of a brand-new multi-academy trust which has been designed around the principles of Relational Inclusion. Roughly five years ago he left mainstream education for alternative provision. It seemed to him that the school system was "losing" too many children, even when some of them were hidden in plain sight. He had recognised that if children were tired or hungry or scared then they weren't going to be able to learn. He had a simple idea that if schools could meet these very basic needs, it might help prevent some of the so-called behavioural problems that were so prevalent and seemed to escalate so quickly. After his first day in charge of a Pupil Referral Unit he realised that he needed to unlearn all he had previously thought about how schools work and start again. He fell down what he likes to refer to as a trauma and attachment rabbit hole and hasn't looked back since.

He has become unashamedly evangelical about what he has learnt in terms of neuroscience and childhood brain development and cannot believe that anyone who wants to work in schools or with children isn't provided with this as prerequisite training before they are taught how to teach. He has spent the last four years developing Relational Inclusion and has worked with anyone and everyone who is prepared to listen

including the Violence Reduction Unit, the police, Manchester University, and of course primary, secondary, and special schools and PRUs. He is absolutely on a mission to change the world.

Sonja Evason – Relational Inclusion Trainer and Therapist

Sonja has worked pastorally in High Schools in greater Manchester since 2008 focusing on safeguarding and behaviour. She qualified as a children's and adult counsellor in 2013. She ran inclusion rooms in two secondary schools alongside intervention and counselling sessions. She became a therapeutic supervisor in 2015 and an accredited counsellor in 2020. In 2021 she became an EMDR therapist and is currently developing her practice in Internal Family Systems.

In 2022 She began working with Anthony in developing a Relational Inclusion package for schools and PRUs and has been supporting schools in their training and delivery since then.

Leanne Frankish- Victorious MAT Relational Inclusion Lead

Leanne is a dedicated and experienced educator with a career spanning over 18 years. Beginning her journey as a secondary school teacher, she soon found her true calling in supporting children with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. This passion drove her to transition to a role in a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) school, where she could make a meaningful difference in the lives of children facing significant challenges.

Leanne's commitment to mental health and wellbeing extends beyond the classroom. Recognising the growing need for resources in this area, she has authored her own books on mental health, aiming to provide support and guidance to both children and educators.

Currently, Leanne serves as the Wellbeing Development Officer at Victorious Academies Trust, where she champions mental health and wellbeing for staff across the trust. Her role involves creating initiatives and offering support to ensure that those working within the trust feel valued, balanced, and supported in their own mental health journeys.

In addition to her wellbeing-focused work, Leanne holds the position of Relational Inclusion Lead for the Trust. In this capacity, she has played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of the Relational Inclusion project. She has been instrumental in the recruitment and appointment of Relational Inclusion Champions (RICs), overseeing their training in collaboration with expert Sonja Evason, and providing ongoing leadership and guidance to the team.

Leanne's unwavering passion for supporting others, both children and colleagues, is the cornerstone of her work. Her holistic approach to education and wellbeing reflects her belief that fostering positive relationships and mental resilience is key to creating a thriving, inclusive learning environment.

Context

Geography

Situated in the North West of England, Tameside is a metropolitan borough in Greater Manchester. It is bordered by the Pennines to the east and the River Tame, from which it derives its name. The borough's terrain is characterised by a mix of urban areas, green spaces, and waterways, reflecting its industrial heritage and proximity to natural landscapes. It is made up of nine towns.

Social Demographics

As of the 2021 Census, Tameside's population was approximately 231,071, with a median age of 40 years, mirroring the national average. The ethnic composition has diversified over the years, with the White British group constituting about 82.4% of the population, and notable communities of Pakistani (3.9%), Bangladeshi (2.5%), and Indian (1.6%) descent.

Poverty and Deprivation

Tameside faces significant challenges related to poverty and deprivation. Recent figures indicate that over a third of children in the borough live in poverty, with the rate rising from 30.9% in 2014/15 to 36.1% in 2021/22. Additionally, 54 out of 141 areas in Tameside are among the 20% most income-deprived in England. These socioeconomic challenges have been exacerbated by welfare reforms and austerity measures over the past decade.

Education and Schools

Tameside's educational infrastructure comprises 50 nurseries, 77 primary schools, 16 secondary schools, 8 special schools, and 4 colleges/sixth forms. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to improve educational outcomes. For instance, in 2015, GCSE results improved more in Tameside than anywhere else in the North West, with 57.3% of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades, including English and Maths. However, challenges remain, particularly in addressing the educational attainment gap linked to socioeconomic deprivation.

Tameside is a borough with a rich industrial heritage and a diverse population. While strides have been made in education, significant challenges persist in addressing poverty and deprivation to improve the overall quality of life for its residents.

IF TAMESIDE WAS A VILLAGE OF 100 CHILDREN

51 GIRLS
49 BOYS

4 WILL NOT ATTEND SCHOOL TODAY

41 LIVE IN RELATIVE POVERTY
compared to 30 children nationally

ENGLISH AS ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
14%

FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES
23%

NURSERY	3
PRIMARY SCHOOL	40
SECONDARY SCHOOL	29
SPECIAL SCHOOL OR PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT	2
NOT IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT	6

4 CHILDREN IN NEED

- 1 CHILD PROTECTION
- 1 CHILD LOOKED AFTER
- 1 EARLY HELP

32	FREE SCHOOL MEALS
14	SEN SUPPORT
5	EDUCATION, HEALTH, CARE PLAN
4	SUSPENDED OR PERMENANTLY EXCLUDED

Victorious Academies

Victorious Academies Trust are committed to creating high-quality learning environments where both pupils and staff are supported to achieve their best. They value the dedication of their team, ensuring they feel acknowledged, encouraged, and developed appropriately. Their shared purpose and collaborative approach ensure high standards are maintained across all our schools, fostering a culture of success and improvement.

Since their launch in January 2018, they have grown from two to eleven fully converted academies, with an additional three schools on track to join in the spring term of 2025, completing an East Manchester Hub of 14 schools. Their academies are based across Tameside and Derbyshire, and they remain focused on continuous development to ensure they deliver the best outcomes for our learners and communities.

Tameside Pupil Referral Service

Tameside Pupil Referral Service is a Pupil Referral Unit made up of two schools: Elmbridge School is the Local Authority's Key Stage 4 specialist provision for Social, Emotional and Mental Health as well as containing a small key stage 2 PRU cohort; and White Bridge College, which is a secondary PRU. There are currently 190 pupils on roll at Tameside Pupil Referral Service.

Introduction

In 2020, during the middle of the pandemic, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council began their search for an executive headteacher to lead their Pupil Referral Unit. As an authority they struggled with rising permanent exclusion and suspension figures, so decided they wanted a mainstream headteacher to run the PRU and work alongside mainstream schools to develop a more inclusive agenda.

In November 2020, Anthony Benedict took up the post. He quickly realised that the best way to support children and young people was to catch them before they fall. As Desmond Tutu said:

There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in.

Initially Anthony worked with secondary schools and began to develop a Relational Inclusion Pilot. From this body of work, supported by the rabbit hole of significant research on trauma, attachment, ACEs and Neuroscience, he decided that by working with primary aged children he could develop pre-emptive and preventative strategies rather than being reactionary.

He met Karen, Victorious Academies CEO and they discussed how this might look in practice across her 13 primary schools. Karen was concerned about the Trust numbers of suspensions and permanent exclusions, which she felt for pupils at Primary age were too high. Karen was keen to have an insight into the scientific and anecdotal detail informing the approach of Relational Inclusion and felt that the information should be shared with all her staff to better equip them to understand the impact of trauma, how that might manifest itself in child behaviours and, most importantly, for staff to be informed and trained appropriately to adopt practices which would support both staff and pupils' emotional wellbeing. Therefore, a project was planned between the two professionals and their organisations and this report captures their journey and findings. The work has also led to the completion of a book: Educating Everyone – an introduction to Relational Inclusion in Schools, due for publication on April 16th 2025 by Routledge.

Rationale

Why a new approach

- One in three children and young people are exposed to at least one potentially traumatic event by the time they are 18[1].

- Exposure to trauma can lead to toxic stress, which inhibits brain development,[2] which in turn impacts children's learning, behaviour, or both. A large body of research has demonstrated negative effects of trauma on pupils' cognitive, academic, behavioural, and social-emotional functioning in schools[3]

- Long-term findings suggest that youth who have experienced trauma are at significant risk for impairments across various cognitive functions, including IQ, memory, attention and language/verbal ability; poorer academic performance and school-related behaviours such as discipline, dropout and attendance; and higher rates of behavioural problems and internalising symptoms.[4]

- Using a trauma-responsive approach in schools can help staff address learning and behavior problems, and it can also help educators address the well-being of the whole child[5]. Just as important, a trauma-responsive approach can help educators have better interactions with their pupils and colleagues and even improve their own well-being[6]. Furthermore, a trauma-responsive approach has benefits not only for the pupils who have been exposed to traumatic events, but also for the pupils who have not; these approaches are best practice for all pupils and should be incorporated as universal supports.

[1] Anna Freud Centre

[2] Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., McGuinn, L., ... & Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. Pediatrics, 129(1), e232-e246.

[3] Perfect, M. M., Turley, M. R., Carlson, J. S., Yohanna, J., & Saint Gilles, M. P. (2016). School-related outcomes of traumatic event exposure and traumatic stress symptoms in students: A systematic review of research from 1990 to 2015. School Mental Health, 8(1), 7-43.

[4] Maynard et al 2017 https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/esss-outlines/aces

[5] National Association of School Psychologists (2016).

[6] Perry, D. L., & Daniels, M. L. (2016). Implementing trauma—informed practices in the school setting: A pilot study. School Mental Health, 8(1), 177-188.
*Adapted from TRSCT toolkit Colorado

What is Relational Inclusion?

Relational inclusion refers to an approach aimed at fostering a holistic, compassionate, and trauma-informed environment for all pupils, including those with complex needs. It is grounded in the understanding that children's behaviour and emotional responses are often shaped by their experiences, particularly adverse or traumatic ones, and that meaningful relationships are central to their sense of belonging, emotional well-being, and ability to learn.

In practice, Relational Inclusion means adopting a preventative, supportive approach to education, where everyone from school leaders to support staff is involved in creating a nurturing environment. This shift contrasts with traditional behaviour management models, which are often reactive, compliance-driven, and focused on discipline, potentially exacerbating distress among vulnerable pupils.

Relational Inclusion does not mean excusing poor behaviour, removing consequences, allowing children to *get away with things* or eliminating rules and boundaries. Instead, Relational Inclusion promotes firm but fair boundaries applied with empathy and understanding. It aims to create a school environment that is supportive, responsive, and focused on helping children develop the skills they need to thrive.

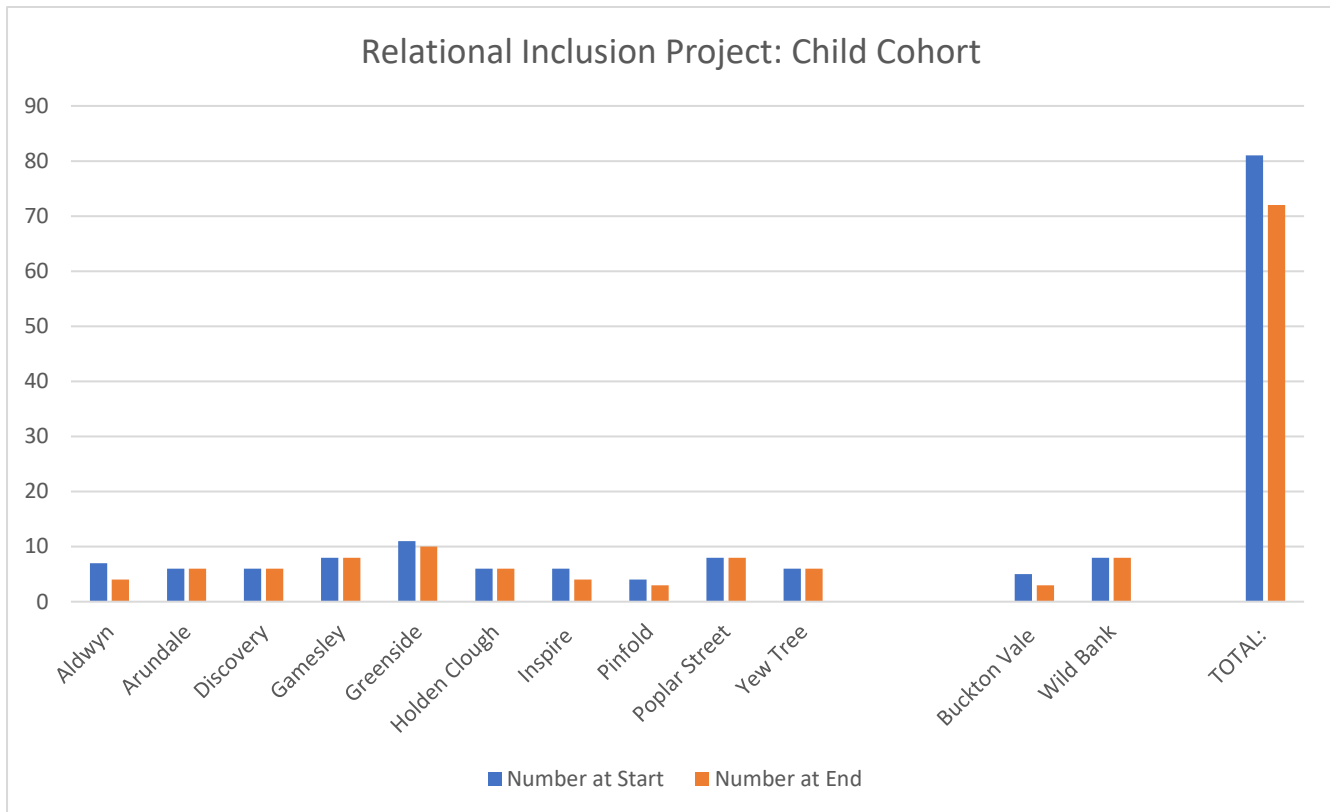Relational Inclusion has five guiding principles:

- We believe that if a child could do better, they would

- Relationships are at the heart of everything we do

- We accept all emotions but not all behaviours

- We identify and address the cause not the symptoms

- We foster a culture of compassion and repair

Methodology

Our methodology was quite complex and had many moving parts. The implementation plan on the next page presents our methodology in detail. In summary:

1. The CEO and leadership team received an introductory two-hour training session on relational Inclusion. Leadership support and buy in is crucial. Relational Inclusion is not simply 'another initiative' – it is a change of culture and ethos
2. The whole school staff received an Introduction to Relational Inclusion
3. A Relational Inclusion Trust lead was appointed
4. Headteachers were supported to complete a Relational Inclusion School Audit and then individual implementation plans. They attended a termly headteachers' clinic with the Trust Relational Inclusion lead, Leanne, and link therapist, Sonja
5. Each school received training on the Relational Inclusion 5 key vocabularies
6. Leadership teams were supported in moving from behaviour to relational policies
7. A team of Relational Inclusion Champions (RICs) was developed across the trust. They were made up of one member of staff from each school and received in depth training across a number of aspects including ACEs, Trauma, Attachment; Neuroscience. The RICs served several purposes:
    a. To provide ongoing Relational Inclusion training to staff in their schools as well as induction training for new staff
    b. To use the pupil profile tool to help identify key cohorts of ks2 children

c. To write and deliver the core competency units to be delivered weekly to the selected cohort

d. To provide sustainability and ensure this project survived beyond the pilot

8. 81 key stage 2 pupils were identified and received Relational Inclusion support through five core competencies. 72 pupils completed the full programme:

Relational Inclusion Project: Child Cohort

Core competency	Definition	Associated skills
Self-awareness	The ability to accurately recognise one's own emotions, thoughts and values and how they influence behaviour. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.	• Identifying emotions • Accurate self-perception • Recognising strengths • Self-confidence • Self-efficacy
Self-management	The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts and behaviours in different situations – effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work towards personal and academic goals.	• Impulse control • Stress management • Self-discipline • Self-motivation • Goal setting • Organisational skills
Social awareness	The ability to take the perspective of and empathise with others. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behaviour and to recognise family, school and community resources and supports.	• Understanding emotions • Empathy/sympathy • Appreciating diversity • Respect for others
Relationship skills	The ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively and seek and offer help when needed.	• Communication • Social engagement • Relationship building • Teamwork
Responsible decision making	The ability to make constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.	• Identifying problems • Analysing solutions • Solving problems • Evaluating • Reflecting • Ethical responsibility

Improving Social and emotional Literacy in Primary Schools Guidance Report (EEF)

The information below outlines a comprehensive program designed to develop core competencies in children, specifically focusing on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Here's a detailed summary of the content:

Core Competency 1: Self-Awareness

This section is divided into six sessions, each with specific objectives and activities aimed at helping children recognise and understand their emotions, feelings, self-esteem, inner self, talents, and negative thoughts.

- Session 1: Introduction to self-awareness, creating a group contract, and discussing emotions.
- Session 2: Exploring feelings through activities like "Feelings Bingo" and discussing uncomfortable feelings.
- Session 3: Focusing on self-esteem and inner self through activities like creating an inner self poster.
- Session 4: Discussing talents and celebrating uniqueness with activities like "Power Poster."
- Session 5: Addressing negative thoughts and turning them into positive thoughts.
- Session 6: Reviewing the group contract and reflecting on the sessions.

Core Competency 2: Self-Management

This section focuses on managing stress, impulses, motivation, goal setting, and organisation through various activities and discussions.

- Session 1: Introduction to self-management and self-regulation.
- Session 2: Managing stress with breathing and tapping techniques.
- Session 3: Understanding and managing impulses.
- Session 4: Motivating oneself and flipping negative thoughts.
- Session 5: Setting goals and organising tasks.
- Session 6: Recognising emotions and strategies to deal with them.

Core Competency 3: Social Awareness

This section aims to improve social awareness skills, including understanding social norms, honesty, personal space, appropriate humour, differences in opinions, and teamwork.

- Session 1: Introduction to social awareness and discussing social norms.
- Session 2: Exploring honesty and blame through scenarios.
- Session 3: Understanding personal space and its importance.
- Session 4: Discussing appropriate humour and its impact.
- Session 5: Exploring differences in opinions and how to handle them.
- Session 6: Teamwork and roles through activities like baking a cake or making a pizza.

Core Competency 4: Relationship Skills

This section focuses on building and maintaining healthy relationships, including friendships, resilience, positive and negative relationships, teamwork, and social skills.

- Session 1: Discussing what makes a good friend and building trust.
- Session 2: Exploring resilience and how to handle fall-outs.
- Session 3: Understanding positive and negative relationships.
- Session 4: Identifying unhealthy relationships and peer pressure.
- Session 5: Teamwork and planning activities together.
- Session 6: Developing social skills and handling disagreements.

Core Competency 5: Responsible Decision Making

This section aims to develop responsible decision-making skills, including identifying problems, analysing problems, solving problems, evaluating and reflecting on decisions, and ethical responsibility.

- Session 1: Identifying problems and discussing their impact.
- Session 2: Analysing problems and sorting them by severity.
- Session 3: Solving problems through activities like the human knot game.
- Session 4: Reflecting on problem-solving techniques and their effectiveness.
- Session 5: Making choices and decisions based on prior knowledge and information.
- Session 6: Ethical responsibility and understanding the impact of decisions.

Implementation plan

Mission Statement (Why?):				
Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.				
Area of Focus (what?)	**Action(s) (How)**	**(When)**	**Outcomes (How well?)** How will you know it's working?	**Final Outcomes (and so?)**
1. Introduction to Relational Inclusion training package				The Trust and all its schools have a culture of relational inclusion and have become increasingly better at embedding the guiding principles. They have a sense of continuous improvement cycles. They are able to apply a relationally inclusive lens to all they do. This will support both staff and pupil in supporting dysregulation through co- and self-regulation. This will help pupils return to a state of social engagement. Instances of dysregulated behaviour will last for shorter periods of time. Restorative practice such as consequential learning experiences will start to replace compliance related consequences such as removal from lessons or
1.1 – CEO and Headteachers/SLT	• AB deliver Relational Inclusion (level 1 and 2)	Summer 2 2023		
1.2 – Whole Staff	• AB deliver Relational Inclusion (level 1 and 2)	Autumn 1 4th Sept 23	Feedback forms completed by 18th sept	
1.3 – SLT guiding principles, audit and implementation plan training	• SLT discuss guiding principles - how do these 'fit' with current practice? Where are there issues or concerns? • SLT discuss school audit • Schools grouped into 4s for audit/IP support meetings with SE/LF • SLT complete school audit • SLT review school audit • SLT discuss implementation plan • SLT complete individual IPs • SLT review IPs	4th Sept 23 16th-18th Oct 20th Oct 23 4th Sept 23 20th Oct 23	Termly Core team IP review Termly supported review of audit and IP – RIC, head, co-ordinator and SE (1:1) – 2 hours per school Co-ordinator report to CEO and project lead	

Mission Statement (Why?):				
Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.				
Area of Focus (what?)	Action(s) (How)	(When)	Outcomes (How well?) How will you know it's working?	Final Outcomes (and so?)
				traditional punishments such as loss of break or lunch. There will be better peer relationships and better staff-pupil relationships. Levels of anxiety amongst staff and pupils will be reduced.
2. Work force development 1 (core team)				The Trust has a highly developed and sustainable Relational Inclusion team. The team can confidently support staff. The team can confidently train staff. The team can confidently profile pupil. The team can confidently deliver core competency support packages for the identified pupils and the wider school communities. As a results all staff feel well trained and supported. Relationships between leadership and staff; staff and staff and
2.1 identify Relational Inclusion co-ordinator for the trust	• Meeting with core team (CEO, Project lead, trauma therapist and trust well being improvement officer) • Monthly meetings between LF and SE to initially train up LF and then to track and monitor progress	5th Sept 23 monthly	• Co-ordinator to have monthly meetings with trauma therapist – generate impact reports for RICs • Co-ordinator to produce termly report for CEO/project lead – trust board	
2.2 identify Relational Inclusion Champions for each school	• Process and criteria discussed and agreed • TLRs agreed • Interview process / timeline	Completed by end of sept	• RIC to report to co-ordinator every 7 weeks – standardised impact reports produced	

Mission Statement (Why?): Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.				
Area of Focus (what?)	**Action(s) (How)**	**(When)**	**Outcomes (How well?)** How will you know it's working?	**Final Outcomes (and so?)**

2.3 provide 3 tier trauma training package	• Tier 1 trauma Awareness (deeper level)
	• Tier 2 skills and self-awareness – 4 sessions – building a relationally inclusive approach in schools
	• Tier 3 core competency workshops
	  1. Self-awareness
	
	  2. Self-management
	
	  3. Social awareness (spring 2)
	
	  4. Relationship skills
	
	  5. Responsible decision making (summer 2)
		*Tr = trained
		*del = delivered
		
		4th October
		
		2nd Nov (weekly) End 30th Nov
		
		Tr spr 1 del spr 1 Tr spr1 del spr 2 Tr spr 2 del sum 1 Tr sum 1 del sum 2 Tr sum 2 Del aut 1
			• RIC to attend each training
			• RIC 'observed' cascading training
			• Training feedback forms
			• Data collation (attendance; exclusions / behaviour)
			• Cohort voice
				staff and pupils improve. There is an improvement in staff attendance. There are high levels of engagement with the training.
				
				Training in Relational Inclusion leads to improved relationships between staff and pupils that supports emotional regulation and then leads to dysregulated behaviour being supported (managed in a more supportive and less punitive way) which reduces anxiety and stress for pupils and staff which in turn leads to fewer exclusions, fewer instances of lesson disruption and greater attendance.

2.4 Audit and implementation plan	• Link between SLT – Co-ordinator – therapist and RIC so audit and IPs agreed and consistent • LF and SE to consolidate schools' IPs	termly	• Audit demonstrates progress • IP ragged termly • Audit and IP cross-trust scrutiny	

Mission Statement (Why?):				
Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.				
Area of Focus (what?)	**Action(s) (How)**	**(When)**	**Outcomes (How well?)** How will you know it's working?	**Final Outcomes (and so?)**
3. School Context				The Trust and its schools have a clear understanding of the profile of its schools from a relationally inclusive perspective. They are able to meet need through pre-emptive systems and strategies and thus improve the life chances of all their young people.
3.1 Forensic analysis of key data (attendance, exclusions, behaviour)	• Baseline established for individual schools (attendance; suspensions, exclusions; behaviour) total and by year • Baseline established for Trust (as above) • Previous year	By end of sept 23	• Improved attendance – whole school end of year (with a particular focus on persistent and severely persistent absence and sub-populations specific to individual schools) • Decrease in suspensions – whole school -end of year • Decrease in permanent exclusions • Decrease in behaviour incidents (agreed categories) • Positive staff well-being reflected in staff survey • Improved rewards/positive points	
3.2 Student profile training	• Co-Ordinator, RIC and pastoral teams trained in pupil profiling	Oct half term 23	• Improved attendance – key cohort	

Mission Statement (Why?): Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.				
Area of Focus (what?)	**Action(s) (How)**	**(When)**	**Outcomes (How well?)** How will you know it's working?	**Final Outcomes (and so?)**
	(ACEs, attachment, stress-response) • Recognition and understanding that pupils suffer dysregulation as opposed to choosing poor behaviour • Understanding that this is not a 'behaviour checklist' and that 4 ACEs etc are guidelines • Ability to identify, understand and apply co and self-regulation strategies		• Decrease in suspensions – key cohort -end of year • Decrease in permanent exclusions • Decrease in behaviour incidents key cohort – agreed criteria • Increase in positive behaviours (merits/dojo) • Positive pupil well-being of key cohort through pupil voice and core 10 – mental health perspective • SEMH tool-kit	
3.3 cohort identification	• Consistent approach to key cohort identification • Evidence based approach to key cohort identification • Rigorous system created, developed, tested and tracked	By Christmas 23 To be agreed by core-team Oct 23	• All 13 school's cohorts successfully meet the criteria	

Mission Statement (Why?): Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.				
Area of Focus (what?)	**Action(s) (How)**	**(When)**	**Outcomes (How well?)** How will you know it's working?	**Final Outcomes (and so?)**
4. Policy Review				All policies and procedures fully embody the practice of relational inclusion
4.1 Behaviour to relational	• Trust identify 'non-negotiables' • Whole school training – selection of relational policies shared – individual schools identify 'best and most suitable' • Relational policy written; QA; LGB; Trust board	This will vary between schools but completed by July 24	• Behaviour logs • Exclusion and suspension data • Staff voice • Pupil voice • QA	
4.2 Cultural Fit and appointments	• Trust adopts a 'cultural fit' document referencing relational inclusion • Schools adopt 'cultural fit' document • Trust and all schools include relational inclusion in interview process	October half term	• Trust cultural fit document written and evident (website etc) • School cultural fit document written and evident ('lived not laminated') • Audit • Interview packs	
4.3 Rewards and sanctions	• Training delivered to schools – 'rewards and sanctions' through a relational and inclusion lens • Schools review their use of 'rewards and sanctions' through a relational inclusion lens	Majority of schools adopted by September 24	• Behaviour logs • Exclusion and suspension data • Staff voice • Pupil voice • QA • Reward data	

4.4 restorative practice and process	• Trust and schools adopt a relational approach. This may be:
	  o Protect
	  o Relate
		On-going	• Behaviour logs
			• Exclusion and suspension data
			• Staff voice	

Mission Statement (Why?):

Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.

Area of Focus (what?)	Action(s) (How)	(When)	Outcomes (How well?) How will you know it's working?	Final Outcomes (and so?)
	o Regulate o Reflect o Repair • Relational policies replace behaviour policies • Core team to review with a mind to spread into core competencies • SE to develop into a workshop		• Pupil voice • QA • Restorative practice logs	
5. Workforce Development 2 (whole staff)				All staff understand and apply the principles of relational inclusion. They are able to recognise consistent emotional dysregulation and co and self-regulate themselves, each other and the young people. They create an environment where all feel safe, feel heard, feel seen and are valued.
5.1 Key vocabulary	• Key vocabulary re-visited (workshops led by co-ordinator / RIC) o Dysregulate o Co-regulate o Self-regulate o Window of tolerance o Attachment / connection seeking • Termly pro-q survey for staff		• Staff voice • QA • Feedback from training • Pro q staff survey	
5.2 cascaded training: know thyself etc	• Skills and self-awareness delivered by RICs in groups of no more than 20 (all staff across the Trust to have had training by end of summer term)			
5.3 culture	• Staff check in process adapted			
6. PSHE curriculum programme				

Mission Statement (Why?):				
Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.				
Area of Focus (what?)	Action(s) (How)	(When)	Outcomes (How well?) How will you know it's working?	Final Outcomes (and so?)
6.1 Core competencies cascaded into a whole school / trust wide PSHE programme including: • **Zones of regulation/ affect labelling** • **Window of tolerance; co and self-regulation; the hand model of the brain** • **core competencies developed whole school**	• Schools create a system for affect labelling to help pupils understand, identify and be aware of their emotions (or use or adapt zones of regulation) - this could be the self-awareness and self-management core competencies cascaded • All staff and pupils understand that all emotions are 'ok' • Pupils are supported to develop strategies to recognise emotions and apply strategies to move between zones as appropriate	Start sept 24	• Pupil voice (pupils are able to recognise and co and self-regulate) • Behaviour logs • Attendance • Suspensions and exclusions	Improved relationships between staff and pupils and pupils and pupils supports emotional regulation and then leads to dysregulated behaviour being supported (managed in a more supportive and less punitive way) which reduces anxiety and stress for pupils and staff which in turn leads to fewer exclusions, fewer instances of lesson disruption and greater attendance. Pupils are starting to be able to co-regulate each other and understand acceptance.
6.2 pupil check in	• To use form time and assemblies to identify emotions, window of tolerance and acceptance • To develop pre-emptive strategies to activate the parasympathetic nervous system as opposed to reactionary responses	Sept 24		
7. Parental programme				

Mission Statement (Why?):
Through adopting the principles and practices of relational inclusion we will: improve relationships between all stakeholders; improve attitudes to self and to school; improve attendance; reduce suspension and exclusion.

Area of Focus (what?)	Action(s) (How)	(When)	Outcomes (How well?) How will you know it's working?	Final Outcomes (and so?)
7.1 parent support group	• To develop the TPRS parent support pilot into a primary school model	Sept 24	• There is a parent support group in each school • The parent support group is well attended • Parent feedback	Improved relationships between staff, pupils and parents supports emotional regulation and then leads to dysregulated behaviour being supported (managed in a more supportive and less punitive way) which reduces anxiety and stress for all stakeholders which in turn leads to a common 'language' of relational inclusion, fewer exclusions, fewer lesson disruption and greater attendance.
7.2 parent training package	• To invite parents to observe either core competency small group / PSHE sessions • Coffee morning following observation with practical take away strategies	Sept 25		

Relational Inclusion Champions Recruitment and Role

As part of the Relational Inclusion Project, the Victorious Academies Trust appointed Relational Inclusion Champions (RICs) to drive forward the adoption of relational practices across their schools. The RICs were tasked with leading the implementation of relational approaches, conducting training sessions for staff, and delivering intervention sessions with children to foster a positive and inclusive school culture.

Appointment Process of Relational Inclusion Champions (RICs)

The appointment of RICs was a structured process led by Leanne Frankish, the Trust's Relational Inclusion Lead. The role was initially envisioned for teaching staff, as it was believed that teachers would be more confident in leading training sessions, influencing their colleagues, and embedding relational approaches within their schools.

To apply, teachers from all schools within the Trust were invited to submit a letter of application to Leanne Frankish. The application letter required candidates to address key questions, including:

1. Their understanding of a relational inclusive approach and its benefits to pupils, staff, and the wider school community.
2. The skills required to work with a relational inclusive approach.
3. Their existing strengths in these areas and where they identified opportunities for further development.

After receiving the applications, Leanne reviewed each letter in detail. Shortlisted candidates were discussed with the Headteacher of each respective school. The final decision on appointments was made collaboratively between Leanne and the Headteacher to ensure that the selected candidate would be best suited to lead and embed the relational approach within their school.

Responsibilities of Relational Inclusion Champions

The appointed RICs were entrusted with several key responsibilities to ensure the success of the project. These included:

- Leading their school in adopting and embedding a relational approach.
- Participating in ongoing training sessions, committing to a minimum of one training day per half term.
- Developing bespoke core training materials tailored to their school's demographic needs.
- Delivering training to staff, running intervention workshops for pupils, and potentially extending these sessions to parents.
- Promoting health and wellbeing for young people through relational practices.

RICs were required to demonstrate a warm and engaging personality, a passion for improving wellbeing, and a commitment from their school to provide the necessary time and resources for this role.

Training Programme for RICs

All RICs underwent comprehensive training to prepare them for their roles. The training programme included:

1. **Childhood Trauma Training** – A five-day intensive course spread over a fortnight, providing RICs with a deep understanding of how trauma impacts children in educational settings.

2. **Intervention Planning and Development** – Five additional training days spread across the academic year. These sessions focused on planning, developing, and refining the core competency programme of intervention activities to be delivered to children. The sessions also provided an opportunity for RICs to share resources and discuss best practices to ensure consistency and effectiveness across schools.

Challenges in the Appointment Process

Despite the structured approach to appointing RICs, several challenges arose during the process:

Challenge 1: Lack of Suitable Candidates at Lyndhurst School

At Lyndhurst School, the Headteacher expressed concerns that no teacher had the experience or capacity to take on the RIC role. Many experienced teachers were already managing heavy workloads and could not commit additional time to the project. To address this, a RIC from another school was appointed to take on the responsibilities at Lyndhurst. While this solution ensured that intervention sessions for children were delivered effectively, it delayed staff training at Lyndhurst until the current academic year.

Challenge 2: Capacity at Pinfold School

At Pinfold School, there was a capacity issue for the RIC role due to existing staff commitments. As a result, a Teaching Assistant (TA) was invited to apply and was successfully appointed. This TA brought valuable skills from their previous experience as a police officer, particularly in working with children facing challenges. The appointment proved successful, with no difference observed in the quality of training or intervention sessions delivered by this RIC compared to their teacher counterparts.

Challenge 3: RICs Leaving or Taking Extended Absences

An unforeseen challenge was the impact of RICs leaving their roles or taking long-term absences. Some schools were left without a designated RIC at the end of the last academic year. To address this issue, the Trust allowed other staff members to step into the role temporarily or permanently. Additionally, training responsibilities were shared among experienced RICs and Leanne Frankish to ensure continuity.

Lessons Learned and Suggested Improvements

Reflecting on the appointment process, the Trust identified several ways to improve the structure and sustainability of the RIC role:

1. **Shared Responsibilities**:
   o Moving forward, it is recommended that multiple staff members are trained as RICs within each school. This would prevent over-reliance on a single person and ensure the project's continuity even if a RIC leaves or becomes unavailable.
   o A suggested model is to have a teacher lead staff training while a Teaching Assistant delivers weekly intervention sessions with children.
2. **Broader PSHE Curriculum**:
   o It was suggested that intervention sessions could be incorporated into a broader PSHE curriculum to include larger groups of children, not just those identified as high-need. This would broaden the reach of relational practices, benefiting more pupils.

Moving Forward

The Trust has developed a solid team of well-trained RICs who will continue to advocate for relational approaches both within their schools and across the wider educational community. These RICs are equipped to deliver training sessions within their own schools and to other schools within and outside the Trust.

Despite the challenges faced, the project has already shown significant positive impacts on both pupils and staff. The Trust is committed to ensuring the longevity of the relational inclusive approach by continuing to provide support, training, and development opportunities for RICs. The relational practices introduced through this project are expected to have a lasting effect, fostering positive relationships and improved wellbeing in schools for years to come.

Conclusion

The appointment of Relational Inclusion Champions was a vital step in embedding relational inclusive practices across the Victorious Academies Trust. While challenges were encountered during the process, the Trust's adaptability and commitment to the project ensured its success. Moving forward, the Trust is well-positioned to continue promoting relational inclusion, improving outcomes for both pupils and staff across its schools.

Cohort Selection and Pupil Profiling

Introduction

The Relational Inclusion Project aims to support children who exhibit dysregulated behaviour through targeted intervention groups. The selection of the cohort of children for this project was conducted through a meticulous pupil profiling process. This report outlines the criteria and methodology used for selecting the cohort, as well as the key factors considered in the profiling process.

Selection Criteria

Schools participating in the Relational Inclusion Project were asked to select a cohort of children from years 3 to 5. The number of children selected varied based on the school's structure:

- **Up to 8 children** from single-form entry schools.
- **Up to 10 children** from two-form entry schools.

Target Group

The children selected for the cohort are those who may display dysregulated behaviour and are likely to benefit from the intervention groups provided by the project. It is important to note that the selection process did not necessarily target the most challenging children. Instead, the focus was on identifying children who could gain the most from the interventions based on specific criteria.

Profiling Process

The pupil profiling process involved a comprehensive assessment of various factors to ensure a well-rounded selection. The main areas of selection included:

1. **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Descriptors**
   - Children were assessed based on their exposure to ACEs, which include experiences such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. These experiences can significantly impact a child's behaviour and development.
2. **Attendance**
   - Attendance records were reviewed to identify children with irregular attendance patterns, which can be an indicator of underlying issues that may benefit from intervention.
3. **Behaviour Markers**
   - Behavioural assessments were conducted to identify children exhibiting signs of dysregulation, such as frequent outbursts, difficulty in maintaining attention, and other behavioural challenges.
4. **Stress Responses**
   - The children's responses to stress were evaluated to understand their coping mechanisms and identify those who may need additional support.
5. **Attachment Style**
   - The attachment styles of the children were considered, as insecure attachment can lead to difficulties in forming healthy relationships and regulating emotions.
6. **Risk Behaviours**
   - Risk behaviours, such as aggression, self-harm, or substance use, were assessed to identify children who may be at higher risk and in need of intervention.
7. **Involvement with Other Agencies**

- o The involvement of other agencies, such as early help services, Child Protection, and Looked After Children programs, was taken into account. This helped in understanding the broader context of the child's life and ensuring a coordinated approach to their support.

Conclusion

The Relational Inclusion Project's cohort selection process was designed to identify children who would benefit most from targeted interventions. By focusing on a range of factors, including ACEs, attendance, behaviour, stress responses, attachment styles, risk behaviours, and involvement with other agencies, the project aims to provide comprehensive support to children in need. This holistic approach ensures that the selected children receive the necessary interventions to improve their behaviour and overall well-being.

The Relational Inclusion Project includes a variety of interventions designed to support children with dysregulated behaviour. These interventions focus on improving emotional regulation, social skills, and overall well-being. Here are some of the key interventions:

1. **Therapeutic Group Sessions**:
   - o Small group sessions led by trained therapists or counsellors.
   - o Activities and discussions aimed at helping children understand and manage their emotions.
2. **Social Skills Training**:
   - o Programmes designed to enhance children's social interactions and relationships.
   - o Role-playing, social stories, and cooperative games to practice positive social behaviours.
3. **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques**:
   - o Teaching children mindfulness practices to help them stay calm and focused.
   - o Breathing exercises, guided imagery, and relaxation techniques to reduce stress.
4. **Behavioural Interventions**:
   - o Strategies to address specific behavioural issues.
   - o Positive reinforcement, behaviour charts, and individualised behaviour plans.
5. **Parental Involvement and Support**:
   - o Workshops and resources for parents to help them support their children's emotional and behavioural needs.
   - o Family therapy sessions to improve family dynamics and communication.
6. **Collaboration with Other Agencies**:
   - o Coordinating with external agencies such as early help services, Child Protection, and Looked After Children programmes.
   - o Ensuring a holistic approach to the child's support network.
7. **School-Based Support**:
   - o Training for teachers and school staff on how to support children with dysregulated behaviour.
   - o Creating a supportive and inclusive school environment.

These interventions are tailored to meet the individual needs of each child, ensuring they receive the appropriate support to thrive both academically and emotionally.

SEMH Toolkit

The SEMH (Social Emotional Mental Health) Positive Outcomes Toolkit was developed by the SEN Division of Northeast Lincolnshire Authority for use in schools. This tool gives an SEMH profile using a points system. Used over time it gives a clear measurement of pupil development skills in each area. It is a specific, quantitative assessment tool to help analyse behaviour; measure level of support needed; and highlight specific areas that need further development. It can be used at any point throughout the year. In terms of the pilot this was helpful for us to have a consistent measurement across the schools, in particular a measurable start and end point.

The profile indicates areas of relative strength as well as areas for further development, which helped the RIC's develop the half termly workshops, correlating this with the five Core Competencies. The tool supports a relational inclusive approach as it helps the RIC's create bespoke workshops for their chosen pupils.

Overview

The toolkit is structured to support the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR)** process of the Graduated Approach for SEMH. It includes:

- **SEMH Profile**: A quantitative assessment tool to measure pupil development in five main areas: Emotional Aspects, Social Awareness and Relationships, Independence and Resilience, Behaviour for Learning, and Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- **Strategies**: Suggested interventions and strategies for each stage of support, including universal, targeted, and specialist approaches.
- **Developmental Milestones**: Checklists for age-related social and emotional developmental milestones.
- **Activities**: Various activities to support development, such as team building, cooperation, mindfulness, and relaxation exercises.

Key Components

1. **High Quality First Teaching (Cycle 1 – Universal)**
   - Focuses on creating a calm, consistent environment with attention to seating and groupings.
   - Emphasises the importance of parental involvement, planned teaching of social and emotional skills, and CPD for staff around SEMH.
   - Strategies include restorative approaches, peer mentoring, and differentiated curriculum.
2. **Targeted Strategies (Cycle 2 – Prevention and Early Intervention)**
   - Collaborative working between staff, parents, and CYP.
   - Use of specific assessments like the Boxall Profile and SDQ to monitor progress.
   - Small-group work based on identified needs, such as social skills and conflict resolution.
3. **Specialist Strategies (Cycle 3 – Targeted or Specialist)**
   - In-depth interviews and discussions with CYP and parents to understand behaviour and needs.
   - Detailed and targeted observation and recording.
   - Collaboration with external specialists and increased parental involvement.

SEMH Profile

The SEMH Profile is a detailed assessment tool that evaluates pupils in five main areas:

- **Emotional Aspects**: Includes criteria like accepting discipline, managing emotions, and behaving appropriately in public.
- **Social Awareness and Relationships**: Focuses on interactions with peers, empathy, and maintaining friendships.
- **Independence and Resilience**: Assesses willingness to ask for help, accept responsibility, and risk failure.
- **Behaviour for Learning**: Evaluates understanding of school routines, ability to work independently, and response to instructions.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing**: Looks at coping with day-to-day difficulties, ability to relax, and engagement in enjoyable activities.

Activities and Resources

The toolkit provides a variety of activities to support SEMH development, including:

- **Team Building Activities**: Exercises like "All Aboard" and "Human Knot" to promote cooperation and communication.
- **Mindfulness and Relaxation Activities**: Techniques like applied tension and guided relaxation to help CYP manage anxiety and stress.
- **Circle Time Activities**: Games and exercises to develop social skills and emotional awareness.

Intended Impact

Regardless of their background, children with higher levels of emotional and social well-being achieve better academically and are more engaged in school. The earlier we apply relational inclusion, the less detrimental the effects of living with toxic stress are on long term outcomes.

We wanted to change the way our schools operated so that our approach became centred around relationships and truly inclusive practice. We wanted this to improve the health and wellbeing of all our stakeholders. We wanted to improve attendance and reduce suspensions and exclusions. We wanted our staff and our children and young people to have a happier experience of school and learning. We wanted to help them improve their self-worth and have a reflective attitude and approach, even when things were difficult.

Aldwyn Primary

Introduction

Aldwyn Primary School, led by Headteacher Craig Beaty and supported by RIC Jennie Clarke, has undertaken a Relational Inclusion (RI) project aimed at enhancing social-emotional learning and well-being among pupils. The project focused on developing the social awareness and emotional regulation of a selected cohort while simultaneously fostering a relationally inclusive culture within the school staff.

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the project's key components, successes, challenges, and future steps.

Cohort Selection

The initial cohort comprised six children (three boys, three girls) from Years 4 and 5. The children had varying degrees of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as:

- Death of a parent
- Disruption in caregiving
- Parental mental/physical health issues
- Exposure to community violence
- Alcohol abuse in the household
- Emotional school avoidance and severe anxiety

The cohort were selected based on their specific needs and potential to benefit from relational inclusion strategies.

Data and Observations

The project's impact was assessed through staff observations and the SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health) toolkit.

Key Findings:

1. **Social Awareness:**
   - At the start of the project, the cohort exhibited egocentric behaviour and limited empathy. Over time, children demonstrated greater capacity to reflect on the consequences of their actions on others.
   - Tools such as the "traffic light system"—stop, consider, and respond—helped enhance social decision-making skills.
2. **Behaviour for Learning:**
   - The children's classroom behaviour improved, showing more independence in learning. However, they still required ongoing support to maintain these behaviours.
3. **Well-being:**
   - Although the SEMH toolkit data did not fully capture the progress, day-to-day interactions indicated improvements in peer relationships and emotional regulation.

Staff Development

The school delivered a series of training sessions and workshops over 12 months to support staff understanding of relational inclusion.

Training Highlights:

- Sessions were mindful of staff's personal experiences, which sometimes triggered emotional responses.
- Repeated sessions allowed all staff to access the training, especially those who missed earlier workshops.
- Textbooks and theory books were made available for further self-study.

Challenges:

- Some staff initially resisted shifting from traditional practices to relational inclusion approaches.
- The training needed careful delivery to avoid making staff feel criticised for previous practices.

Changes Implemented in the School

Several systemic changes were introduced to embed the relational inclusion approach:

1. **Updated Behaviour Policy:**
   - The behaviour policy was revised to incorporate relational inclusion principles.
2. **Language Shift:**
   - The school adopted new language practices when interacting with children and adults, emphasising empathy and understanding.
3. **Regulation Stations:**
   - These stations were set up throughout the school to help pupils manage dysregulation.
4. **Well-being Room:**
   - A dedicated space for emotional health interventions and quiet reflection.
5. **Reward System:**
   - A new reward system using Class Dojo was introduced.

Case Study: BC ALP4

Pupil Overview: BC ALP4 is a Year 6 pupil with a history of significant ACEs, including parental loss, domestic violence, and gang-related issues in the community. Initially guarded and self-reliant, BC displayed avoidant attachment behaviours.

Progress:

- Attendance at workshops: 90%
- Significant improvements in emotional regulation were noted. BC began to accept support from staff and develop healthier relationships.
- They demonstrated the ability to apply calming techniques (e.g., tapping exercises) in stressful situations.

Challenges:

- Initially a passive observer in workshops, BC became more engaged as the sessions progressed, especially when given activities to keep their hands occupied.

Term 1 Report (Autumn 2023)

Targets:

1. Conduct a baseline understanding of staff knowledge.
2. Introduce the five core principles of relational inclusion.

Key Activities:

- Staff training days and workshops.
- Appointment of Relational Inclusion Champions (RICs).
- Headteacher clinic and school audits.

Successes:

- Strong support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- High attendance and positive feedback from RIC training sessions.
- Implementation plans and audits completed by all schools involved.

Challenges:

- Cohort selection posed initial difficulties due to varying needs and parental concerns. These were overcome through open discussions.
- Time constraints required a staggered training approach to ensure effective learning.

Term 2 Report (Spring 2024)

Targets:

1. Begin training roll-out to all staff.
2. Discuss relational inclusion principles and integrate them into school practices.

Key Activities:

- Ongoing RIC training sessions.
- Whole-school training sessions with alternative timings for flexibility.

Successes:

- Enthusiasm from staff to adopt the approach.
- Recognition of the approach's positive impact on pupils.

Challenges:

- Adjustments to training delivery were necessary to ensure all staff could participate.
- Pupil absences occasionally disrupted workshop schedules.

Unexpected Outcomes

Several surprising outcomes were observed:

1. Rapid adoption of emotional regulation strategies by children.
2. Increased articulation by pupils regarding their emotional states and coping mechanisms.

Evidence and Data Collection

The school has been collecting data to evaluate the project's impact:

- Attendance data (previous and current year).
- Behaviour and exclusion data.
- Demographic data.
- Pupil profile data from the start and end of the project.
- SEMH toolkit evaluations each term.
- Staff feedback surveys.

Quotes from Stakeholders

Staff:

- "It is great to see all the regulation stations around school, and children having a safe space to leave the classroom when needed."
- "The RIC project has really helped the group of children involved. Their confidence and communication skills have grown."

Children:

- "When I first came into the sessions, I had lots of worries. Now I don't really have any worries, except for my dad's blood sugar levels."
- "I used to be dead moody and not very nice. Now I'm friendly and kind."
- "It's good that it's okay to have some time to be calm."

Next Steps for Aldwyn Primary School

1. Continue staff training to ensure all staff have access to relational inclusion knowledge.
2. Identify a new cohort of children for RIC sessions.
3. Work with parents to further embed relational inclusion practices.
4. Maintain and enhance the reward system using Class Dojo.

Conclusion

Aldwyn Primary School has made substantial progress in implementing the relational inclusion approach. The project has positively impacted both pupils and staff, fostering a more inclusive and emotionally aware school environment. Continued training and reinforcement of these practices will ensure long-term sustainability and success.

Arundale Primary

Background

Arundale Primary School, under the leadership of Headteacher Peter Hartley and Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC) Rebecca Jackson, implemented the Relational Inclusion (RI) project to enhance pupils' social and emotional well-being. The initiative, led by Sonja Evason, aimed to foster a supportive school environment by embedding relational approaches into daily practices.

The project focused on training staff and working directly with selected pupils with high Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to improve their emotional regulation and social awareness. It also aimed to create a long-term cultural shift within the school.

Methodology

The RI project involved:

1. **Cohort Selection:**
   o Six children from Key Stage 2 (two each from Years 3, 4, and 5) were chosen based on high ACE scores and classroom behaviours noted by their teachers.
   o A safeguarding officer was consulted to understand the children's home situations.
2. **Session Delivery:**
   o Weekly 45-minute sessions focused on responsible decision-making, relationships, self-management, social awareness, and self-awareness.
   o The sessions were tailored to the specific needs of each child and incorporated interactive activities to engage them effectively.
3. **Staff Training:**
   o The project included a series of workshops for staff to understand the relational inclusion approach.
   o Midday assistants received specific training to help them use relational strategies during lunchtime interactions.
4. **Evaluation:**
   o The project was evaluated using SEMH Toolkits, attendance data, and staff feedback.
   o Cycle assessments tracked the progress of the children throughout the programme.

Key Findings

The RI project demonstrated positive outcomes for both pupils and staff:

Progress of the Focus Group:

1. **General Improvements:**
   o SEMH Toolkits showed significant improvement in the children's emotional and social skills.
   o Teachers observed that children became more confident, open, and willing to engage in classroom activities.
2. **Case Study - ARP1 (Year 4 Pupil):**
   o Initial presentation: The pupil displayed avoidant attachment behaviours, was emotionally distant, and showed minimal participation in group activities.
   o Progress: By the end of the programme, ARP1 actively engaged in group work, shared ideas with peers, and showed emotional expression.

- SEMH Scores:
  - Baseline: 223
  - Cycle 1: 243
  - Final Score: 265

Staff and School-Wide Impact:

1. **Cultural Shift:**
   - Staff began using relational language confidently in daily interactions.
   - Midday assistants reported success in using relational approaches to diffuse lunchtime conflicts.
2. **Unexpected Outcomes:**
   - Children adopted the language of regulation, using terms like "dysregulated" and discussing self-regulation strategies.
   - Staff noticed stronger bonds with pupils who had participated in the programme.

Successes

1. **Staff Engagement:**
   - The project received strong support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
   - Staff buy-in increased as they witnessed the positive impact of relational inclusion on pupil behaviour.
2. **Pupil Outcomes:**
   - Focus group children showed notable improvements in emotional regulation, social interactions, and classroom engagement.
   - Teachers observed reduced incidents of emotional outbursts and increased resilience in pupils.
3. **Training Effectiveness:**
   - Staff training sessions received positive feedback.
   - The use of relational language and strategies became embedded in the school's culture.

Challenges

Despite its successes, the project faced several challenges:

1. **Time Constraints:**
   - Delivering RI sessions required the RIC to balance teaching responsibilities with project commitments.
   - Finding suitable times for sessions that fit into both pupils' and teachers' schedules was difficult.
2. **Cohort Retention:**
   - Two of the six children left the school mid-project. One moved due to housing issues, and another left following a disagreement between their parent and the school.
3. **Changing Staff Mindsets:**
   - Some staff were initially resistant to the new approach, viewing it as a departure from traditional behaviour management strategies.
   - The school overcame this through continuous reinforcement of the relational inclusion principles and individualised support for staff.
4. **Parent Engagement:**

- o Some parents expressed scepticism about the RI approach. The school addressed this by involving parents in discussions and demonstrating the positive impact on their children.

Recommendations

To sustain and build on the success of the RI project, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Expand Training:**
   - o Continue delivering RI training to all staff, including new hires.
   - o Provide refresher courses to reinforce relational language and practices.
2. **Broaden Pupil Participation:**
   - o Identify new cohorts of pupils who could benefit from RI sessions.
   - o Incorporate RI strategies into whole-class activities to reach more pupils.
3. **Parent and Community Involvement:**
   - o Increase efforts to communicate the benefits of relational inclusion to parents.
   - o Organise workshops for parents to learn about self-regulation techniques and relational language.
4. **Policy Integration:**
   - o Embed relational inclusion principles in the school's behaviour management policy.
   - o Ensure that RI approaches are consistently applied across all interactions within the school.
5. **Long-Term Monitoring:**
   - o Continue collecting and analysing data on attendance, behaviour, and SEMH progress to track the project's long-term impact.
   - o Use feedback from staff, pupils, and parents to refine the approach.

Conclusion

The Relational Inclusion project at Arundale Primary School has had a significant positive impact on pupils and staff. By embedding relational strategies into daily practices, the school has fostered a more supportive and emotionally aware environment. Continuing this work will ensure sustained improvements in pupils' social-emotional well-being and a lasting cultural shift within the school community.

Discovery Academy

Background

Discovery Academy, led by Headteacher Bev Oldham and Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC) Nathan Roberts, embarked on the Relational Inclusion (RI) project to enhance the social-emotional well-being of pupils and foster a trauma-informed culture. The project focused on embedding relational practices in everyday interactions, improving behaviour management, and building strong relationships between pupils and staff.

The RI project aimed to support both staff and pupils by integrating strategies that address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and emotional dysregulation. The initiative also emphasised engaging parents and the wider school community in trauma-informed practices.

Methodology

The RI project involved a structured approach to staff training, pupil workshops, and evaluation of progress. Key components included:

1. Cohort Selection:

- Six pupils from Key Stage 2 were selected based on high ACE scores and observed behaviours that indicated a need for emotional and social support.
- The cohort was assessed using the SEMH Toolkit and baseline evaluations.

2. Workshop Delivery:

- Weekly workshops focused on five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social skills, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- Workshops were interactive and tailored to address the specific needs of each pupil.

3. Staff Training:

- All staff participated in relational inclusion training sessions, including core competency workshops and self-awareness training.
- Midday assistants (MDAs) received specific training to help manage behaviour and support emotional regulation during unstructured times.

4. Evaluation and Data Collection:

- Attendance, exclusion, behaviour, and demographic data were collected.
- Reflect and Restore logs, behaviour logs, and pupil voice surveys were used to track progress.
- The SEMH Toolkit was reviewed each term to assess changes in emotional and social well-being.

Key Findings

The RI project led to several positive outcomes for both pupils and staff:

1. Pupil Progress:

Case Study - DAP4 (Year 5 to Year 6 Pupil)

Background:

- DAP4 displayed an avoidant attachment style, preferring to work independently and often avoiding support from adults. He demonstrated behaviours indicating a need for connection through disruptive actions.

Progress:

- Attended all RI workshops and showed improvements in emotional regulation and social awareness.
- Baseline SEMH Score: 195
- Final SEMH Score (Cycle 5): 225

Improvements:

- DAP4 became more adaptive in the classroom, engaging in discussions and recognising the impact of his behaviour on others.
- He showed increased resilience and a better understanding of emotional regulation.

Challenges:

- Despite progress, DAP4 continued to struggle with unstructured time and managing conflicts during breaks. He often sought validation from peers through disruptive behaviour.

2. Staff and School-Wide Impact:

- Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing the RI approach.
- The use of relational language, such as "dysregulated" and "co-regulation," became common practice.
- Staff noted improvements in their ability to manage challenging behaviours and support pupils' emotional well-being.

Successes

1. **Cultural Shift:**
   - The RI project brought a noticeable cultural shift within the school. Staff and pupils began to use relational language and approaches in everyday interactions.
2. **Parental Engagement:**
   - Parents showed interest in the RI approach and inquired about the vocabulary and strategies being used.
   - Parent workshops and online resources were introduced to support trauma-informed practices at home.
3. **Pupil Outcomes:**
   - Pupils demonstrated improved emotional awareness and resilience.
   - The use of self-regulation strategies, such as breathing techniques and mindfulness, became more common.
4. **Staff Development:**
   - The RIC's knowledge and skills improved significantly through training and practical application.
   - Staff training sessions were well-received, with positive feedback from participants

Challenges

The project faced several challenges, which were addressed through adaptive measures:

1. **Parental Concerns:**
   o Some parents expressed concerns about the school's behaviour management policies. These concerns were addressed through open discussions between the RIC, SLT, and parents.
2. **Timetabling Issues:**
   o Scheduling workshops and training sessions posed challenges. Sessions were sometimes rescheduled to accommodate staffing needs and other school activities.
3. **Resistance from Staff:**
   o A small number of staff initially viewed the RI approach as additional work or were sceptical about its effectiveness. Continuous reinforcement and discussions helped overcome these perceptions.
4. **Pupil Behaviour:**
   o Some pupils used the new behaviour management strategies as opportunities to push boundaries. This was addressed through restorative conversations and clear communication with pupils and parents.

Recommendations

To sustain and enhance the impact of the RI project, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Expand Training:**
   o Continue delivering RI training to all staff, including new hires.
   o Provide refresher courses to reinforce relational language and practices.
2. **Broaden Pupil Participation:**
   o Identify new cohorts of pupils for RI workshops.
   o Integrate RI strategies into whole-class activities and the PSHE curriculum.
3. **Increase Parent Engagement:**
   o Organise more workshops and provide online resources to educate parents on trauma-informed practices.
   o Encourage parents to use relational language at home.
4. **Policy Integration:**
   o Embed RI principles in the school's behaviour management policy.
   o Ensure consistent application of RI approaches across all interactions within the school.
5. **Ongoing Monitoring:**
   o Continue collecting and analysing data on attendance, behaviour, and SEMH progress.
   o Use feedback from staff, pupils, and parents to refine the approach.

Conclusion

The Relational Inclusion project at Discovery Academy has positively impacted the school's culture, staff practices, and pupil outcomes. By embedding relational strategies and trauma-informed practices, the school has created a more supportive and emotionally aware environment. Ongoing training, parental engagement, and policy integration will ensure the project's long-term success.

Gamesley Primary

Background

Gamesley Primary School embarked on a significant project aimed at supporting children with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). These experiences included exposure to trauma, parental mental health issues, large family dynamics, and other challenges impacting the children's emotional well-being and learning outcomes. The project was spearheaded by the Headteacher, Deborah Meredith, with Clare Dangerfield serving as the Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC). The primary goal was to implement a trauma-informed approach within the school to improve children's emotional regulation, social relationships, resilience, and behaviour for learning.

The children chosen for the project were those showing signs of trauma through their behaviour and work ethics. Some children exhibited inappropriate behaviours, while others struggled with daily school routines without outwardly expressing their challenges. The school recognised that addressing these needs required a structured and compassionate approach to foster better emotional and mental health outcomes for the pupils.

Methodology

The project followed a phased approach, integrating various workshops and training sessions aimed at both staff and pupils. The methodology included:

1. **Baseline Assessments**: Children were assessed at the start of the project to determine their emotional, social, and behavioural baselines.
2. **Core Competency Workshops**: Workshops focused on developing key competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills. These workshops were conducted for both pupils and staff.
3. **Staff Training**: All staff, including mid-day supervisors, participated in training sessions to understand and implement trauma-informed practices. Training covered concepts such as Zones of Regulation and the hand model of the brain to help children understand and manage their emotions.
4. **Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC) Role**: Clare Dangerfield took the lead as the RIC, conducting workshops and coordinating the project's implementation across the school. RICs from other schools also shared best practices and provided mutual support.
5. **Evaluation Cycles**: The project included multiple evaluation points where pupils' progress was assessed to measure the impact of the interventions.

Key Findings

The project yielded several insights into the children's development and the effectiveness of trauma-informed approaches:

Emotional Regulation

- The initial baseline showed that children struggled with accepting change and managing consequences, leading to outbursts.
- Over time, children developed techniques to manage these behaviours. There were fewer outbursts, particularly when facing changes.

Social Awareness and Relationships

- Social skills were a significant challenge due to the children's ACEs, especially in forming healthy relationships with adults.
- Children initially struggled with turn-taking and often wanted to lead, causing conflicts during unstructured times.
- By the end of the project, children demonstrated improved tolerance, empathy, and cooperative behaviour, though apologising remained difficult.

Independence and Resilience

- Many children showed low resilience, giving up easily due to the emotional toll of their home lives.
- The project helped them develop strategies to improve their independence and resilience, resulting in higher scores during the cycle reviews.

Behaviour for Learning

- Baseline assessments showed that children generally enjoyed school and wanted to succeed, but some struggled with organisational skills.
- By improving their independence and resilience, children became better prepared for learning, resulting in improved behaviour in the classroom.

Mental Health and Well-being

- Children often worried about their families' well-being, leading to frequent physical complaints like headaches and stomach aches.
- The project helped children verbalise their feelings and understand the root causes of their worries. They developed strategies to manage their emotions, leading to noticeable improvements in their mental health.

Successes

Several successes were noted throughout the project:

1. **Improved Emotional Regulation**: Children showed reduced outbursts and better management of their emotions.
2. **Social Skills Development**: Pupils became more empathetic and cooperative, showing improvements in social interactions.
3. **Increased Independence and Resilience**: Children displayed greater independence and were more resilient in their learning.
4. **Staff Engagement**: The trauma-informed approach was well received by staff, who embraced the new strategies.
5. **Parental Support**: Parents were supportive of their children participating in the group work and noticed positive changes.

Challenges

Despite the project's successes, there were several challenges:

1. **Balancing Trauma-Informed Approaches with Behaviour Management**

- o Staff found it challenging to balance managing extreme behaviour with implementing trauma-informed strategies. This required ongoing supervision and discussions to address individual children's needs.
2. **Staffing Issues**
   - o Training for mid-day supervisors was delayed due to staffing challenges. However, these issues were eventually resolved, and training commenced.
3. **Emotional Triggers**
   - o Some workshops occasionally triggered emotional responses in pupils. Staff had to be prepared to manage these situations sensitively.
4. **Initial Resistance**
   - o Some staff were initially sceptical about the new approach but became fully engaged as they saw the positive impact on pupils.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and challenges of the project, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Continue Staff Training**
   - o Ongoing professional development is essential to ensure the trauma-informed approach is embedded and sustained. New staff should receive training upon joining the school.
2. **Expand Parental Engagement**
   - o Increase communication with parents about the trauma-informed practices being used in school to ensure consistency at home.
3. **Implement Zones of Regulation Across the School**
   - o Fully implement the Zones of Regulation framework across all year groups to support children's emotional regulation.
4. **Provide Regular Supervision and Support for Staff**
   - o Continue to offer staff regular opportunities to discuss individual cases and challenges they face in implementing the trauma-informed approach.
5. **Collect and Analyse Data**
   - o Continue collecting attendance, behaviour, and mental health data to monitor the long-term impact of the project. Use this data to adjust strategies as needed.
6. **Create Peer Support Groups for Pupils**
   - o Establish peer support groups to help children practice their social and emotional skills in a supportive environment.
7. **Evaluate and Share Outcomes**
   - o Conduct an end-of-project evaluation to assess the overall impact. Share the results with other schools to promote best practices in trauma-informed education.

Conclusion

The project at Gamesley Primary School has made significant strides in supporting children with ACEs through trauma-informed practices. The improvements in emotional regulation, social skills, independence, and mental health are testament to the effectiveness of this approach. While challenges remain, the dedication of the staff and support from parents ensure that the project has a strong foundation for sustained impact. By continuing to embed these practices, Gamesley Primary School can further improve the outcomes for its pupils, ensuring they have the tools to succeed both academically and emotionally.

Greenside Primary School

1. Background

Greenside Primary School initiated the Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC) project to embed relational inclusion principles into the school's culture. The aim was to foster a trauma-informed approach that supports both pupils and staff in creating a more inclusive, empathetic, and supportive environment. The project emphasised regulation over punishment, promoting understanding and kindness through active workshops, community engagement, and policy reforms.

Key elements of the project included:

- Introducing Regulation Stations and active breaks in place of traditional punitive measures like time-outs.
- Launching a Random Acts of Kindness initiative to encourage positive behaviours.
- Conducting staff training to instil trauma-informed practices and relational inclusion.
- Running workshops to help children develop emotional regulation, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.
- Strengthening community connections through outreach activities.

The project was spearheaded by Judith Reynolds, the Headteacher, with significant contributions from Michael Ellis (RIC) and external trainers like Sonja Evason.

2. Methodology

The RIC project followed a structured approach that included:

Policy Revisions

One of the initial steps was revising the school's behaviour policy to align with relational inclusion principles. This involved:

- Removing punitive measures like time-outs.
- Implementing Regulation Stations and active breaks.
- Establishing logical consequences to replace traditional punishments.

Staff Training

Comprehensive training sessions were conducted for staff to ensure a deep understanding of trauma-informed practices. These included:

- Inset days and twilight sessions focused on self-awareness, self-management, and relational practices.
- Small group training for newer staff and midday supervisors.

Workshops for Pupils

Weekly workshops were held for selected pupils. These sessions focused on:

- Emotional regulation through physical activities.
- Problem-solving and teamwork.

- Community engagement projects.

Community Engagement

Pupils participated in community outreach programmes, such as working with older adults and individuals with additional needs. These activities aimed to foster empathy and social responsibility.

Data Collection and Evaluation

Various data points were collected to track the project's impact:

- Attendance and behaviour data.
- Pupil profiles and SEMH toolkit assessments.
- Staff feedback and pupil voice surveys.

3. Key Findings

The RIC project has yielded several key insights:

1. **Behavioural Shifts**

- Pupils demonstrated improved emotional regulation and reduced reliance on adult intervention.
- The introduction of Regulation Stations and active breaks led to a noticeable decline in disruptive behaviours.

2. **Increased Engagement**

- Participation in workshops and community activities increased pupils' sense of belonging and engagement in school life.
- Pupils, previously disengaged or anxious, became more active in school events, such as sports competitions and community outreach.

3. **Positive Feedback**

- Feedback from parents, pupils, and staff has been overwhelmingly positive.
- The Random Acts of Kindness initiative has been well-received, fostering a culture of recognition and empathy.

4. **Unexpected Outcomes**

- The project led to the discovery of the value of Trauma-Informed Physical Education (PE), which has since been integrated into the school's practices.

4. Successes

The RIC project has achieved several notable successes:

1. **Policy Integration**

- The revised behaviour policy is now embedded within the school's culture.
- Logical consequences and regulation-based practices have replaced punitive measures.

2. **Staff Training and Adoption**

- All staff members have received training in relational inclusion.
- New staff are introduced to the principles of relational inclusion during their induction.

3. **Pupil Growth**

- Pupils involved in the workshops have shown marked improvements in emotional regulation, self-awareness, and social skills.
- Individual case studies highlight significant positive changes, such as reduced incidents of self-harm and increased engagement.

4. **Community Impact**

- Community engagement activities have fostered empathy and responsibility among pupils.
- Feedback from community members has been highly positive.

5. Challenges

Despite the successes, the project encountered several challenges:

1. **Time Constraints**

- Finding time for staff training and workshops within the existing school schedule proved difficult.
- The solution involved utilising Inset days and rearranging timetables.

2. **Staff Misconceptions**

- Some staff initially misunderstood relational inclusion as leniency. This required additional training to clarify the importance of regulation and logical consequences.

3. **Pupil Adaptation**

- Some pupils found it challenging to adjust to the workshop style initially. The sessions were adapted to be more active and engaging to suit the children's needs.

4. **Parental Engagement**

- More work is needed to involve parents in relational inclusion practices.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and challenges, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure the sustainability and further success of the RIC project:

1. **Expand Parent Engagement**

- Organise workshops and informational sessions for parents to educate them on relational inclusion and trauma-informed practices.

2. **Sustain Staff Training**

- Ensure continuous professional development for staff through refresher courses and induction training for new staff members.

3. **Embed Trauma-Informed PE**

- Continue to develop and expand Trauma-Informed PE sessions to support pupils' emotional and physical well-being.

4. **Adapt Workshop Formats**

- Allow for flexibility in workshop planning to better respond to the immediate needs of pupils.

5. **Monitor and Evaluate**

- Continue collecting data to track the long-term impact of the RIC project.
- Use feedback from pupils, staff, and parents to refine and improve practices.

6. **Broaden Community Engagement**

- Strengthen ties with local community groups to provide more opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful outreach activities.

The RIC project at Greenside Primary School has successfully embedded relational inclusion principles into the school's culture, resulting in positive behavioural and emotional outcomes for pupils. While challenges remain, the successes achieved thus far indicate that the project is well on its way to creating a lasting, positive impact on the school community. By addressing the remaining challenges and implementing the proposed recommendations, Greenside Primary School can ensure that the relational inclusion framework continues to benefit pupils, staff, and the wider community for years to come.

Holden Clough

1. Background

The Relational Inclusion (RIC) project at Holden Clough Community Primary School is part of a broader initiative aimed at improving emotional well-being and fostering a more inclusive school environment. The school is situated on the outskirts of Ashton Under Lyne and serves a diverse community with varying socio-economic backgrounds. Recognising the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on pupils' emotional health, the school adopted the RIC approach to enhance its support for both pupils and staff.

The primary goal of the RIC project is to implement strategies that promote relational inclusion, focusing on self-awareness, emotional regulation, and relationship-building among pupils. The project also aims to integrate the principles of emotional well-being into the school's behaviour policies and day-to-day practices.

2. Methodology

The project was implemented through a combination of workshops, staff training sessions, and small-group interventions. Key activities included:

Workshops and Training:

- **Self-Awareness Workshops:** Conducted for staff and pupils to foster understanding of emotions and triggers.
- **Core Competency Workshops:** Sessions on self-management and relational inclusion strategies.
- **Zones of Regulation:** Introduced in classrooms to help pupils identify and manage their emotions.

Small Group Interventions:

Specific cohorts of pupils were selected to participate in regular group sessions. These groups aimed to build trust, improve emotional literacy, and develop coping strategies.

Data Collection:

Data was gathered through various tools, including:

- Pupil profiles and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) toolkits.
- Attendance and behaviour data comparisons.
- Surveys from staff, parents, and pupils.

3. Key Findings

The following findings emerged from the project:

Improvements in Pupil Emotional Well-Being:

- Pupils participating in the workshops demonstrated increased confidence and emotional understanding.
- Children expressed a better ability to regulate emotions and recognise triggers.

Engagement of Staff and Parents:

- Staff training sessions resulted in a shift in language and approach towards pupil behaviour.
- Parents were informed about the project and showed interest in supporting their children's emotional development.

Positive Behavioural Outcomes:

- The school's attendance rate improved from 94.99% to 95.5%.
- No exclusions were recorded during the project period.

4. Successes

Several successes were noted during the implementation of the RIC project:

- **Support from Senior Leadership Team (SLT):** The SLT actively supported the project, ensuring it was embedded in the school's culture.
- **Effective Workshops:** The workshops were well-received by pupils, with noticeable improvements in their confidence and emotional regulation.
- **Parental Engagement:** Parents were informed and willing to engage with the project.
- **Staff Development:** Staff training improved understanding of trauma-informed practices and relational approaches.

5. Challenges

Despite its successes, the project faced several challenges:

- **Staff Absences:** The long-term absence of the appointed RIC impacted the continuity of the project. Angela Woodward stepped in to support the initiative in their absence.
- **Varied Pupil Engagement:** Some younger pupils found it difficult to engage with the workshops. Year 5 pupils responded more positively to the sessions.
- **Time Constraints:** Staff struggled to fit the workshops into their schedules, given their existing commitments.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the project, the following recommendations are proposed:

Short-Term Recommendations:

1. **Continue Staff Training:** Ensure all staff receive ongoing training in relational inclusion and trauma-informed practices.
2. **Finalise the Behaviour Policy:** Complete and implement the new behaviour policy, incorporating the RIC principles and Zones of Regulation.
3. **Maintain Small Group Interventions:** Continue running small group sessions to support pupils with emotional needs.

Long-Term Recommendations:

1. **Embed Emotional Friendly Settings:** Further develop the school's emotional friendly framework to support long-term sustainability.
2. **Monitor and Evaluate:** Regularly review the effectiveness of the RIC project through data collection and feedback.

3. **Expand Parent Engagement:** Increase opportunities for parental involvement in emotional well-being initiatives.

Conclusion

The Relational Inclusion project at Holden Clough Community Primary School has made significant strides in promoting emotional well-being and fostering a supportive school environment. While challenges such as staff absences and varied pupil engagement need to be addressed, the overall impact of the project has been positive. With continued focus on staff training, policy development, and parental engagement, the school is well-positioned to sustain and build upon the successes of this initiative.

Inspire Academy

1. Background

Inspire Academy implemented the Relational Inclusion (RIC) project to promote emotional well-being and foster a supportive learning environment. Recognising the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma on children's behaviour and learning, the project aimed to equip staff with the necessary skills to understand, support, and nurture pupils' social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs.

The project focused on embedding relational inclusion principles within the school's culture through staff training, pupil workshops, and policy changes. The goal was to ensure pupils feel safe, valued, and understood, thereby reducing behaviour issues and improving academic performance and emotional resilience.

2. Methodology

The RIC project was implemented through a combination of staff training, small-group workshops, and ongoing support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The following methods were employed:

Staff Training:

- **Self-Awareness Workshops:** Focused on helping staff understand their own emotional responses and how these impact interactions with pupils.
- **Core Competency Workshops:** Covered key topics such as self-management and trauma-informed practices.
- **Behaviour Policy Review:** Staff engaged in discussions to assess and revise the school's behaviour policies to align with relational inclusion principles.

Pupil Workshops:

- Cohorts of pupils were selected based on their SEMH needs. The workshops aimed to help pupils build emotional literacy, resilience, and self-regulation skills.
- Tools such as the emotions wheel and grounding techniques were used to help pupils identify and manage their feelings.

Data Collection:

Data was gathered through:

- **Pupil Profiles and SEMH Toolkits:** Reviewed at the start and end of each project cycle.
- **Attendance and Behaviour Data:** Compared year-on-year to assess impact.
- **Staff and Parent Surveys:** Gathered feedback on the effectiveness of the project.

3. Key Findings

The RIC project at Inspire Academy yielded several significant findings:

Improvements in Pupil Emotional Well-Being:

- Pupils in the workshop groups demonstrated increased emotional awareness and resilience.
- Children became better equipped to identify their feelings and use self-regulation techniques.

Positive Changes in Staff Practice:

- Staff reported greater awareness of the impact of trauma on pupil behaviour.
- The self-awareness training helped staff reflect on their interactions with pupils and colleagues, resulting in more empathetic and supportive practices.

Enhanced School Environment:

- The language and cultural fit within the school began to shift toward a more inclusive and understanding approach.
- The introduction of relational inclusion principles contributed to improved relationships between staff and pupils.

4. Successes

Several successes were achieved during the implementation of the RIC project:

- **Staff Engagement:** Staff were highly receptive to the training, with many reporting personal growth and positive changes in their interactions with pupils.
- **Pupil Progress:** Pupils in the workshop groups showed noticeable improvements in emotional regulation and resilience. For example, one Year 5 pupil who initially struggled with anxiety and avoidance behaviours became more resilient and engaged in school activities.
- **Parental Support:** Parents expressed interest in the project and showed willingness to support their children's emotional development.
- **SLT Support:** The SLT actively supported the project, ensuring it was embedded in school practices.

5. Challenges

While the project saw considerable successes, it also faced challenges:

- **Staff Workload:** The RIC role added to existing responsibilities, making it challenging for staff to dedicate sufficient time to the project.
- **Time Constraints:** Scheduling staff training and workshops within the school day proved difficult.
- **Pupil Attendance:** Some pupils in the workshop groups had inconsistent attendance due to family circumstances.
- **Resistance to Change:** Some staff initially struggled to adopt the relational inclusion approach, particularly in balancing empathy with maintaining behavioural standards.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the project, the following recommendations are proposed:

Short-Term Recommendations:

1. **Continue Staff Training:** Ensure all staff, including new hires, receive training in relational inclusion and trauma-informed practices.
2. **Complete Behaviour Policy Review:** Finalise and implement the revised behaviour policy, incorporating relational inclusion principles.
3. **Maintain Small-Group Interventions:** Continue running workshops to support pupils with SEMH needs.

Long-Term Recommendations:

1. **Embed Relational Inclusion in Induction:** Develop training sessions for new staff to ensure they understand and apply relational inclusion principles from the start.
2. **Parental Engagement:** Create a leaflet on trauma-informed approaches and share it with parents to foster a supportive home environment.
3. **Monitor and Evaluate:** Regularly review the impact of the RIC project through data collection and feedback from staff, pupils, and parents.

Conclusion

The Relational Inclusion project at Inspire Academy has made significant strides in promoting emotional well-being and fostering a supportive school environment. Although challenges such as staff workload and time constraints need to be addressed, the overall impact of the project has been positive. By continuing to focus on staff training, policy development, and parental engagement, the school can sustain and build upon the successes of this initiative.

Pinfold Primary School

1. Background

The Relational Inclusion (RIC) initiative, implemented at Pinfold Primary School under the leadership of Headteacher Jennifer Hughes and Luke Moss (Relational Inclusion Champion), focuses on improving pupils' mental health and well-being through targeted interventions. This project was introduced to address growing concerns around social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs within the pupil body, particularly those stemming from attachment issues and trauma. The school identified a significant portion of its pupils exhibiting anxious attachment styles, prompting the need for a holistic approach to behavioural management and emotional support.

The SEMH profiling tool was deployed as a key component of this initiative to assess pupils' emotional well-being and track progress over time. Workshops were designed based on profiling outcomes to provide tailored support for children, particularly those who fell below expected SEMH standards. The ultimate goal was to promote a relational, trauma-informed approach to behaviour management, thereby fostering a more supportive and inclusive school environment.

2. Methodology

The project began with the identification of children in need of intervention using the SEMH profiling tool. This tool assessed various aspects of pupils' emotional well-being, allowing staff to pinpoint specific areas of concern. Key steps in the methodology included:

1. **Initial Assessment**: Pupils were profiled using the SEMH tool to establish a baseline score.
2. **Workshop Design and Delivery**: Workshops were developed based on the identified needs of the pupils. Sessions focused on key competencies such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, and relational inclusion.
3. **Staff Training**: Staff across various roles received training to adopt the relational inclusion approach, ensuring consistency in language and practices used in classrooms and beyond.
4. **Continuous Monitoring**: Pupil progress was tracked across several profiling cycles to measure improvements and identify areas for further intervention.

Workshops were structured to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of each child. Regular evaluations were conducted to ensure that the workshops were effective and that any necessary adjustments were made to improve outcomes.

3. Key Findings

The project yielded several significant findings:

1. **Impact on SEMH Scores**: Pupils who participated in the workshops demonstrated substantial improvements in their SEMH scores. For example, one case study (PIP4) showed an increase from a baseline score of 209 to 276 by the end of the intervention.
2. **Behavioural Improvements**: Teachers and staff observed notable improvements in pupils' behaviour, including reduced hyperactivity, improved emotional regulation, and increased engagement in learning activities.
3. **Positive Feedback from Parents and Teachers**: Both parents and teachers reported seeing positive changes in the children's emotional well-being and social interactions. Parents noted improvements in their children's ability to manage emotions and build friendships.

4. **Enhanced Staff Capacity**: The training provided to staff equipped them with tools and language to better support pupils' emotional needs. Staff reported a shift in their approach to behaviour management, focusing more on understanding and addressing underlying emotions rather than merely reacting to behaviours.

4. Successes

The project has achieved several key successes:

- **Improved Pupil Outcomes**: The relational inclusion approach has had a direct positive impact on pupils' emotional well-being, as evidenced by improvements in SEMH scores and behavioural observations.
- **Cultural Shift in School**: The adoption of relational inclusion practices has contributed to a cultural shift within the school, promoting a more empathetic and supportive environment.
- **Effective Staff Training**: The training sessions were well-received, with staff expressing increased confidence in managing pupil behaviour through a trauma-informed lens.
- **Positive Relationships**: Pupils have developed healthier relationships with peers and staff, leading to a more cohesive school community.

5. Challenges

Despite the successes, several challenges were encountered during the implementation of the project:

1. **Time Constraints**: Coordinating workshops and staff training sessions proved challenging due to time limitations. To address this, sessions were split by staff roles (e.g., teaching staff, support staff) to maximise participation.
2. **Cross-Year Cohorts**: Managing workshops for pupils across different year groups posed logistical difficulties. This challenge could be mitigated by grouping pupils from the same year group in future iterations.
3. **Assumptions about Quick Fixes**: Some staff initially assumed that the relational inclusion approach would yield immediate results. However, it became clear that long-term commitment and consistent practice were necessary for sustainable impact.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and challenges identified, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of the project:

1. **Continued Professional Development**: Provide ongoing training and support for staff to ensure that relational inclusion practices are deeply embedded within the school culture.
2. **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation**: Continue using the SEMH profiling tool to track pupil progress and adjust interventions as needed. Regular reviews will ensure that the project remains responsive to pupils' evolving needs.
3. **Parental Engagement**: Increase efforts to engage parents in the relational inclusion approach. Providing parents with tools and strategies to support emotional regulation at home can enhance the overall impact of the project.
4. **Policy Integration**: Update the school's behaviour policy to fully reflect the relational inclusion approach. Ensure that all policies and procedures prioritise emotional well-being and relationship-building.
5. **Expansion of Workshops**: Develop quick-impact workshops for new pupils and staff to ensure that everyone is equipped with the foundational knowledge of relational inclusion.

6. **Focus on Peer Relationships**: Incorporate more activities that promote positive peer relationships, as these have been shown to significantly impact pupils' emotional well-being and academic success.

7. Conclusion

The Relational Inclusion and SEMH Profiling Project at Pinfold Primary School has had a transformative impact on the school community. By prioritising emotional well-being and promoting a trauma-informed approach to behaviour management, the school has created a more supportive and empathetic environment for both pupils and staff.

The project's success is evident in the improved SEMH scores, positive behavioural changes, and enhanced relationships observed within the school. While challenges remain, the recommendations outlined in this report provide a clear path forward to ensure the sustainability and long-term impact of the relational inclusion approach.

Continued commitment to this initiative will undoubtedly contribute to the ongoing development of a positive, inclusive, and resilient school culture at Pinfold Primary School.

Poplar Street Primary School

1. Background

Poplar Street Primary School has undertaken a Relational Inclusion (RI) project to address social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) challenges among its pupils. The project aims to foster a supportive and inclusive environment that prioritises the well-being and emotional literacy of children facing significant personal difficulties. The school's commitment to RI principles is part of a broader strategy to improve long-term outcomes for pupils by enhancing their social and emotional skills.

The school identified a cohort of children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as parental incarceration, family separation, and substance misuse within the home. These experiences have negatively impacted their mental health, leading to issues such as attachment difficulties, anxiety, and disruptive behaviours. Through the RI project, the school aims to equip these children with the tools to self-regulate, build positive relationships, and improve their overall well-being.

2. Methodology

The implementation of the RI project at Poplar Street Primary School followed a structured approach involving:

2.1 Training and Staff Development

The project began with a series of training workshops for staff, including:

- Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC) training
- Core Competency Workshops focusing on self-awareness and self-management
- Regular staff meetings to discuss progress and share best practices

The training sessions emphasised the importance of using consistent emotional language, creating safe spaces, and fostering positive relationships with pupils. Staff were also encouraged to use reflective practices to evaluate their interactions with children.

2.2 Pupil Workshops

Identified children participated in weekly workshops focusing on emotional literacy and self-regulation strategies. Each child's progress was tracked using SEMH toolkits and baseline assessments. The workshops covered themes such as:

- Emotional awareness
- Coping strategies for managing difficult emotions
- Building trust and positive relationships

2.3 Safe Spaces and Check-Ins

The school established a "Reset Zone" to provide children with a dedicated space to manage their emotions when feeling overwhelmed. Regular check-ins with designated staff members helped monitor pupils' emotional states and provided an opportunity for individualised support.

2.4 Parent and Community Engagement

Efforts were made to involve parents and the wider community in the RI process. Activities included:

- "Come Dine with Me" sessions where parents joined their children for lunch
- Workshops for parents to understand the RI approach and support their children at home

3. Key Findings

The implementation of the RI project has yielded several key findings:

3.1 Mental Health and Well-Being Improvements

The most notable improvements have been observed in pupils' mental health and well-being. Children are more capable of expressing their emotions and managing difficult situations. For example:

- Pupils reported feeling calmer and more in control after using the Reset Zone.
- Staff observed fewer outbursts and aggressive incidents in the classroom.

3.2 Staff Development

The RI training sessions have had a significant impact on staff practices. Teachers and teaching assistants are now using a unified approach to emotional language and behaviour management. Staff feedback indicates that the RI approach has helped create more supportive classroom environments.

3.3 Behavioural Improvements

Data collected from SEMH toolkits and pupil profiles show a reduction in disruptive behaviours. Identified children have demonstrated an increased capacity to self-regulate and engage positively with peers and staff.

4. Successes

Several successes have been achieved through the RI project:

- **Supportive Relationships:** The establishment of strong, positive relationships between staff and pupils has been a cornerstone of the project's success. Children feel more secure and are more willing to seek help when needed.
- **Consistency in Language:** The use of consistent emotional language has helped pupils better understand and articulate their feelings.
- **Safe Spaces:** The creation of the Reset Zone has provided pupils with a safe and calming environment to manage their emotions.
- **Parental Engagement:** Initiatives to involve parents in the RI process have been well-received and have strengthened the home-school connection.
- **Staff Commitment:** The dedication of staff to the RI approach has ensured its successful implementation and sustainability.

5. Challenges

Despite its successes, the RI project has encountered several challenges:

5.1 Time Constraints

Finding time within the busy school schedule to conduct workshops and follow-up sessions has been a challenge. Allocating time for regular staff training and meetings has also required careful planning.

5.2 Resistance to Change

A small number of staff members initially struggled to accept the new RI approach, particularly regarding the emphasis on meaningful, consequential sanctions rather than traditional punishments.

5.3 Parental Engagement

Explaining the RI support process to parents of identified children and encouraging their participation required additional effort. Phone calls and individual meetings were necessary to secure parental buy-in.

5.4 Managing Group Dynamics

Some group sessions posed challenges due to the behaviours of certain children. Managing these dynamics while ensuring all participants benefited from the sessions required skilful facilitation.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and challenges of the RI project, the following recommendations are proposed to ensure its long-term success and sustainability:

6.1 Continue Staff Training

Ongoing professional development is essential to maintain the momentum of the RI project. Refresher courses and advanced training sessions should be scheduled regularly to reinforce RI principles.

6.2 Strengthen Parent Engagement

Efforts to engage parents should be expanded. Consider organising regular parent workshops, providing resources for at-home support, and establishing a parent advisory group to offer feedback on the RI approach.

6.3 Expand Safe Spaces

The Reset Zone has proven effective, but additional safe spaces throughout the school could further support pupils in managing their emotions. Consider creating smaller, satellite reset areas in different parts of the school.

6.4 Embed RI in School Culture

To ensure the long-term impact of the RI project, it is important to fully embed RI principles into the school's culture. This can be achieved by:

- Updating the school's behaviour policy to reflect RI principles
- Including RI topics in the curriculum
- Encouraging all staff to model RI practices in their interactions with pupils

6.5 Monitor and Evaluate Progress

Regular evaluation of the RI project's impact is crucial. Use data from SEMH toolkits, pupil profiles, and staff feedback to track progress and make necessary adjustments. Share these findings with all stakeholders to maintain transparency and accountability.

7. Conclusion

The Relational Inclusion project at Poplar Street Primary School has made significant strides in improving the mental health and well-being of pupils, fostering positive relationships, and creating a supportive school environment. The project has demonstrated the importance of addressing children's emotional and social needs to enhance their long-term outcomes.

By continuing to invest in RI practices, Poplar Street Primary School can build on these successes and ensure that every child feels valued, supported, and equipped to thrive both academically and personally.

Yew Tree Primary School

Background

Yew Tree Primary School undertook a Relational Inclusion Initiative (RIC) aimed at fostering emotional resilience, improving behaviour management, and promoting a supportive learning environment for pupils and staff. The project was driven by the school's recognition of the impact of trauma on children's behaviour and learning outcomes. The initiative emphasised training staff at all levels, implementing new behaviour policies, and using structured tools such as Regulation Stations.

The initiative also prioritised identifying pupils in need of emotional and behavioural support, facilitating workshops to help pupils develop self-awareness and regulation strategies, and engaging parents in the process to build a consistent approach to inclusion across the school community.

Methodology

The Relational Inclusion Initiative employed a structured approach consisting of the following key steps:

1. **Staff Training:** Comprehensive training sessions, led by experts such as Sonja Evans, were provided to staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, midday supervisors, administrative staff, and the site manager. This training focused on understanding trauma, secondary stress, and the principles of relational inclusion.
2. **Policy Revision:** The school behaviour policy was rewritten to include a relational approach, incorporating consistent vocabulary and tools to support emotion regulation.
3. **Workshops:** Workshops were conducted for selected pupils to build emotional awareness and regulation skills. The workshops used creative activities and hands-on strategies to engage pupils.
4. **Behaviour Management Tools:** Regulation Stations and Zones of Regulation displays were established in classrooms and shared areas to provide pupils with designated spaces and tools for self-regulation.
5. **Data Collection and Feedback:** Regular feedback was collected from staff, pupils, and parents to assess the effectiveness of the initiative. Attendance, behaviour incident records, and survey data were analysed for trends and impacts.

Key Findings

1. **Behaviour Improvements:** The number of behavioural incidents logged has significantly decreased, and there have been no exclusions or suspensions since the initiative's implementation.
2. **Pupil Engagement:** Workshops were well-received by pupils, with improved emotional regulation and increased capacity to learn observed in participants.
3. **Staff Buy-In:** Staff members showed strong engagement with the programme, with no resistance to the changes in behaviour policy and practice.
4. **Parental Involvement:** Increased engagement with parents, including their participation in workshops and use of relational inclusion strategies at home, contributed to the initiative's success.
5. **Cultural Shift:** The consistent use of relational language and tools across the school created a supportive and inclusive culture.

Successes

- The introduction of Regulation Stations and consistent vocabulary led to notable improvements in pupil behaviour and emotional regulation.
- Training sessions provided staff with deeper insights into the emotional needs of pupils and how to address them effectively.

- Collaboration between staff, parents, and external experts ensured the project's sustainability and alignment with best practices.
- Pupils demonstrated greater self-confidence, emotional understanding, and learning engagement following their participation in workshops.

Challenges

- **Staff Training Coordination:** Ensuring all staff received equal and timely training was challenging due to the large number of personnel and schedule constraints. Flexibility in the school calendar and targeted follow-ups addressed this issue.
- **Parental Consent Delays:** Obtaining timely consent from parents for pupil workshops initially delayed their commencement. Direct communication with parents helped resolve this.
- **Workshop Scheduling:** Ensuring weekly workshops without timetable conflicts required careful planning and adjustments to avoid disruptions to other subjects.

Recommendations

1. **Sustain Training and Development:** Regular refresher training sessions for staff should be scheduled to ensure continued understanding and application of relational inclusion practices.
2. **Expand Parent Engagement:** Organise additional workshops for parents to further align school and home approaches to behaviour management and emotional support.
3. **Monitor and Evaluate Impact:** Continue collecting and analysing data on behaviour incidents, pupil outcomes, and staff feedback to track progress and identify areas for improvement.
4. **Cluster Group Collaboration:** Establish termly cluster group meetings for RICs to share ideas and best practices across schools.
5. **Adaptable Resources:** Develop adaptable workshop materials for future cohorts, ensuring scalability and ease of implementation.

Relational Inclusion Project: Progress, Successes and Challenges.

Summary of the **progress, successes, and challenges** for the Relational Inclusion Research Project. based on the provided information:

Relational Inclusion Research Project Summary
The Relational Inclusion Research Project aims to improve the well-being, mental health, and learning outcomes for children in Trust schools by embedding therapeutic, relational practices. The initiative is driven by a strong moral purpose to foster emotional literacy and a culture of understanding across schools. Despite facing challenges, the project has made significant progress, achieved notable successes, and is laying the foundation for long-term cultural change.

Progress and Early Successes

The project has made remarkable strides in its early stages, building momentum toward transforming school culture.

- **Training Delivery:** Five comprehensive training sessions have been conducted, equipping staff with a shared vocabulary and co-regulation strategies. This has led to more consistent relational practices across schools.
- **Relational Inclusion Champions (RICs):** Nearly all schools have appointed RICs who are responsible for cascading training and leading interventions. These champions are essential to sustaining the project's impact.
- **Leadership Support:** The project is a priority in the Trust Development Plan, with strong backing from senior leadership, including the CEO. This support has helped position the project as a catalyst for long-term cultural change.
- **Community Building:** A headteachers' WhatsApp group has fostered collaboration and mutual support among leaders. Additionally, parent engagement initiatives, including therapist-supported groups, are being trialled to build trust with families.
- **Data Collection:** A combination of questionnaires, standardised tests, and case studies is being used to measure both qualitative and quantitative outcomes, ensuring a holistic approach to tracking progress.

Key outcomes include:

- Improved staff engagement with relational approaches.
- Adoption of shared language and consistent behaviour management strategies.
- Early signs of improved attendance and reduced exclusions.
- Interest from external stakeholders, including schools, police, and social services, indicating the project's potential for wider impact.

Key Successes

Several notable successes have been achieved:

1. **Cultural Shift:** Schools have embraced restorative approaches, focusing on empathy, self-regulation, and mutual respect. The use of regulation spaces and relational policies reflects a move away from punitive measures.
2. **Collaboration:** RICs have fostered a culture of mutual learning between senior leaders and staff, strengthening teamwork and shared responsibility for pupil well-being.

3. **Policy Changes:** Behaviour policies across the Trust have been revised to focus on relational practices, promoting positive interactions and a supportive environment.
4. **Parent Engagement:** Two models of parent engagement are being trialled, with early positive feedback from parents who value the opportunity to contribute to the process.
5. **Unexpected Positive Outcomes:** The project has gained traction beyond initial expectations, with buy-in from staff and connections to regional leaders, indicating potential for broader influence.

Challenges and Solutions

Despite its successes, the project has faced several challenges, which have been met with a solution-focused approach:

- **Scope and Adaptation:** The pilot was initially limited to Year 5 pupils but has since been adapted to meet the varying needs of schools across Key Stage 2.
- **Post-Covid Data Inconsistencies:** The pandemic has made it difficult to measure progress consistently.
- **Time Constraints:** Headteachers have expressed concerns about the time required to implement the project, and clearer communication from the outset could have alleviated some of these issues.
- **Staff Absence:** Some schools have experienced significant staff absences, impacting the project's consistency. This was particularly challenging at Holden Clough, but support from a therapist and the Deputy Head helped address the issue.
- **RIC Selection:** The process of selecting Relational Inclusion Champions requires more rigor to ensure consistent commitment.
- **Parent Engagement Variability:** While some schools have successfully engaged parents, others need further support to replicate this success across all Trust schools.
- **Data Management:** As the volume of data grows, managing and analysing it efficiently has become increasingly challenging. Support from the Wellbeing Development Officer and data specialist Stephen is expected to streamline this process.

Future Outlook and Sustainability

The project is positioned for long-term sustainability, with plans to expand its reach across all Trust schools and through regional and national networks.

- **Next Steps:** The upcoming phase will deepen relational inclusion practices, with a focus on expanding parent engagement and improving data management processes for richer insights.
- **Sustainability:** RICs and senior leaders remain central to sustaining cultural change. The project team is committed to documenting evidence and addressing challenges to maintain authenticity and validity.
- **Dissemination:** The project is gaining regional attention, with plans to share findings through networks and collaborations with institutions like Manchester University. This could involve trainee teachers or PhD pupils, further enhancing the project's impact.

Summary of Achievements and Remaining Focus Areas

The project has achieved substantial progress in embedding relational inclusion practices across Trust schools. Key achievements include:

- The creation of a shared language and consistent relational practices.
- Revised behaviour policies that promote positive, empathetic interactions.
- Improved attendance and reduced exclusions in some schools.

- Strong engagement from staff, RICs, and external stakeholders.

However, challenges remain:

- Ensuring consistent parent engagement across all schools.
- Managing leadership transitions and minimising disruptions.
- Addressing staff capacity concerns to ensure ongoing commitment.
- Improving the selection process for RICs to ensure sustainable leadership.
- Streamlining data collection and analysis to measure impact effectively.

The project's strong moral purpose and solution-focused approach are key to its success. By addressing the well-being and emotional literacy of children, the initiative aims to create lasting cultural change within schools and the wider community. The progress made so far is promising, and the project is well on track to achieve its long-term goals of fostering inclusion and improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children.

Summary of Staff and Child Feedback for Relational Inclusion Project:

Relational Inclusion Project: Summary of Staff and Child Feedback

The *Relational Inclusion Project* has had a positive impact on both staff and children, with significant improvements in emotional regulation, relationships, and overall school atmosphere.

Staff Feedback:

1. **Emotional Regulation & Safe Spaces**: Many staff have highlighted the importance of the regulation stations, allowing children a safe space to calm down when needed. The use of terms like co-regulation and self-regulation has helped staff provide better support for children during emotional moments.
2. **Reflection & Practice**: Staff report becoming more reflective in their practices, with a deeper understanding of building authentic relationships with children. Many mentioned that the training has helped them recognise and address the underlying emotions behind children's behaviours, rather than focusing solely on the actions themselves.
3. **Confidence & Communication**: Several staff observed that children involved in the project showed improvements in communication skills and confidence, especially those who might not have been identified for other interventions. The small group environment has been empowering for them.
4. **Impact on Behaviour**: Staff have noticed fewer behavioural incidents and a more understanding approach to children's emotional needs. Positive reinforcement, such as acknowledging children's display of the *5 Rs* (resourcefulness, respect, resilience, responsibility, and reflection), has helped improve behaviour and foster a supportive environment.
5. **Professional Growth & Support**: The project has fostered professional growth, with staff appreciating the opportunity to engage in reflective discussions and learn from colleagues. They have found the training engaging and relevant, often leading to practical changes in their day-to-day interactions with children.

Child Feedback:

1. **Emotional Awareness & Self-Regulation**: Children report significant improvements in understanding and managing their emotions. Many have learned to articulate how they are feeling, using terms like "dysregulated" to explain their emotions. Techniques like grounding exercises and breathing have helped children calm down and regain control.

2. **Safe Spaces**: The Regulation Stations and Reset Zones have been described as safe spaces for children to go when feeling overwhelmed or upset. These spaces provide an opportunity for children to regulate their emotions, helping them return to their learning activities feeling calmer.
3. **Social Skills & Friendships**: Children have expressed greater confidence in social interactions, with many sharing that they have made new friends and learned how to be better friends to others. They appreciate the group contract that promotes safety and openness in discussions about feelings.
4. **Positive Changes**: Children also noted that they have become kinder, more helpful, and less moody, attributing these changes to the skills and techniques they have learned through the project. They enjoy the sense of belonging and support the approach offers.

In conclusion, the *Relational Inclusion Project* has positively influenced both staff and children by fostering an environment of understanding, emotional regulation, and supportive relationships. The use of tools like the Regulation Stations, Zones of Regulation, and grounding techniques has empowered children to manage their emotions and become more confident learners. Staff have embraced these methods, resulting in a more reflective and inclusive approach to behaviour and emotional development in the school.

Relational Inclusion Project: Staff and Pupil Voice

Staff:

- Since starting the relational inclusion training, it is great to see all the regulation stations around school, and children having a safe space to leave the classroom when needed'.

- 'It has allowed me to become more reflective in my practice and about the importance of developing authentic relationships with children.'

- 'I feel the RIC project has really helped the group of children who have been involved. Their confidence has grown, and their communication skills improved. They were children who may well not have been identified for any other kind of intervention as their needs are not disruptive but I could see an empowerment for them in that small group style scenario which they wouldn't have otherwise received.'

- 'For me, building relationships with children and families has always been key to my approach in school and the Relational Inclusion approach sits very close to what I have previously done. Now having the knowledge of the research and the new learning which supports the clear positives behind adopting the approach are firmly embedded in me.'

- 'I have noticed a difference in the children who become dysregulated, at first co-regulating and now many children using these strategies to self-regulate in the regulation stations.'

- 'It's good that we are now able to put names to the techniques we have been using for a while. We have always looked at supporting children with a sensitive approach and being able to use words like co-regulate and self-regulate have supported the children in my class when tackling tricky emotions.' - Teaching assistant

- 'Relational Inclusion helped me realise early in the year that some of the children in my class did not know how to name the emotions they were feeling. Things like the feeling wheel has helped this a lot.' - Teacher

- 'I look forward to more training from our RIC* to help us deal with tricky behaviours at lunchtime. Just watching some of the teachers has been a great so far though' – MDA

- ' I love the emphasis the approach puts on repairing and restoring relationships with children and also distancing the individual from their behaviours. The consideration of potential traumas that children may have been through also gives you a whole new perspective on what children might be dealing with outside the classroom and how to ensure you are making allowances for this.'

- I will take away from this as I know every single child has their own personal needs and how big or small it is just to be a little bit understanding what makes them feel they can't control their emotions.

- I found the self-awareness training fascinating and very useful. I have taken lots of the things discussed and use them/have them in the forefront of my mind, in my day-to-day practice (breathwork, giving children time to be heard, person-centred theory, vagal theory etc).

- I found it very beneficial being able to have a professional dialogue with others in the same or similar job role as we often saw things differently. There were a couple of occasions where I reconsidered my opinion as a result so I think it was great for personal growth.

- I would definitely be interested in attending more sessions like this.

- I have found the sessions incredibly useful, pitched at the right level and very informative. Vic really knows her stuff and presents it in a fun and engaging way. She has shared lots of in-depth knowledge but also sign posted to other reading and thoughts and kept it relevant to Inspire. I've loved how you got to do activities as well as be talked at and had the opportunity to talk about current children with colleagues and how we can help them but also our feelings around them.

- Lots of recapping and revisiting has helped the new knowledge stick and has definitely changed some of my practice and helped me to reflect on how I engage and deal with certain children but also assured me it's OK to not be that person on that day and it's OK to pass to someone else!

- "Relational Inclusion has impacted how we think and react to behaviours within school. We are no longer focusing solely on the behaviour itself but thinking rather on understanding and addressing the underlying emotions. By fostering a caring environment and building on the relationships, which are key, we have made a significant impact within the school.   Relational Inclusion for me personally, has been a turning point for us as a school, being able to have an approach supported by science helps staff members understand that dysregulation isn't a choice, and emphasises the need for further understanding in order to have a positive impact on the children we teach."

- "I'm trying hard to not just see the bigger picture and I am celebrating the smaller wins more than ever before. Making the most out of a challenging class. I have discovered patience that I never thought I had-yes still room for improvement and I know my faults but feel that this academic year (so far) I have been able to pull those children back with something simple as just ignoring or a quiet conversation."

- "Relational inclusion has provided us with a problem-solving environment which has resulted in a calmer atmosphere where children are more willing to work together to fix issues that arise. Where a child is struggling, supporting them by validating their emotions and actively listening to them, whilst making clear their choice of action is not ok has had positive impact upon their ability to co and self-regulate and for them to reflect upon their feelings and the impact of these through the choices they make"

- "The children have responded well to the teaching and learning of expectations of behaviour and relationships underpinned by the Relational Inclusion approach. The language of self-regulation and ownership of their actions has had a positive impact of their understanding and has enabled them to appreciate the importance of making the right choice and owning the outcomes of their decisions.

- Incorporating relational inclusion within the classroom around our curriculum rationale: REALL (five R's: resourcefulness, respect, resilience, responsible, reflective; equality and diversity; aspiration and ambition; language and life experience) we have displayed each child's name around each of our 5R's. During the day, the children are acknowledged for any of the qualities displayed, we cheer and clap as their name is displayed on our board. Such positive reinforcement has been well received by the children and definitely had a positive impact on behaviour.   Seeing the children encouraging each other has been a joy to behold."

- I found the sessions on relational inclusion were quite inspiring. They showed us clear ways to create supportive and inclusive environments for the children. Something as simple as doing a regular check in at the door as the children come in can make a big different to how a child feels and how they are valued. The discussions were engaging and helped us realise how we are doing things that link to relation inclusion as part of our daily routine as a teacher. The sessions showed us simple, effective ways to help children feel like they truly belong within our classrooms

- Relational inclusion has enabled me to think in more depth about my practice and evaluate my interactions and relationships with the children in my class, especially having taken on a new role working with our must vulnerable children. I've worked hard on building relationships, creating an environment of trust as well as setting clear boundaries and expectations. I try my best to make myself available emotionally and physically for the children in order to develop those relationships. As they enter the classroom, I do a daily emotional check in and we have a quick chat. I assist them in co regulating when needed, but I work hard to ensure this isn't but I work hard to ensure this isn't always necessary as I know and understand their triggers.

- I feel like relational inclusion allows the opportunity to open dialogue with a pupil who is dysregulated. It has allowed discuss with them how they are feeling and try to unpick what is causing them to feel dysregulated rather than just responding to the behaviour. I think it allows children to explore the fact that sometimes our bodies are responding to emotions and we can learn strategies to support this. We are able to be firm to our behaviour policy whilst still caring for the child in question.

- "Through adopting the Relational Inclusion Approach across school, we have improved children's social and emotional skills and developed their resilience and self-confidence. There has been a significant impact on behaviour with the introduction of a new behaviour policy which has resulted in a reduction in behaviour Incidents and no suspensions or exclusions last year."

- "Relational Inclusion has helped staff to understand behaviours and emotions. Staff are beginning to think more about why children might be behaving in certain ways and be more understanding of their needs. As a school we have thought more about logical consequences"

- "The Year 5 children who participated in the RI workshops showed greater emotional understanding and resilience as the project unfolded. They were able to articulate their feelings more coherently and access strategies to help regulate themselves. This also helped improve their learning behaviours, making them more positive and engaged learners"

Pupils:

- 'When I first came into the sessions, I had lots of worries and I couldn't even get in to the hall. Now I don't really have any worries, except for my dad's blood sugar levels.'

- 'I used to be dead moody and not very nice, now I'm friendly and kind and helpful'

- 'It's good that it's ok to have some time to be calm'

- 'I wish we could keep meeting in our group until we leave school'

- 'I really liked the group with my teacher. It taught me about how to tell what I am feeling and how to help when I am feeling dysregulated! I like that we had a group contract so we felt safe when talking about our feelings.

- 'I've started using 'dysregulated' to tell my mum how I am feeling and it's good because she knows that sometimes I just need some time to calm down... I told her that being alone helps me and she gets it most the time'

- 'The workshops we have done with our friends has really helped us think about our emotions and how we can cope with feeling certain ways. We've learnt to understand that it's ok to be upset and there's things we can do to help us get back to green. (Zones of regulation) We've really enjoyed some of the grounding techniques work we've done with our teacher and we feel more confident as a result.

- "When we first started with sessions, I was pretty hyperactive and didn't always listen, I've been able to make friends and helped me on how to be a good friend. Talking with my teacher helped me with my emotions, and I learnt how to control them better."

- 'I like it when we start the afternoon with breathing' 'Reset zone is great for when I feeling overwhelmed so then I can go back to my learning' 'Reset zone helps people when they feel angry or disappointed'

- 'Reset zone is a safe place for everyone to go' 'Reset zone is a place to feel calm' 'Can use it for lots of different emotions'

- 'It calms people down.' 'It helps people to relax.' 'I feel like the class has been calmer.'

- "I think it helps a lot because we used to have A LOT of issues, but now there aren't as many."

- "If somebody gets sad or maybe a bit mad, then they need time to calm down. We can send them to the Regulation Station to help them get in the Green Zone."

- "When people are feeling in the Red Zone and they need to calm down, I think using the Regulation Station and the Sensory Toolbox helps. When I had to use in Year 2, it really helped me."

Exceptions: Unexpected Outcomes and Challenges:

Lyndhurst Primary School

Lyndhurst Primary School's approach to implementing the relational inclusion project differed significantly from that of other schools within the Trust. From the outset, it became apparent that the school faced unique circumstances that influenced how the project was delivered. Unlike other schools, Lyndhurst was unable to nominate a member of their own staff to take on the role of Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC). This was due to a strategic focus on developing their staff's expertise in other areas of the curriculum, which took priority at the time.

To address this, the school arranged for a RIC from another school within the Trust to provide weekly support to their cohort of children. This external RIC led weekly intervention sessions for the children identified as part of the project. While this ensured that the pupils received consistent, targeted support, it meant that Lyndhurst's own staff did not participate in the project's initial training sessions. As a result, staff members are only now accessing this training during the current academic year.

Despite this, Lyndhurst Primary was already integrating many of the principles of relational inclusion and trauma-informed practice prior to the project's launch. The school serves a particularly challenging demographic, which has necessitated a focus on relational approaches to support children's social-emotional needs. The Headteacher at Lyndhurst has long been an advocate for relational inclusion and trauma-informed practice, both within her own school and across other schools in the Tameside area. Her deep knowledge of these approaches has contributed to the school's existing culture of relational support.

Consequently, many of Lyndhurst's staff are already familiar with practical strategies to support children in this area, even though they missed the formal training at the start of the project. Their experience highlights the adaptability of the project's framework and demonstrates that, while a different delivery model was required, Lyndhurst was still able to embed core principles effectively, thanks to their Headteacher's leadership and the school's proactive approach to supporting their pupils' needs.

Buckton Vale Primary School

At the outset, Buckton Vale Primary was selected to be part of the Relational Inclusion Project, an initiative aimed at fostering inclusive educational practices that prioritise building positive relationships. The school was initially enthusiastic about the opportunity, with a dedicated Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC) who participated in all relevant training and effectively led intervention groups for the cohort of children. These sessions were designed to offer pupils a supportive, nurturing environment to help them thrive academically and emotionally.

However, as the academic year progressed, unexpected changes began to alter the trajectory of the school's involvement in the project. A new Headteacher was appointed, and with them came a shift in senior leadership priorities. Along with this leadership change, there was a significant turnover in staff, creating further disruption. These changes meant that the school was unable to offer the regular, consistent sessions that the Relational Inclusion Project required. Despite efforts to maintain the initiative, the workshops were not always held on the expected schedule, leading to gaps in the children's experiences.

Moreover, the staff, who were key to implementing the relational inclusion approach, were not given the necessary training to fully understand and embed this approach within their classrooms.

The lack of professional development in relational inclusion meant that the staff could not offer the level of support the initiative demanded, further affecting the cohesion and impact of the intervention.

Adding to the complexity, the trained RIC, who had been instrumental in delivering the programme, left their position to pursue a new role outside of education. This left the school without a designated leader for the Relational Inclusion Project, and no immediate staff members had the training or capacity to take over this critical responsibility.

With the school facing these internal challenges, including the need to focus on improving the curriculum under the new Headteacher and preparing for an upcoming Ofsted inspection, the priority was naturally placed on raising academic standards. The pressure to demonstrate progress in learning outcomes for pupils inevitably overshadowed the continuation of the relational inclusion work.

Despite these setbacks, Buckton Vale Primary continued to support the children in the cohort. Although the intervention groups were not as regular as intended, the children still had access to the workshops when possible. The school was committed to the ethos of the Relational Inclusion Project, even if the logistics and consistency of delivery were not as they had originally envisioned.

Looking ahead, Buckton Vale Primary is scheduled to receive the necessary training for the Relational Inclusion approach. However, this training is expected to be delayed, potentially until the later part of this academic year or early into the next one. Despite these hurdles, the school remains hopeful that with the right support and a renewed focus on staff development, the Relational Inclusion Project will be able to make a more substantial impact in the future.

Through these unexpected changes and challenges, Buckton Vale Primary has learned valuable lessons about the importance of consistent leadership, adequate training, and the need for a collaborative effort to embed a culture of relational inclusion across the school. While the journey has been more complicated than initially anticipated, the school is determined to continue the work and create an environment where every child can feel supported and valued.

Wild Bank Primary School

At Wild Bank Primary, a school with a small pupil roll and limited staffing, the journey towards cultivating Relational Inclusion has been marked by both progress and challenges. As one of the first schools to introduce staff training for relational inclusion, Wild Bank quickly established a culture grounded in building strong, supportive relationships with their children. This early commitment to the project allowed them to appoint a dedicated Relational Inclusion Champion (RIC), whose responsibility was to undertake relevant training and pass on this knowledge to the rest of the staff.

With only a small cohort of pupils, Wild Bank could design intervention sessions that were aimed at supporting the children most in need of relational support. However, these sessions were often very structured, leaning more towards formal lessons than the nurturing, organic environment that might be expected in a relational inclusion model. Despite the rigid structure of these interventions, the school saw tangible benefits. The language and culture of the school began to shift—teachers were more attuned to the emotional needs of their pupils, and staff felt better equipped to handle challenging behaviour.

However, the school's trajectory was not without setbacks. Throughout the course of the project, Wild Bank underwent leadership changes with the appointment of a new Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. These changes were a pivotal moment in the school's journey, as the newly

appointed leadership team had to prioritise improving academic attainment across the school and preparing for an impending Ofsted inspection.

Even though relational inclusion was not always the school's central priority during this time, the staff remained committed to the project. Many staff members noticed the positive effects on both their ability to manage behaviour and on the school atmosphere as a whole. The culture of relational inclusion, though not always in the spotlight, continued to thrive among the staff, who remained dedicated to maintaining the supportive environment.

As the school year drew to a close, the departure of the Relational Inclusion Champion left a significant gap. The absence of a clear leader for the project posed a potential challenge for the future of relational inclusion at Wild Bank. Nevertheless, the school quickly took action by nominating a teaching assistant to take responsibility for the project moving forward. This teaching assistant, who had always approached their work with a relational mindset, was already deeply familiar with the principles of relational inclusion, and their appointment ensured continuity in the approach.

Looking ahead, the senior leadership team remains committed to fostering relational inclusion within the school. While the teaching assistant now leads the project, the school is determined to continue offering structured intervention sessions to support a new cohort of children, and any new training will be disseminated to staff to ensure ongoing development. The core values of relational inclusion are still very much alive at Wild Bank, with the school's leadership and staff determined to build on the foundations already laid, despite the challenges they have faced.

The school's experience highlights the unpredictable nature of educational projects and the need for flexibility in the face of unexpected changes. While the path has not always been smooth, Wild Bank's resilience and commitment to relational inclusion have ensured that the culture and practices surrounding the project remain a central part of the school's identity.

System Change and Cultural Change

Systems resist change. Like tightly wound springs, they instinctively snap back to the familiar, seizing every opportunity to revert to their previous state. Many years ago, when I was Head of English, my headteacher asked, "Could you *do* literacy?"

I replied, "Would you like it *done* by Christmas, or would you like us to *do literacy properly*?"

Literacy isn't a quick fix. It's never 'done'—it's an ongoing process, a continuous evolution. The same is true for **Relational Inclusion**.

Relational Inclusion cannot and must not be seen as just another initiative. It requires a fundamental shift—a deep, unwavering commitment that embeds itself into the very fabric of a school's ethos and culture. Without this, it risks becoming yet another fleeting educational trend, rather than the transformational change which we have found it to be.

From a personal perspective, **Relational Inclusion** has been life changing. It has reshaped the way I interact in my personal relationships, transformed how I parent, and fundamentally altered how I lead my schools.

From a school perspective, the impact has been just as profound. My school is calmer, staff and students are happier, and relationships are stronger. Behaviour isn't just 'managed'—it's understood. Challenges are met with curiosity rather than punishment, and the culture has shifted from control to connection.

The difference is more than just a feeling; it's measurable. Exclusions are down, engagement is up, and there's a renewed sense of belonging. Relational Inclusion isn't just a strategy—it's a way of being. And once you see its power, there's no going back.

Core Competency Data

Reliability

SEMH Profile Subscale	Person		Item	
	Separation	Reliability	Separation	Reliability
1. Emotional Aspects	2.79	0.89	8.55	0.99
2. Social Awareness & Relationships	2.93	0.90	6.64	0.98
3. Independence & Resilience	2.53	0.86	7.78	0.98
4. Behaviour for Learning	2.60	0.87	10.54	0.99
5. Mental Health & Wellbeing	2.81	0.89	11.66	0.99

- **Key Subscales:** Includes Emotional Aspects, Social Awareness & Relationships, Independence & Resilience, and Behaviour for Learning.

- **Person Separation Reliability:** High scores (~0.89–0.90) indicate strong differentiation between individuals across subscales.

- **Item Separation Reliability:** Consistently high scores (~0.98–0.99), suggesting items are reliable and robust across subscales.

- **Implication:** Both individuals and items demonstrate reliable measurement properties, making the tool suitable for assessing SEMH profiles.

Variance

SEMH Profile Subscale	Explained Variance		
	Persons	Items	Total
1. Emotional Aspects	37.8%	22.5%	60.3%
2. Social Awareness & Relationships	33.7%	19.3%	53.0%
3. Independence & Resilience	23.2%	21.4%	44.6%
4. Behaviour for Learning	33.4%	23.0%	56.4%
5. Mental Health & Wellbeing	29.3%	24.7%	54.0%

- **Explained Variance (Persons):** Ranges from 23.2% (Independence & Resilience) to 37.8% (Emotional Aspects).

- **Explained Variance (Items):** Varies between 19.3% (Social Awareness) and 23% (Behaviour for Learning).

- **Total Variance Explained:** Generally exceeds 50%, with Emotional Aspects achieving 60.3%.

- **Insight:** Emotional Aspects contribute the highest explained variance, suggesting this subscale is a stronger predictor or more distinct compared to others.
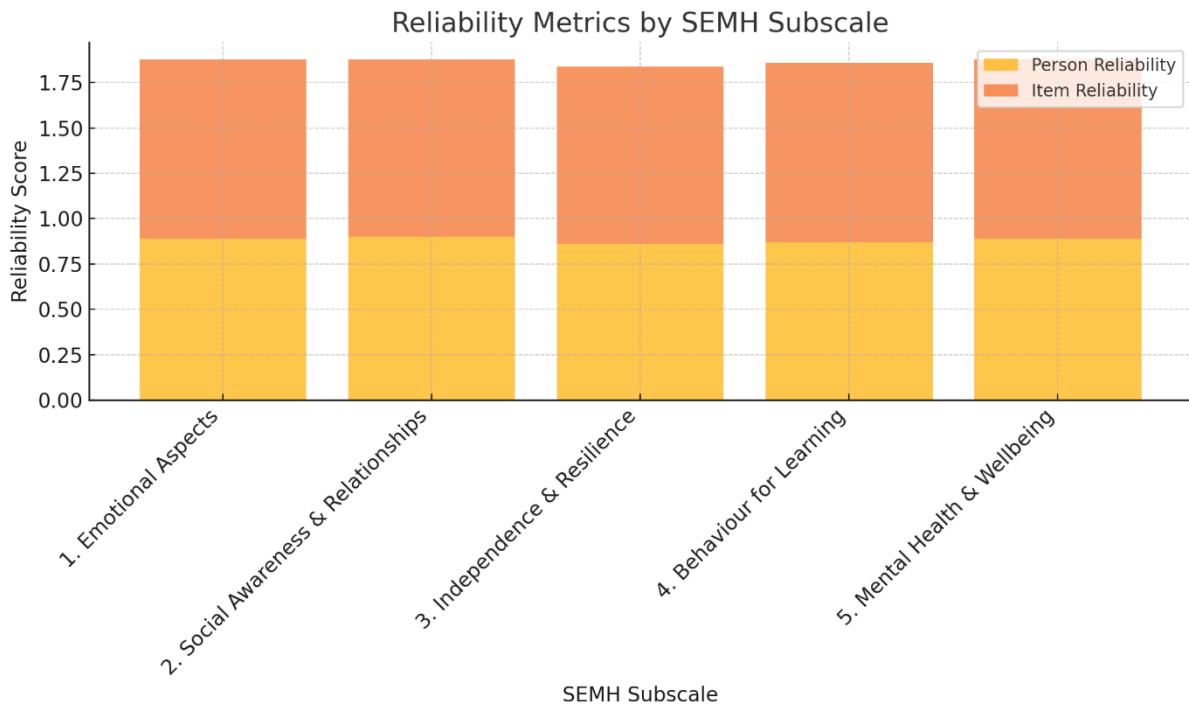
Effect Sizes

SEMH Profile Subscale	Baseline	Review#1	Review#2	Review#3	Review#4	Review#5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional Aspects	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.7
Social Awareness & Relationships	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9
Independence & Resilience	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.1
Behaviour for Learning	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.8
Mental Health & Wellbeing	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.0
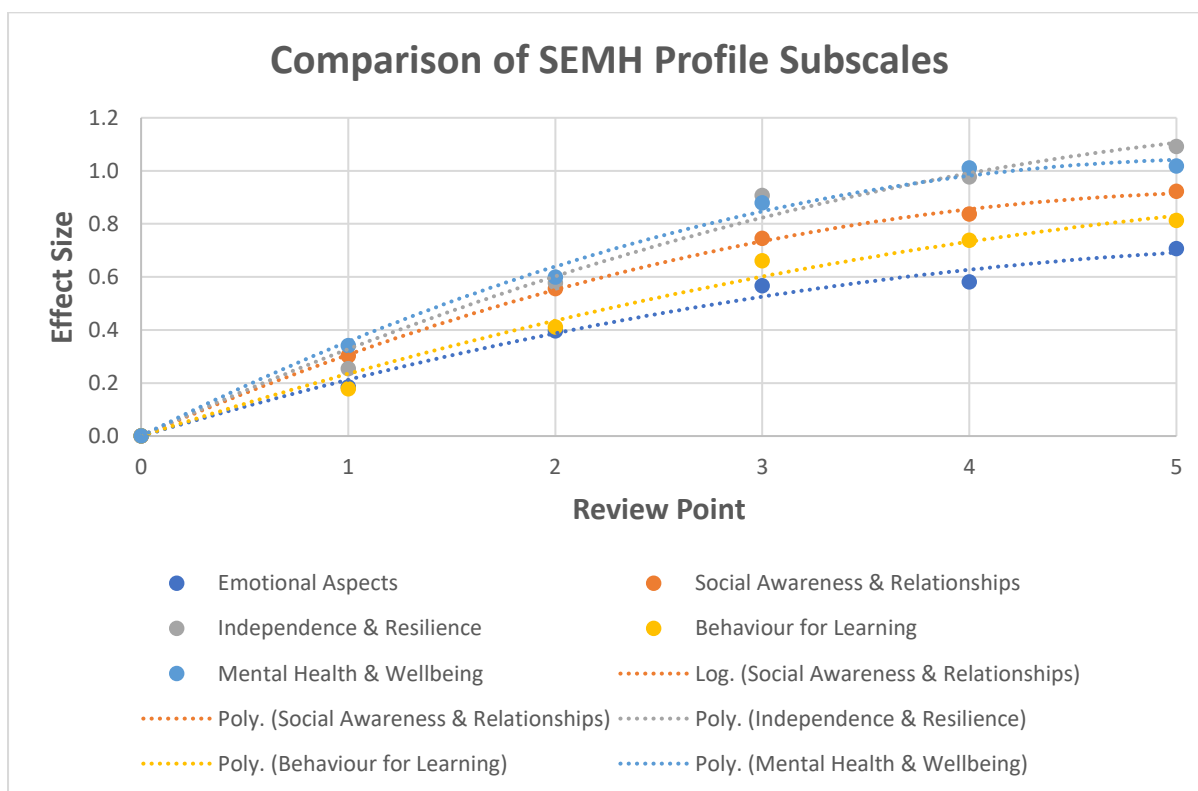
- **Baseline Scores:** All subscales start at zero, providing a clear comparison point for subsequent reviews.

- **Growth Over Time:** Effect sizes increase consistently across reviews:

  - Emotional Aspects: From 0.18 (Review#1) to 0.71 (Review#5).

  - Social Awareness & Relationships: Largest growth, reaching 0.92 by Review#5.

  - Independence & Resilience: Steady progress, peaking at 1.09.

  - Behaviour for Learning: Increases to 0.81, reflecting steady improvement.

- **Conclusion:** The interventions or conditions tracked show positive impact, with notable improvements in all subscales over time.

1. **Reliability Metrics by SEMH Subscale**:

   o A bar chart showing **Person Reliability** and **Item Reliability** for each subscale, emphas~~iz~~ising their high scores.

2. **Explained Variance by SEMH Subscale**:

   - A stacked bar chart displaying the contribution of **Persons Variance** and **Items Variance** to the total explained variance.
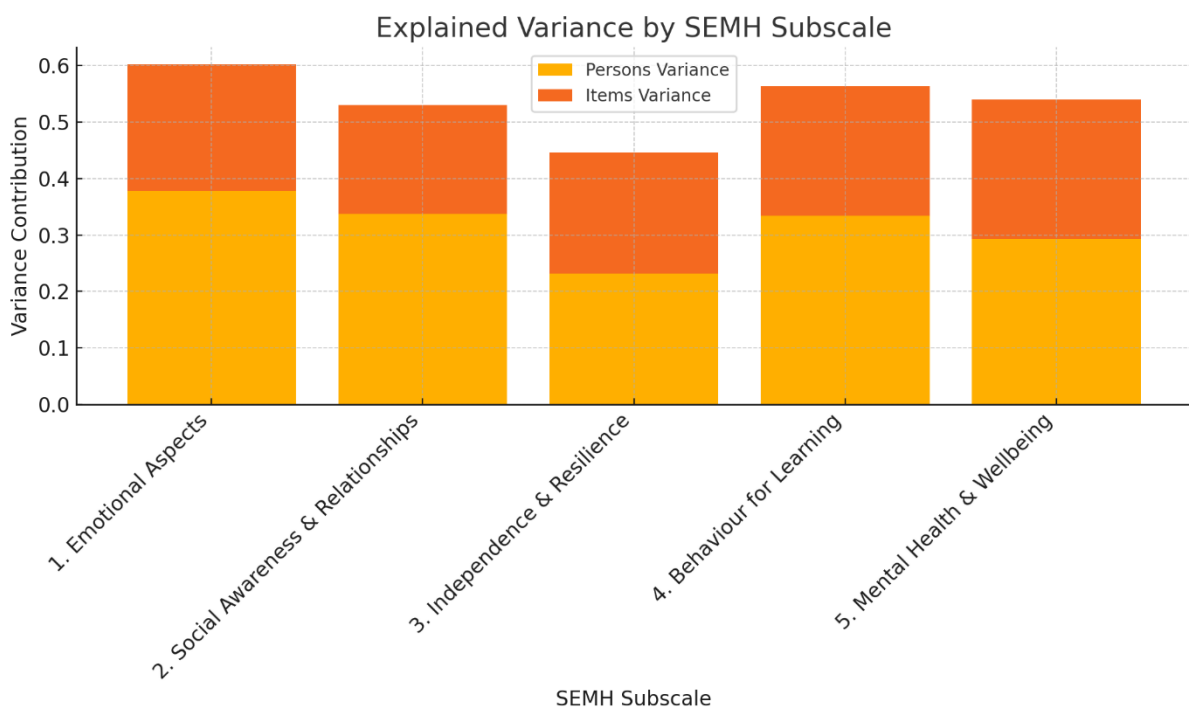
3. Effect Size Trends by SEMH Subscale:

- A line graph tracking the progression of effect sizes over the review stages, showing consistent improvement across all subscales.
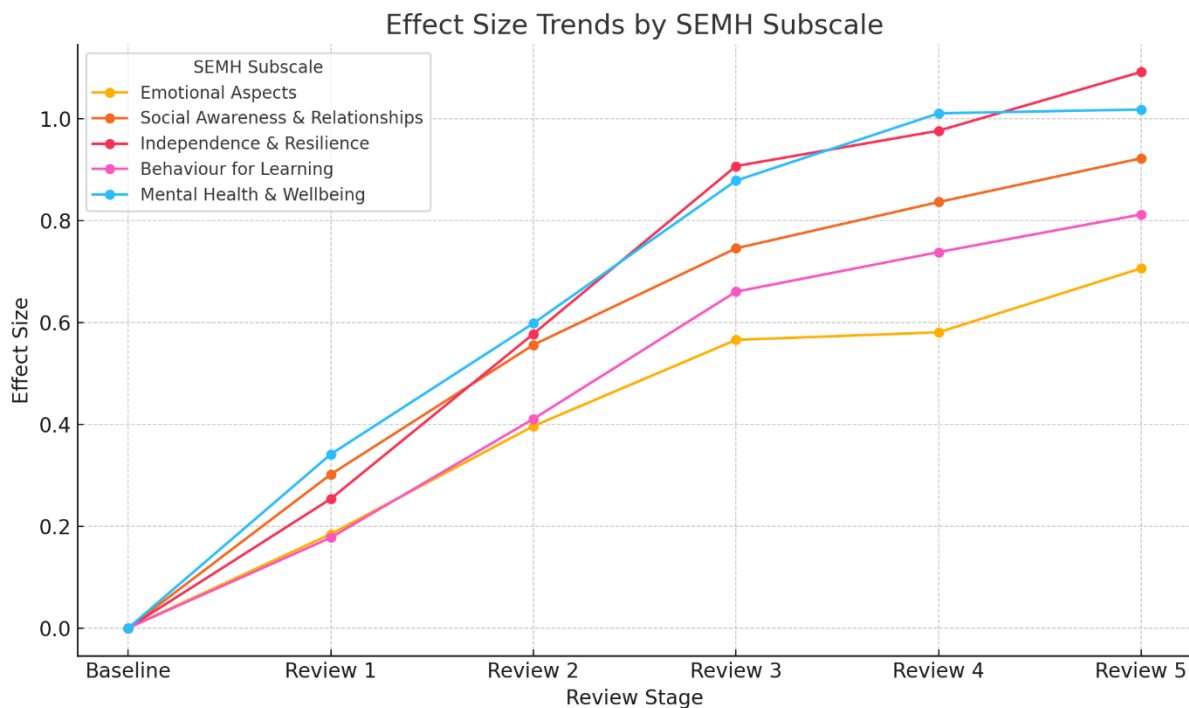
4. Effect Size Progression (Heatmap):

- A heatmap illustrating the progression of effect sizes, highlighting areas of significant improvement over time.

Descriptives:

Observation:

- o Consistent pupil counts across reviews for each school.

- o Indicates stability in data collection and no dropouts over time.

- o Emotional scores increase from Baseline (52) to Review#1 (60), then stabilise.

- o Social and Mental scores show small fluctuations but remain fairly stable.

- o Independence shows a notable increase in Review#3 (51), indicating significant progress.

- o Median scores increase steadily from Baseline (43) to Review#3 (50).
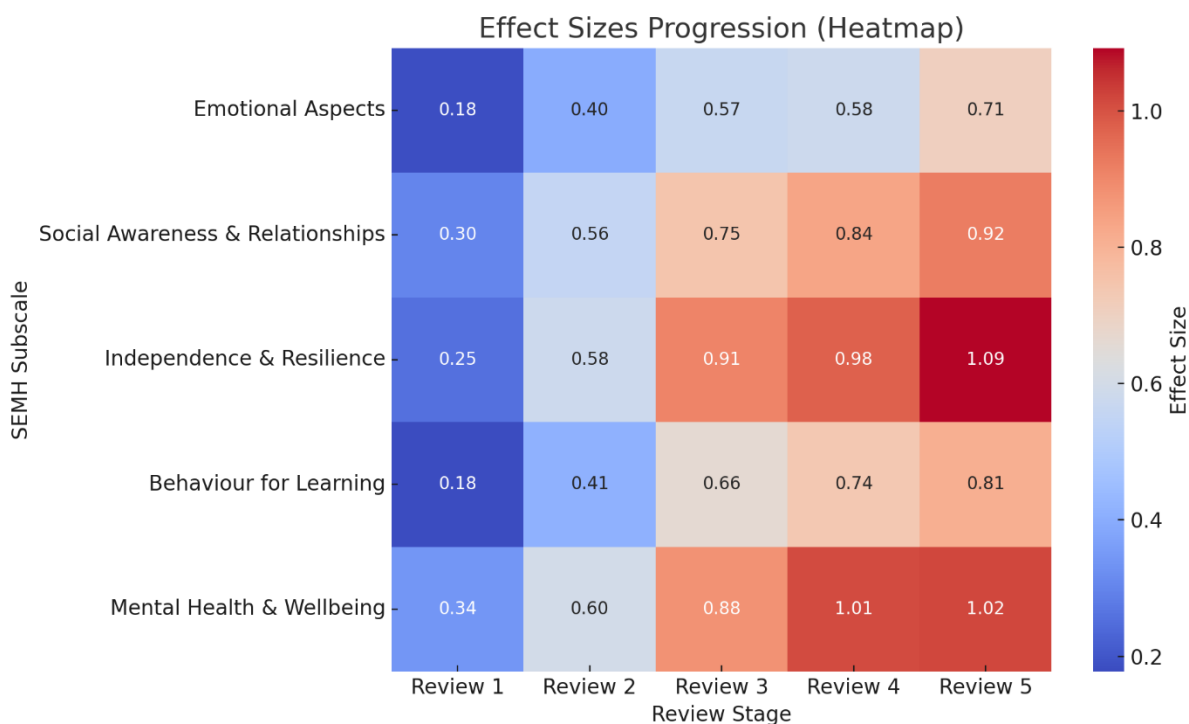
- o Quartile ranges suggest progressive improvement across all pupils.

Individual Subscale Sheets

1. Emotional Aspects

1. Emotional Aspects — box plot of Total Score against Assessment Period (Baseline, Review#1, Review#2, Review#3, Review#4, Review#5)
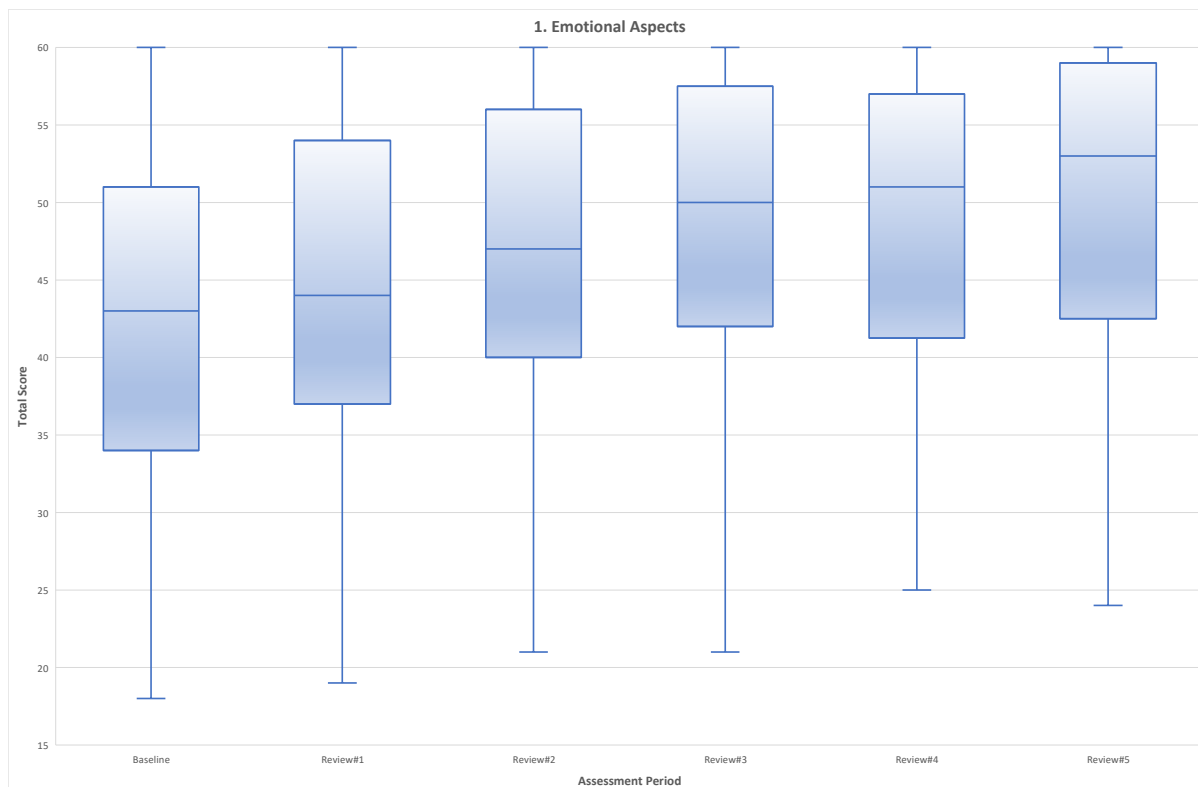
Observation:

- o Total Emotional scores improve significantly from Baseline (52) to Review#1 (60).

- o Progress stabilises in later reviews.

2. Social Awareness and Relationships
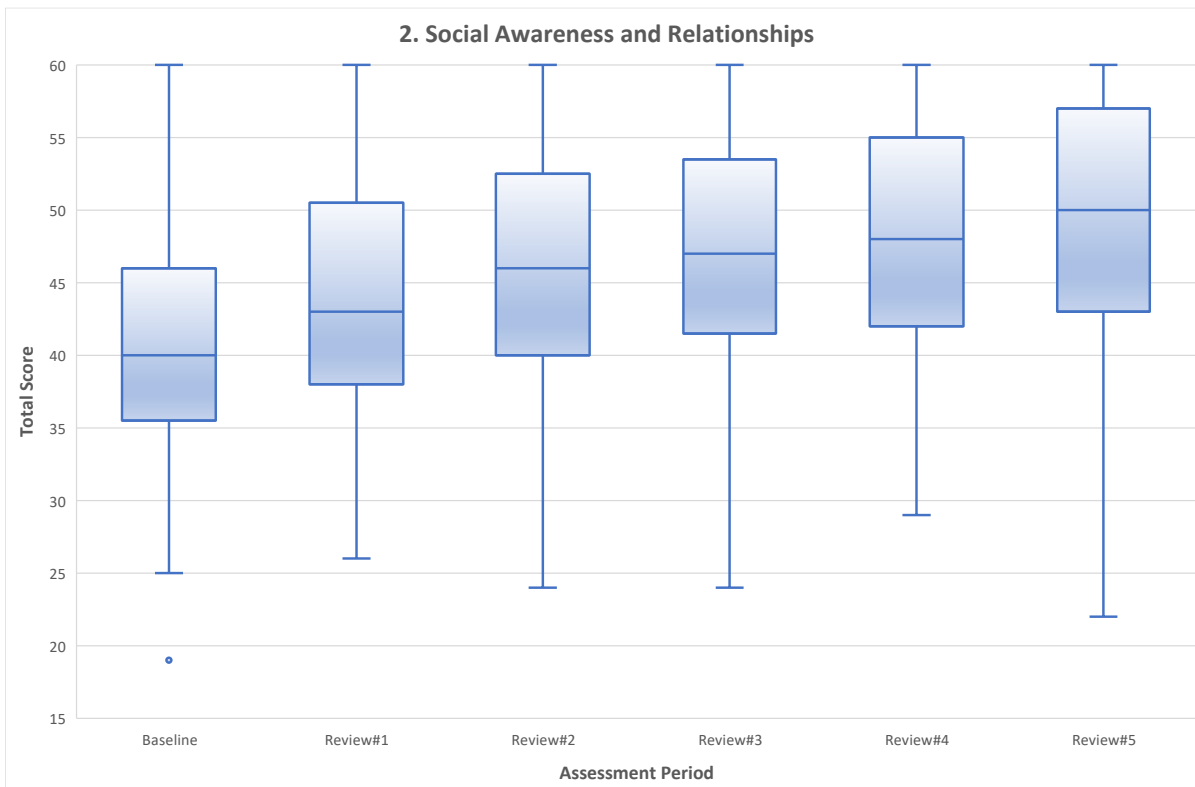
Observation:

- o   Scores increase from Baseline (44) to Review#1 (54), with fluctuations in subsequent reviews.

- o   Suggests initial strong gains, followed by varying individual progress.

3. Independence and Resilience
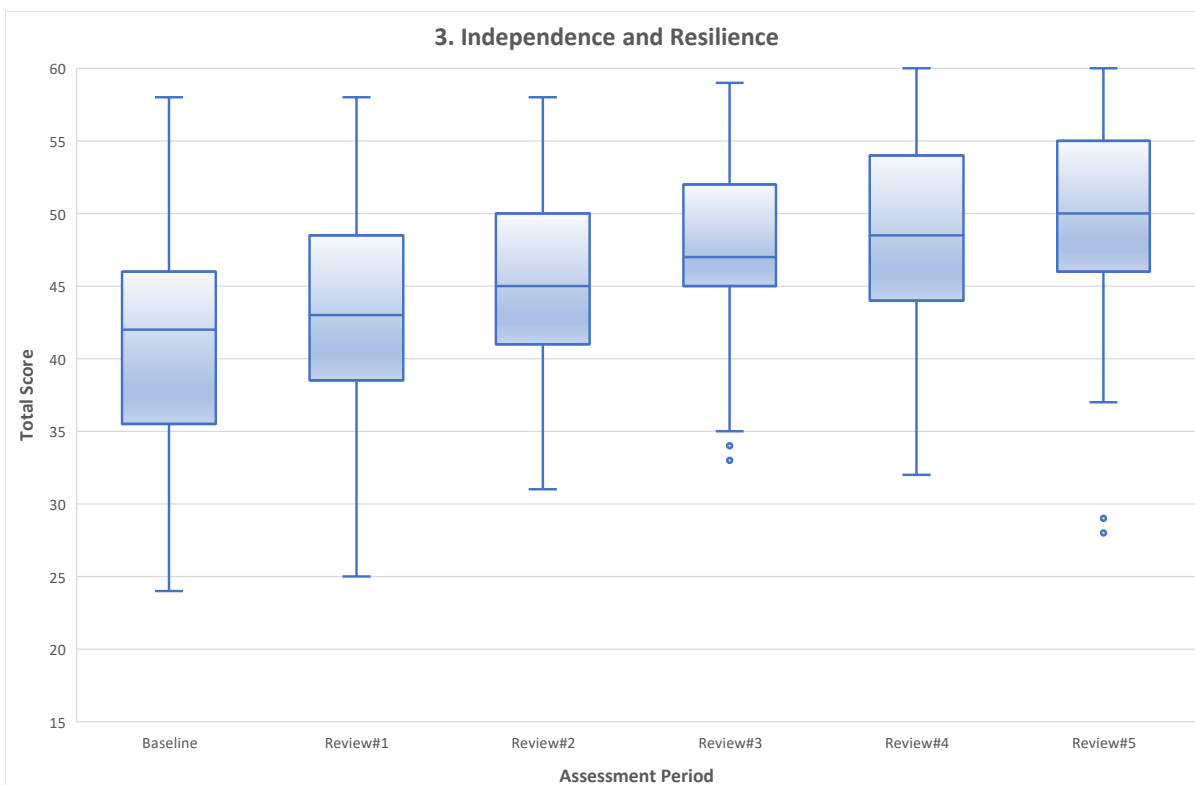
Observation:

- o Independence scores increase sharply at Review#3 (51), showing delayed but substantial improvement.

4. Behaviour and Learning
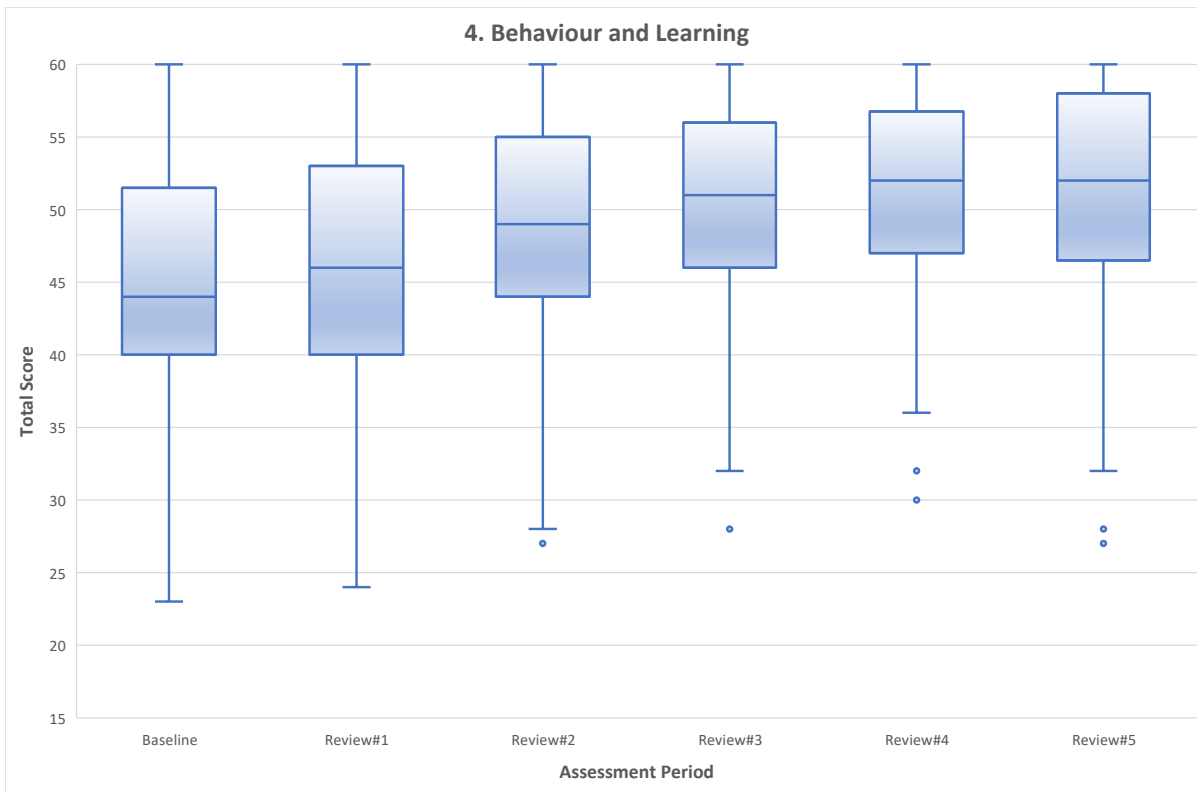
Observation:

- o Total scores remain mostly stable, with slight improvement from Baseline (52) to Review#3 (54).

5. Mental Health and well-being

5. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Observation:

- o Mental scores show moderate improvement from Baseline (50) to Review#1 (53), then stabilise.

Key Cohort Attendance

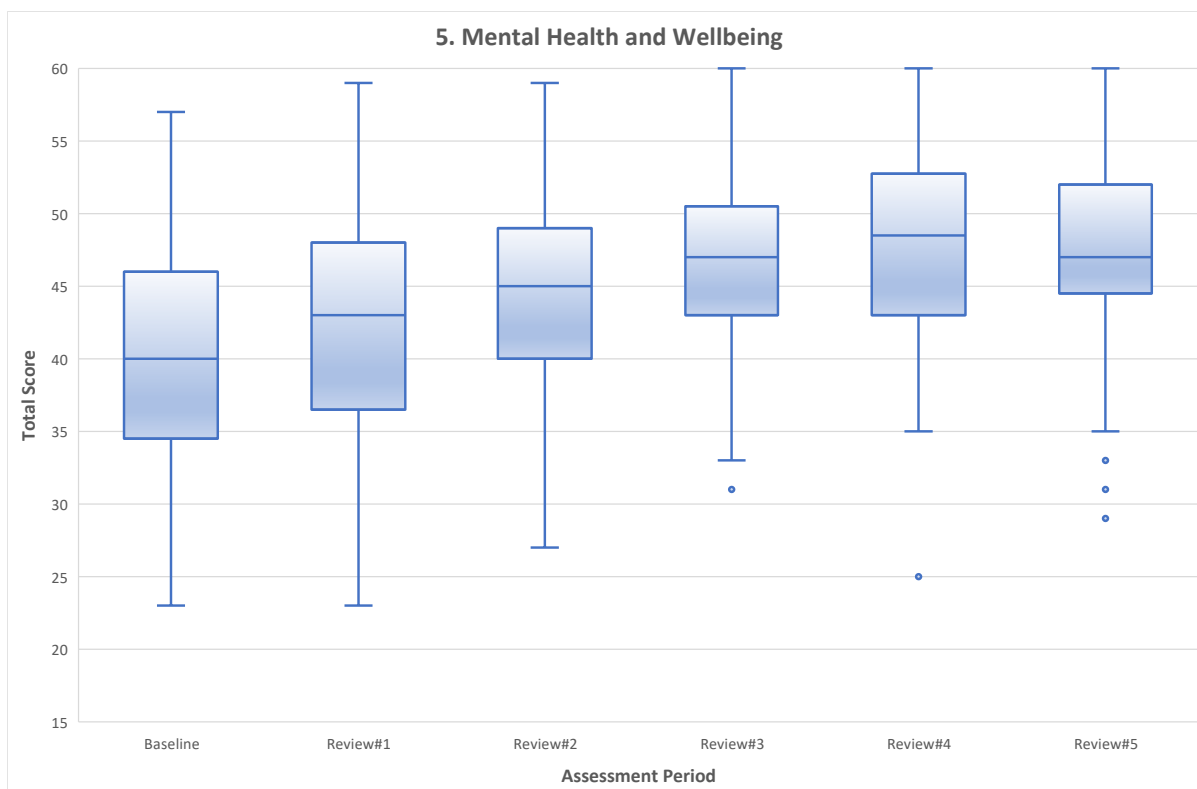| Attendance Rates			
Child Code	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
ALP2	93.80	97.30	100.00
ALP4	87.00	84.00	100.00
ALP5	97.30	93.50	88.30
ALP7	100.00	97.10	100.00
ARP 2	93.40	92.60	96.90
ARP 1	93.90	88.40	84.80
ARP 6	98.70	95.30	98.10
BV1	95.20	95.80	99.40
BV2	97.50	92.90	100.00
BV3	92.90	91.30	90.10
BV4	92.20	90.50	94.40
DAP1	93.30	83.60	94.90
DAP2	91.90	99.20	99.40
DAP3	79.30	68.50	77.80
DAP4	89.20	99.70	97.30
DAP5	94.40	95.20	100.00
DAP6	91.40	84.10	88.00
GAP1	99.40	97.10	93.80
GAP3	93.60	93.70	91.90
GAP4	97.80	95.80	97.50
GAP5	98.10	98.90	99.40
GAP6	93.30	91.30	86.30
GAP7	86.40	93.10	94.40
GAP8	96.10	97.60	93.20
GAP1	97.10	97.70	100.00
GAP2	98.60	99.20	100.00
GAP3	100.00	100.00	100.00
GAP4	94.70	94.60	100.00
GAP5	97.40	94.00	73.00
GAP8	100.00	98.40	100.00
GAP9	94.90	97.90	100.00
GAP10	98.60	93.30	100.00
HCP 1	99.20	94.50	94.90
HCP2	95.10	93.40	92.40
HCP3	100.00	97.00	98.10
HCP4	99.70	97.10	89.20
HCP5	93.00	92.90	80.40
HCP6	95.30	88.70	98.70
IAP1	97.60	99.20	100.00
IAP2	97.90	93.40	97.00
IAP4	91.00	80.10	93.90
IAP6	89.90	84.00	90.90

LP1	74.60	86.80	92.50
LP2	100.00	97.40	100.00
LP3	95.90	96.80	99.40
LP4	100.00	98.90	98.70
LP5	93.40	97.10	95.60
LP6	96.50	94.70	98.80
LP7	96.50	98.40	95.00
LP8	91.20	90.50	96.30
LP9	84.20	91.10	87.40
PIP2	76.00	90.20	85.60
PIP3	92.30	85.80	86.30
PIP4	96.70	97.20	95.60
PSP1	81.40	88.60	86.70
PSP2	90.40	90.90	100.00
PSP3	100.00	99.30	100.00
PSP4	83.40	78.20	93.30
PSP5	90.70	93.50	100.00
PSP7	96.80	96.40	100.00
PSP8	99.20	99.30	99.40
WB1	93.60	95.40	100.00
WB2	95.70	95.70	93.90
WB3	98.70	100.00	100.00
WB4	93.30	94.40	92.00
WB5	98.70	98.70	94.50
WB6	93.60	93.00	95.10
WB7	96.00	98.90	100.00
YT1	88.60	93.00	100.00
YT2	99.20	92.90	92.40
YT3	94.90	93.10	97.50
YT4	96.40	96.00	94.90
YT5	96.50	98.40	94.30
YT6	93.80	89.90	98.10
Average	**94.11**	**93.55**	**95.10**

Key headlines

Attendance Improvements Highlight Positive Pilot Outcomes

- Average attendance increased from **94.11% pre-pilot** to **95.10% post-pilot**

Mid-Pilot Adjustments Required

- A slight dip in average attendance to **93.55%** during the mid-pilot phase

Nearly 1% Mean Attendance Growth

- The pilot achieved an **average improvement of 0.99 percentage points**

Individual Success Stories Stand Out

- 24% of the cohort achieved **100% attendance.** These children collectively attended approximately **173 additional school days** compared to their pre-pilot attendance levels. This is approximately 2 extra school weeks per child.

- This demonstrates a significant impact of the pilot on improving school engagement for these pupils.

Evidence of Pilot Effectiveness in Long-Term Engagement

- Post-pilot outcomes indicate sustainable benefits, demonstrating the potential for scalability and replication in other settings.

Exclusion, Attendance and Suspension Data

Exclusion Data – Pre, During, End of Project

School Name	22-23	23-24	24-25	Group Size
Aldwyn Primary School	0	0	0	589
Buckton Vale Primary School	1	1	0	323
Discovery Academy	0	0	0	299
Gamesley Primary School	2	0	0	316
Greenside Primary School	0	0	0	651
Holden Clough Primary School	0	0	0	486
Inspire Academy	0	0	0	622
Lyndhurst Primary School	0	0	0	316
Poplar Street Primary	0	0	0	655
Wild Bank Primary School	0	0	0	225
Yew Tree Primary School	1	0	0	550
	Sum:	Average:	Average:	Average:
	4	9.1%	0.00%	457

Detailed Analysis of School Exclusion Data

Overview

The provided data includes exclusion statistics for eleven primary schools over three academic years (2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025) along with their respective group sizes. Here's a detailed analysis of the trends and insights from this data.

Exclusion Trends

1. **Total Exclusions**:
   - **2022-2023**: 4 exclusions
   - **2023-2024**: 1 exclusion
   - **2024-2025**: 0 exclusions
2. **Yearly Breakdown**:
   - **2022-2023**: The highest number of exclusions occurred in this year, with a total of 4 exclusions across all schools.
   - **2023-2024**: There was a significant decrease in exclusions, with only 1 exclusion recorded.
   - **2024-2025**: No exclusions were recorded, indicating a positive trend as a partial result of Relational Inclusion.

School-Specific Insights

1. **Aldwyn Primary School**:
   - No exclusions over the three years, suggesting effective behaviour management and a supportive school environment.
2. **Buckton Vale Primary School**:
   - Had 1 exclusion each in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, but none in 2024-2025, indicating improvement as a result of Relational Inclusion.
3. **Discovery Academy**:
   - Consistently had no exclusions, reflecting a stable and positive school climate.

4. **Gamesley Primary School**:
   - o Recorded 2 exclusions in 2022-2023 but none in the following years, showing a significant improvement.
5. **Greenside Primary School**:
   - o No exclusions throughout the three years, indicating strong application of Relational Inclusion.
6. **Holden Clough Primary School**:
   - o No exclusions, similar to Greenside, suggesting effective application of Relational Inclusion.
7. **Inspire Academy**:
   - o No exclusions, reflecting a positive and well-managed environment.
8. **Lyndhurst Primary School**:
   - o No exclusions, indicating consistent and effective application of a Relationally Inclusive approach.
9. **Poplar Street Primary**:
   - o No exclusions, showing a stable and supportive school environment.
10. **Wild Bank Primary School**:
    - o No exclusions, reflecting effective application of Relational Inclusion.
11. **Yew Tree Primary School**:
    - o Had 1 exclusion in 2022-2023 but none in the following years, indicating improvement.

Group Size Analysis

- The average group size across all schools is 457 pupils.
- The largest group size is at Poplar Street Primary (655 pupils), while the smallest is at Wild Bank Primary (225 pupils).
- Despite varying group sizes, most schools have managed to maintain low or zero exclusions, suggesting that group size may not be a significant factor in exclusion rates whereas a Relationally Inclusive approach may be part of the explanation behind consistency.

Conclusion

The overall trend shows a positive movement towards reducing exclusions across these primary schools. The significant drop in exclusions from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 highlights the effectiveness of implementing Relational Inclusion as an approach. Schools like Aldwyn Primary, Discovery Academy, and Greenside Primary have consistently maintained zero exclusions, setting a benchmark for others. It must be noted that Relational Inclusion was not the only approach used to address exclusion but was used as a key driver.

Attendance Data – Pre, During, End of Project

School Name	22-23	23-24	24-25	Group Size
Aldwyn Primary School	93.2%	93.9%	94.4%	589
Buckton Vale Primary School	96.0%	95.9%	95.5%	323
Discovery Academy	95.0%	93.9%	95.1%	299
Gamesley Primary School	93.3%	93.0%	92.4%	316
Greenside Primary School	94.1%	93.6%	93.3%	651
Holden Clough Primary School	93.6%	94.9%	95.9%	486
Inspire Academy	94.6%	94.4%	95.3%	622
Lyndhurst Primary School	92.0%	93.6%	93.5%	316
Poplar Street Primary	94.2%	93.5%	94.0%	655
Wild Bank Primary School	93.0%	94.0%	91.7%	225
Yew Tree Primary School	94.5%	94.5%	94.8%	550
	Average: 94.2%	Average: 94.1%	Average: 94.3%	Average: 457

Detailed Analysis of School Attendance Data

Overview

The provided data includes attendance percentages for eleven primary schools over three academic years (2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025) along with their respective group sizes. Here's a detailed analysis of the trends and insights from this data.

Attendance Trends

1. **Overall Attendance**:
   - **2022-2023**: Average attendance was 94.2%
   - **2023-2024**: Average attendance slightly decreased to 94.1%
   - **2024-2025**: Average attendance increased to 94.3%
2. **Yearly Breakdown**:
   - **2022-2023**: The highest average attendance was recorded at Buckton Vale Primary School (96.0%), while the lowest was at Lyndhurst Primary School (92.0%).
   - **2023-2024**: Buckton Vale Primary School maintained high attendance (95.9%), while Gamesley Primary School had the lowest (93.0%).
   - **2024-2025**: Holden Clough Primary School had the highest attendance (95.9%), while Wild Bank Primary School had the lowest (91.7%).

School-Specific Insights

1. **Aldwyn Primary School**:
   - Attendance improved steadily from 93.2% in 2022-2023 to 94.4% in 2024-2025, indicating effective attendance policies.
2. **Buckton Vale Primary School**:
   - Consistently high attendance rates, though there was a slight decrease from 96.0% to 95.5% over the three years.
3. **Discovery Academy**:
   - Attendance fluctuated slightly but remained relatively high, with a notable dip in 2023-2024 (93.9%) and recovery in 2024-2025 (95.1%).

4. **Gamesley Primary School**:
   - o Attendance decreased from 93.3% to 92.4%, suggesting potential issues that may need addressing.
5. **Greenside Primary School**:
   - o A slight decline in attendance from 94.1% to 93.3%, indicating a need for further specific strategies to improve attendance.
6. **Holden Clough Primary School**:
   - o Significant improvement in attendance, from 93.6% to 95.9%, reflecting successful interventions.
7. **Inspire Academy**:
   - o Consistently high attendance, with a slight increase from 94.6% to 95.3%.
8. **Lyndhurst Primary School**:
   - o Attendance improved from 92.0% to 93.5%, showing positive trends.
9. **Poplar Street Primary**:
   - o Slight fluctuations in attendance, with a small decrease in 2023-2024 but overall stable.
10. **Wild Bank Primary School**:
    - o Attendance decreased from 93.0% to 91.7%, indicating potential areas for improvement.
11. **Yew Tree Primary School**:
    - o Consistently high attendance, with a slight increase from 94.5% to 94.8%.

Group Size Analysis

- The average group size across all schools is 457 pupils.
- The largest group size is at Poplar Street Primary (655 pupils), while the smallest is at Wild Bank Primary (225 pupils).
- Despite varying group sizes, most schools have maintained relatively high attendance rates, suggesting that group size may not significantly impact attendance.

Conclusion

The overall attendance rates across these primary schools are relatively high, with an average above 94% for all three years. The slight fluctuations in attendance rates indicate areas where schools can focus on improving attendance policies and interventions. Schools like Buckton Vale Primary and Holden Clough Primary have shown consistently high or improving attendance rates, setting a positive example. It is hard to separate exactly which strategies impacted on attendance, but Relational Inclusion was an approach applied with some consistency and is clearly a contributing factor.

Suspension Data – Pre, During, end of Project

School Name	22-23	23-24	24-25	Group Size
Aldwyn Primary School	0	0	0	589
Buckton Vale Primary School	8	7	2	323
Discovery Academy	9	15	5	299
Gamesley Primary School	3	5	0	316
Greenside Primary School	0	2	1	651
Holden Clough Primary School	0	0	0	486
Inspire Academy	5	12	4	622
Lyndhurst Primary School	2	4	1	316
Poplar Street Primary	5	0	0	655
Wild Bank Primary School	0	10	8	225
Yew Tree Primary School	19	0	0	550
	Sum:	Average:	Average:	Average:
	51	500%	191%	457

Detailed Analysis of School Suspension Data

Overview

The provided data includes suspension statistics for eleven primary schools over three academic years (2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025) along with their respective group sizes. Here's a detailed analysis of the trends and insights from this data.

Suspension Trends

1. **Total Suspensions**:
   o **2022-2023**: 51 suspensions
   o **2023-2024**: 55 suspensions
   o **2024-2025**: 21 suspensions
2. **Yearly Breakdown**:
   o **2022-2023**: The highest number of suspensions occurred in this year, with a total of 51 suspensions across all schools.
   o **2023-2024**: There was a slight increase in suspensions, with a total of 55 suspensions.
   o **2024-2025**: A significant decrease in suspensions, with only 21 suspensions recorded.

School-Specific Insights

1. **Aldwyn Primary School**:
   o No suspensions over the three years, indicating a consistent and imbedded approach to Relational Inclusion.
2. **Buckton Vale Primary School**:
   o Suspensions decreased from 8 in 2022-2023 to 2 in 2024-2025, showing improvement due to applying Relational Inclusion.
3. **Discovery Academy**:
   o Had the highest number of suspensions, with a peak of 15 in 2023-2024, but a significant decrease to 5 in 2024-2025.

4. **Gamesley Primary School**:
   o Suspensions decreased from 3 in 2022-2023 to 0 in 2024-2025, indicating positive changes as a result of Relational Inclusion.
5. **Greenside Primary School**:
   o A slight increase in suspensions in 2023-2024, but overall low numbers, suggesting an effective and consistent approach to Relational Inclusion.
6. **Holden Clough Primary School**:
   o No suspensions, similar to Aldwyn Primary, indicating a consistent and imbedded approach to Relational Inclusion.
7. **Inspire Academy**:
   o Suspensions increased to 12 in 2023-2024 but decreased to 4 in 2024-2025, showing improvement.
8. **Lyndhurst Primary School**:
   o Suspensions increased from 2 in 2022-2023 to 4 in 2023-2024, but decreased to 1 in 2024-2025, indicating positive trends.
9. **Poplar Street Primary**:
   o Suspensions dropped to 0 in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, showing significant improvement.
10. **Wild Bank Primary School**:
    o Suspensions increased to 10 in 2023-2024 but decreased to 8 in 2024-2025, indicating some improvement.
11. **Yew Tree Primary School**:
    o Had a high number of suspensions (19) in 2022-2023 but none in the following years, showing a dramatic improvement.

Group Size Analysis

- The average group size across all schools is 457 pupils.
- The largest group size is at Poplar Street Primary (655 pupils), while the smallest is at Wild Bank Primary (225 pupils).
- Despite varying group sizes, most schools have managed to reduce suspensions, suggesting that group size may not be a significant factor in suspension rates.

Conclusion

The overall trend shows a positive movement towards reducing suspensions across these primary schools. The significant drop in suspensions from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 highlights the effectiveness of implementing Relational Inclusion and other key policies and strategies. Schools like Aldwyn Primary, Holden Clough Primary, and Poplar Street Primary have consistently maintained low or zero suspensions, setting a benchmark for others.

Recommendations for Schools Introducing Relational Inclusion

Implementing Relational Inclusion requires more than good intentions—it demands strategic planning, commitment, and cultural shift. Here are **four key considerations** for schools embarking on this journey:

1. Leadership Buy-In

Relational Inclusion will only succeed if there is total commitment from the top. Without unwavering leadership support, it risks becoming just another passing initiative.

In our pilot, the very first conversation was between me and the CEO of Victorious Academies—someone who believed in the project, was invested in its success, and remains actively engaged. The same level of commitment is essential from headteachers and senior leadership teams. If those leading the school aren't fully invested, it becomes impossible to embed meaningful, lasting change.

2. A Carefully Planned, Step-by-Step Approach

Relational Inclusion presents a powerful, compelling ideology. This can create a temptation to implement everything at once. But real, lasting change isn't built overnight.

For Relational Inclusion to be effective and sustainable, it must be introduced gradually and strategically. Schools should adopt a phased approach, embedding principles over time rather than overwhelming staff with immediate, large-scale change.

3. Prioritizing Staff Wellbeing

As we deepen our understanding of ACEs, trauma, attachment, and neuroscience, we must recognize that our staff—just like our students—carry their own histories and experiences. They are at different stages of their own journeys, and as leaders, we must be sensitive to this reality.

At the same time, there must be absolute clarity that this is the direction the school is taking. Professional development is crucial, as is the establishment of Relational Inclusion Champions (RICs)—dedicated staff members who lead training, research, and support the wider team in embedding these practices.

**4. Continuous Monitoring and Clear Communication**

At every stage, we need to ask:

- What are we trying to achieve?

- How will we know if we've achieved it?

- What's working, and what needs to improve?

Clear, open, and honest communication is essential. The principles of Relational Inclusion must apply to everyone—staff, students, and leadership alike. Transparency fosters trust, and trust fuels meaningful change.

By embedding these four principles, schools can move beyond surface-level change and create an authentic, lasting culture of Relational Inclusion.

Educating Everyone
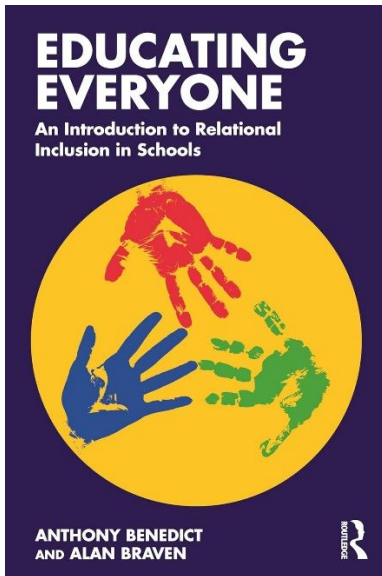
The last four year's work on Relational Inclusion, including the last 18 months of this pilot, has helped the writing of Educating Everyone – An Introduction to Relational Inclusion in schools. The book provides many more details about theory, practice and experience:

Drawing on the latest neuroscientific research and rooted in good practice, Educating Everyone presents the concept of relational inclusion, encouraging schools to reconsider their traditional perspectives on mental health and behaviour.

The authors pose thought-provoking questions about longstanding conventional approaches to behaviour management in schools that have remained largely unchanged since the inception of compulsory state education. They present a range of strategies that extend beyond the needs of individuals with complex requirements who are often isolated as a result of the misguided concept they can be 'taught' to conform. Relational inclusion is advocated as an inclusive approach that can benefit all children and adults, fostering comprehension of the underlying causes behind behavioural challenges. This book will provide an essential framework for responding to pupil's behaviour that has been tried and tested in real classrooms.

Schools play a pivotal role in teaching these essential skills and attitudes, and this accessible resource provides educators with valuable insights and practical strategies for creating a nurturing and supportive environment within school settings. It will appeal to educationalists across the educational sector, including headteachers, policy leaders as well as behaviour leads, classroom teachers, support staff and anyone who works with children and young people.

Recommended Reading:

Know Me to Teach Me **-** Lousie Bomber

The Experience Machine - Andy Clark

Grounded - Claire Wilson.

Attachment Theory and the Pupil Teacher Relationship - Philip Riley

The Deepest Well - Dr Nadine Burke Harris

Trauma Through a Child's Eyes - Peter A Levine and Maggie Kline

Hacking School Discipline - Nathan Maynard

Connections Over Compliance - Lori Desautels

Punished by Rewards - Alfie Kohn

No Bad Parts - Richard Swartz

The Kindness Principle - Dave Whitaker

The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog - Dr Bruce Perry

Born for Love - Dr Bruce Perry

The Body Keeps the Score - Bessel van de Kolk

Seven and a Half Lessons About the Brain - Lisa Feldman Barrett -

What Happened to You- Dr Bruce Perry and Oprah Winfrey

Trauma and Recovery - Judith Lewis Herman

Poor - Katriona O'Sulivan

Non-violent Communication – Marshall B Rosenberg

This is Why You Dream - Rahul Jandial

Leading Schools and Sustaining Innovation - Luke Roberts

You Don't Have to be Mad to Work Here - Dr Benji Waterhouse

Thinking Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman

On the Brink - Penelope Campling

The Simple Guides - Betsy de Thierry

The Damage Done – Peter Wolf

Gentle Discipline – Sarah Ockwell-Smith

Educating Everyone – Anthony Benedict and Alan Braven

Executive Summary

Introduction

This executive summary outlines the findings from an evaluative study conducted by Pinnacle Learning Research School, exploring the impact of relational inclusion principles on improving learning behaviours, strengthening staff relationships, and enhancing teacher planning and practice.

In Summer 2024, we conducted focus groups across five sample schools and with the Relational Inclusion Coaches to examine the influence of this programme.

The focus groups specifically explored:

1. The impact of relational inclusion training on pupils' learning behaviours.

2. Evidence of relational inclusion principles influencing teacher planning and classroom practices.

3. The influence of relational inclusion on staff relationships and collaboration.

4. Lessons learned to inform the future development and sustainability of the programme.

This report provides a concise summary of the findings, highlighting key successes, challenges, and implications for further development.

Key Findings and Insights

1. Programme Relevance

The Relational Inclusion programme demonstrated clear alignment with the needs of the participating schools, particularly in supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEND) and those impacted by trauma. Across all schools, the programme was praised for:

- Addressing emotional and social well-being to foster a sense of belonging.
- Prioritising relationships to meet both academic and non-academic needs.
- Building trust and rapport within school communities to create inclusive environments.

2. Evidence of Impact on Pupils' Learning Behaviours
The adoption of relational inclusion principles led to noticeable improvements in pupils' learning behaviours:

- Pupils displayed increased emotional regulation and resilience, utilising strategies such as the 'Zones of Regulation' to self-regulate.
- Improved engagement in lessons was observed, with pupils demonstrating greater confidence and willingness to participate.

- Children were increasingly able to express their feelings verbally rather than through dysregulated behaviours, fostering a calmer and more productive classroom atmosphere.

3. Integration into Staff Practices
Focus groups revealed that training had influenced staff planning and practices across schools.

Examples included:

- The consistent use of relational inclusion language (e.g., 'regulated' and 'co-regulation'), which was adopted by both staff and pupils.
- Implementation of tailored interventions, such as one-to-one support and calming activities after playtimes to promote readiness for learning.
- Staff modelling relational strategies in everyday interactions with pupils, enhancing emotional support and trust.

4. Impact on Staff Relationships and School Culture
The programme contributed significantly to strengthening staff relationships:

- Staff reported better collaboration and communication, fostering a unified approach to supporting pupils.
- A focus on self-awareness and emotional regulation among staff was highlighted, with many reflecting on their own behaviours to model relational inclusion effectively.
- Senior leaders' active involvement in training and practice reinforced a culture of empathy and mutual support.

5. Key Challenges and Areas for Adaptation
While the programme showed substantial promise, certain challenges and areas for improvement were identified:

- **Consistency in Implementation:** Variability in the understanding and application of relational inclusion principles across staff was noted. Additional training and coaching are needed to ensure consistency.
- **Scalability and Sustainability:** Concerns were raised about the resources required to sustain the programme, particularly the need for ongoing professional development and dedicated time for relational activities.
- **Engagement of All Stakeholders:** Further work is needed to engage families and midday supervisors, ensuring that relational inclusion practices extend beyond the classroom.
- **Information Sharing:** Staff highlighted the need for better mechanisms to share strategies and successes, especially for supporting individual pupils effectively.

Learnings and Recommendations
Based on the findings, several recommendations have been proposed:

1. Enhance Training and Support

- Deliver regular follow-up sessions and coaching to address gaps in understanding and consistency.

- Provide tailored training for specific groups, such as midday supervisors and families, to embed relational inclusion practices throughout the school community.

2. Strengthen Resource Allocation

- Develop a comprehensive library of resources, including case studies, practical tools, and success stories, to support ongoing implementation.
- Allocate time for staff to reflect, plan, and adapt relational strategies as part of their professional routines.

3. Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

- Introduce robust systems to track the impact of the programme on pupil outcomes, behaviour, and school culture.
- Collect and share anonymised case studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of relational inclusion approaches and build staff buy-in.

4. Foster Collaboration and Communication

- Create platforms for staff to share best practices and strategies, promoting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Strengthen communication channels to ensure that all staff are aware of effective interventions and approaches for specific pupils.

Individual Focus Group Reports

Project Phase: Y1 2023 – 2024

Summary of RIC focus group interviews June 2024

Introduction

The Relational Inclusion Coaches (RICs) have provided valuable insights through a focus group discussion on the implementation of relational inclusion strategies within Victorious Academies. This report aims to evaluate the programme's delivery, identify key learnings, and suggest potential adaptations for improvement.

Key Points:

The Relational Inclusion programme at Victorious Academies is highly relevant to the needs of their pupils due to its emphasis on fostering positive relationships and inclusive practices within the school community. The focus group participants included Relational Inclusion Champions from various schools who shared their experiences and observations. The focus group interview was framed around three key questions:

1. Is the programme being delivered as intended?
2. What are we learning?
3. What might need to change/be adapted?

Due to staffing constraints and interview timings the academies were only represented by three schools.

Key question1: Is the programme being delivered as intended?

1. **Engagement and training:**
   ○ Coaches and champions reported receiving comprehensive training from the project leads, which equipped them with the necessary skills to implement relational inclusion strategies effectively.
   ○ Continuous engagement through workshops and meetings has been maintained to ensure the strategies are consistently applied across all schools, although RICs recognised that within school consistency of practice was something that they wanted to develop.

2. **Implementation:**
   ○ The strategies are being actively implemented within classrooms, focusing on fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.
   ○ Specific techniques, such as restorative practices and relationship-building activities, have been integrated into daily routines.

3. **Support and resources:**

   ○ Schools have access to a variety of resources, including training materials, support from coaches, and collaborative platforms for sharing best practices.

- There is ongoing support from the RICs, ensuring that any challenges faced by the schools are promptly addressed.

Key question 2: What are we learning?

The focus group discussions have surfaced several key learnings from the implementation process:

1. **Positive impact on school culture:**
   - There is a noticeable positive shift in the school culture, with students exhibiting better social skills, empathy, and conflict resolution abilities. There has been a noticeable shift in the language used by both staff and students such as regulation, co-regulation, zones of regulation and windows of tolerance.
   - Teachers have reported a reduction in behavioural issues, attributing this to the proactive relational strategies employed rather than reactive responses to dysregulated behaviours.
2. **Student engagement:**
   - Students are more engaged and participative in class activities, feeling valued and understood. They are more able to express their emotions and use strategies modelled to them to reintegrate into lessons more quickly.
   - The relational inclusion approach has helped in identifying and supporting students who might otherwise be marginalised.
3. **Challenges faced:**
   - Despite the positive outcomes, some challenges remain. These include resistance from some staff members who are accustomed to more traditional disciplinary approaches.
   - Time constraints and the need for ongoing professional development have been identified as areas requiring attention.

Key question 3: What might need to change/be adapted?

Based on the feedback from the focus group, several recommendations have been proposed to enhance the programme's effectiveness:

1. **Enhanced training and support:**
   - Additional training sessions focusing on overcoming resistance and changing mindsets are needed.
   - Regular follow-up sessions, coaching and peer support groups could help reinforce the strategies and address any ongoing challenges.
2. **Resource allocation:**

   - Schools may benefit from more resources, such as dedicated time for relational inclusion activities and access to specialised personnel.

   - Developing a comprehensive resource library that includes case studies, success stories, and practical tools can provide ongoing support.

3. **Monitoring and evaluation:**

- Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track progress and impact is crucial. Developing anonymised case studies and success stories would contribute to evaluation and also provide the 'why' to staff who may require further support.
- Regular feedback mechanisms could be established to continuously adapt and improve the strategies based on in year data and experiences.

Conclusion

The implementation of relational inclusion strategies in Victorious Academies is showing promising results, with positive impacts on both students and school culture. While there are challenges to address, the ongoing commitment to training, support, and adaptation will ensure the continued success and sustainability of the programme.

Introduction

This report outlines the focus group discussion relating to the relational inclusion approach being implemented at Arundale Primary, detailing the effectiveness of the implementation strategies, the role of senior leadership, the impact on classroom practices, observed and reported learning behaviours, data usage, and recommendations for improving practice across the school.

Key Points:

The Relational Inclusion programme at Arundale Primary School is highly relevant to the needs of their pupils due to its emphasis on fostering positive relationships and inclusive practices within the school community. This relevance is evident comments made by staff in several key areas:

- **Holistic support and well-being:** The Relational Inclusion programme at Arundale Primary School places a strong emphasis on emotional support and well-being, ensuring that every child feels valued and understood. This approach is particularly beneficial for pupils with SEND, who often require additional emotional support. The programme has highlighted the importance of emotional support in student development and academic success.
- **Behavioural understanding:** The staff aims to focus on understanding and addressing pupils' behaviours, especially those of children with trauma or SEND. By closely observing and responding to individual behaviours, staff can implement tailored strategies that support each child's unique needs.
- **Inclusive environment:** Staff emphasise the importance of being inclusive to all children, particularly those with trauma. The involvement of senior leadership in supporting the Relational Inclusion Champion has been crucial in delivering effective staff training and fostering an inclusive culture across the school. Each staff member understands their role in fostering an inclusive environment, and the implementation is school-wide.

Evidence in planning and practices

The planning and practices at Arundale Primary School demonstrate a strong commitment to relational inclusion through:

1. **Collaborative efforts**: Various roles, including teachers, teaching assistants, and administrative staff, are involved in the programme, indicating a school-wide commitment to relational inclusion. All staff members are encouraged to share their experiences and insights.

2. **Professional development**: Training is comprehensive and involves all levels of staff, ensuring that everyone is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to apply relational inclusion strategies. Training translates into practice through consistent application of relational strategies in the classroom and other school settings. Teachers and staff members use the techniques learned in training to manage behaviour, support emotional needs, and create an inclusive atmosphere.

3. **Customised support**: The school employs tailored interventions for pupils, reflecting a deep understanding of each child's unique circumstances. This individualised approach is a core element of relational inclusion, ensuring that support is personalised and effective. In addition to this, the school recognised 'hotspots' for dysregulated behaviour and implemented regulation time, calming activities, after play to ensure readiness for learning.

Learning behaviours observed

The Relational Inclusion programme at Arundale Primary School has led to noticeable improvements in learning behaviours among pupils. These behaviours are indicative of increased engagement, better emotional regulation, and a more positive attitude towards learning. Children are more engaged in their learning and are actively participating in classroom activities. This increased engagement is a direct result of the supportive and inclusive environment fostered by the programme "Children are expressing their feelings more openly and are better at regulating their emotions. They feel safe to share their thoughts and concerns." The programme has encouraged positive interactions among pupils, promoting a sense of community and mutual respect. Children are more empathetic and supportive of one another, developing greater resilience and are better equipped to handle challenges. The focus on relational inclusion has helped children build problem-solving skills and persist through difficulties.

Impact on staff relationships

The programme's success is attributed to the extensive training provided to all staff members, including teachers, teaching assistants, and administrative staff. This ensures a unified approach to relational inclusion with all staff understanding their role. The relational inclusion approach has also positively impacted staff relationships, fostering an empathetic and supportive work environment. This is seen by the focus group as an enhancement in staff dynamics contributing to the overall school culture and effectiveness of the programme.

The RI approach has fostered a more collaborative and supportive environment among staff. Specific improvements include better communication and teamwork, as staff members work together to apply relational strategies and support each other in their roles.

Learnings and adaptations

From the programme's implementation, some learnings and potential areas for adaptation have emerged:

1. **Impact on school culture**: The programme has positively influenced the school culture by promoting empathy, understanding, and mutual respect among pupils and staff. The Relational Inclusion practices have led to noticeable improvements in student behaviour and emotional well-being.
2. **Consistency:** Challenges include varying levels of staff readiness and differing classroom dynamics. To mitigate these challenges, the school has provided ongoing training and created opportunities for staff to share best practices and support each other.
3. **Scalability and sustainability**: Ensuring that the programme can be sustained and scaled is crucial. This includes maintaining ongoing training for staff and securing resources to support the various initiatives under the relational inclusion framework. Some staff members report challenges in

applying the strategies consistently by everyone in school, suggesting a need for additional support and training.

Introduction

This report outlines the focus group discussion relating to the relational inclusion approach being implemented at Buckton Vale Primary, detailing the effectiveness of the implementation strategies, the role of senior leadership, the impact on classroom practices, observed and reported learning behaviours, data usage, and recommendations for improving practice across the school.

Key Points:

The Relational Inclusion programme at Buckton Vale Primary School is highly relevant to the diverse needs of their pupils through a focus on building strong relationships and fostering an inclusive environment. This relevance is evident comments made by staff in several key areas:

- **Individual Support:** Teachers and staff are beginning to use relational inclusion methods to provide individual support to students, to ensure that each child feels valued and understood. This helps in addressing specific needs and challenges faced by pupils, whether they are academic or personal. Staff are beginning to consider the language being used in supporting children to self-regulate and co-regulate and resources such as the lanyards have been helpful in providing staff with prompts.
- **Community Building:** There is a noticeable improvement in the overall school climate, with a more positive and supportive atmosphere. Instances of bullying and disruptive behaviour have decreased as students learn to communicate more effectively and resolve conflicts amicably.
- **Emotional Well-being:** By prioritising relationships, the school supports the emotional well-being of pupils. Staff are trained to recognize and respond to emotional needs, creating a safe space for students to express themselves and seek help when needed.
- **Support from senior leadership:** Senior leaders at Buckton Vale Primary School strongly support the RI programme. They have made it a priority by allocating resources for staff training, regularly reviewing the programme's progress, and fostering an environment that values relational practices. Their commitment is evident in the way they are modelling relational behaviours and encourage open communication throughout the school. Staff recognise that they are at the beginning of a journey with RI and there is not yet a consistency.

Evidence in planning and practices

The planning and practices at Buckton Vale Primary School demonstrate a strong commitment to relational inclusion through:

1. **Professional development**: Staff at all levels receive ongoing training in relational inclusion strategies. This training involves workshops, professional development sessions, and peer mentoring. The goal is to ensure that all staff members, from teachers to support staff, understand and apply RI principles consistently. This training will help staff to develop skills in building positive relationships and addressing conflicts constructively.

2. **Monitoring and feedback**: The school regularly monitors the impact of relational inclusion methods through feedback from pupils, parents, and staff. This feedback is used to refine and adapt practices, ensuring they remain effective and relevant to the needs of the school community.

3. **Restructuring Teaching Assistant timetables:** There has been a restructuring of TA time to allow the opportunity to have more adults in the classroom after lunch to support children with quiet time, breathing exercises, listening to stories being read and other such calming strategies.

4. **Working with parents**: some parents have been provided with relational inclusion information and have tried to embed Zones of regulation at home. This has happened particularly with parents of SEN children.

Learning behaviours observed

Students exhibit several positive learning behaviours as a result of the RI programme:

- Increased engagement and participation in classroom activities.
- Improved collaboration and teamwork among peers.
- Greater emotional resilience and ability to manage conflicts constructively.
- Enhanced sense of responsibility and empathy towards others.

Children are being equipped with the tools and strategies to help them deal with complex emotions to get them to a more regulated state and reintegrate into the classroom. Staff report that children are becoming more independent in recognising their emotions and staff are able to deal more effectively with dysregulation. Staff have noticed that children mimic strategies modelled by teachers and TAs in coregulation behaviours using phrases such as "Would you like to have my turn instead?", "Why don't we go and sit over here?".

Impact on staff relationships

The RI approach has had a positive impact on staff relationships, fostering a more collaborative and supportive work environment. The RIC and SLT have started to consider 'windows of tolerance' with discussions about tagging in and and tagging out, to enable staff to effectively support each other and build relationships of trust. Some staff in the focus group commented that this training had made them evaluate their own approaches with the children and staff.

Learnings and adaptations

From the programme's implementation, some learnings and potential areas for adaptation have emerged:

1. **Effective communication and professional development:** One key learning is the importance of effective communication around the evidence base to staff during training to secure buy-in for the Relational Inclusion programme. between staff and pupils. Despite the successes, there are ongoing challenges in consistently applying relational methods, especially with new staff or in high-stress situations. Continued focus on training and support for staff is necessary.

2. **Mitigating changes:** There is a variability in practice between teachers and TAs in some part because of changes to staffing including the appointment of a new headteacher. The headteacher is

fully supportive of RI and models effective practice to staff. Whilst changing school culture is hard the team are working incredibly hard to unite and engage staff. Hold your nerve!

3. **Ongoing Challenges:** ensuring all staff are using RI practices so the burden of responsibility does not fall on the same people to work with particular children. Some more modelling of strategies and coaching of staff who are not currently changing their own practices would help to increase confidence and motivation where practice is less secure.

Introduction

This report outlines the focus group discussion relating to the relational inclusion approach being implemented at Gamesley Primary, detailing the effectiveness of the implementation strategies, the role of senior leadership, the impact on classroom practices, observed and reported learning behaviours, data usage, and recommendations for improving practice across the school.

Key Points:

The Relational Inclusion programme at Gamesley Primary School is highly relevant to the needs of their pupils due to its emphasis on fostering positive relationships and inclusive practices within the school community. This relevance is evident comments made by staff in several key areas:

- **Holistic support and well-being:** The Relational Inclusion programme at Gamesley Primary School integrates various support mechanisms tailored to individual needs, recognising the diverse backgrounds and challenges faced by pupils. The programme has highlighted the importance of emotional support in student development and academic success.
- **Behavioural understanding:** The staff aims to focus on understanding and addressing pupils' behaviours, especially those of children with trauma or SEND. By closely observing and responding to individual behaviours, staff can implement tailored strategies that support each child's unique needs.
- **Inclusive environment:** Staff creating an environment where all children feel valued and understood. Each staff member understands their role in building trust and rapport between students and staff, fostering a positive and inclusive school culture. The programme pays particular attention to the needs of SEND pupils, providing tailored interventions and support. For example, the immediate response to dysregulated behaviour is especially beneficial for these students, ensuring they receive the necessary support to participate fully in school.

Evidence in planning and practices

The planning and practices at Gamesley Primary School demonstrate a strong commitment to relational inclusion through:

1. **Collaborative efforts**: The school's approach is collaborative, with staff working together to share insights and strategies. Various roles, including teachers, teaching assistants, and administrative staff, are involved in the programme, indicating a school-wide commitment to relational inclusion. All staff members are encouraged to share their experiences and insights. The school recognises the need for ongoing learning and adaptation. They continually assess the effectiveness of their strategies and are open to making changes based on feedback and observed outcomes.

2. **Professional development**: Training is comprehensive and involves all levels of staff, ensuring they are equipped to handle sensitive situations with care and understanding. Training translates into practice through application of relational strategies in the classroom and other school settings. The dialogue among staff members suggests a culture of openness and a willingness to adapt. The consistent use of terms such as "dysregulated" and "regulated" helps in creating a common understanding among staff and students. This consistency is crucial for the effectiveness of the programme. One teacher commented about a specific pupil using these terms at home, highlighting the impact; "He will use the word dysregulated and regulated because his mum uses it with him as well at home."

3. **Customised support**: Practices include providing one-to-one support for pupils who need it, as seen with the mention of dedicated staff for individual children. This indicates a commitment to meeting each child's unique needs through personalised interventions. This individualised approach is a core element of relational inclusion, ensuring that support is personalised and effective. "So we try to implement trauma informed practice understanding that obviously children's experiences have a direct impact on the behaviour in school."

Learning behaviours observed

The Relational Inclusion programme at Gamesley Primary School has led to noticeable improvements in learning behaviours among pupils. The implementation of Relational Inclusion methods has led to noticeable changes in learning behaviors. Students exhibit increased trust and openness, contributing to a more conducive learning environment.

Impact on staff relationships

The Relational Inclusion approach has positively affected various other areas within the school, including staff relationships and overall school culture. There is a noticeable improvement in communication and collaboration among staff members, leading to a more unified and supportive work environment. Specific improvements include better communication and teamwork, as staff members work together to apply relational strategies and support each other in their roles.

Learnings and adaptations

From the programme's implementation, some learnings and potential areas for adaptation have emerged:

1. **Impact on school culture**: The programme has positively influenced the school culture by promoting empathy, understanding, and mutual respect among pupils and staff. The school identifies areas that require change and adaptation, such as refining communication methods or adjusting support strategies to better meet the needs of their pupils.

2. **Consistency:** While the Relational Inclusion approach is generally successful, maintaining consistent application across all classrooms can be challenging. There is some variability in individual teacher's understanding and implementation.

3. **Scalability and sustainability**: Ensuring that the programme can be sustained and scaled is crucial. This includes maintaining ongoing training for staff and securing resources to support the various

initiatives under the relational inclusion framework. Some staff members report challenges in applying the strategies consistently by everyone in school, suggesting a need for additional support and training.

Introduction

This report outlines the focus group discussion relating to the relational inclusion approach being implemented at Wild Bank Primary, detailing the effectiveness of the implementation strategies, the role of senior leadership, the impact on classroom practices, observed and reported learning behaviours, data usage, and recommendations for improving practice across the school.

Key Points:

The Relational Inclusion programme at Wildbank Primary School is highly relevant to the needs of their pupils due to its emphasis on fostering positive relationships and inclusive practices within the school community. This relevance is evident comments made by staff in several key areas:

- **Emotional and social well-being:** The focus on relational inclusion helps address emotional challenges and fosters a sense of belonging among pupils. The programme supports the emotional and social well-being of pupils, which is crucial for their overall development. By prioritising relationships, the school addresses both academic and non-academic needs, creating a nurturing environment conducive to learning.
- **Behavioural understanding:** The staff aims to understand the root causes of behavioural issues rather than just addressing the symptoms. This is particularly important for pupils who may be dealing with complex emotional or psychological challenges.
- **Inclusive environment:** The methods ensure that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, feel included and supported. This approach ensures that every child feels valued and supported, enhancing their engagement and participation in school activities.

Evidence in planning and practices

The planning and practices at Wildbank Primary School demonstrate a strong commitment to relational inclusion through:

1. **Collaborative efforts**: Staff members, including teachers and teaching assistants, work collaboratively to implement the programme. The frequent meetings and discussions among staff highlight a unified approach to addressing pupils' needs.

2. **Professional development**: Continuous professional development and training for staff are integral to the programme. This ensures that all team members are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to support relational inclusion effectively. The commitment from Senior Leaders is evident in their active involvement, their support for professional learning and in particular, their modelling of strategies with staff and pupils in everyday contexts.

3. **Customised support**: The school employs tailored interventions for pupils, reflecting a deep understanding of each child's unique circumstances. This individualised approach is a core element of relational inclusion, ensuring that support is personalised and effective. In addition to this, the

school recognised 'hotspots' for dysregulated behaviour and implemented regulation time, calming activities, after play to ensure readiness for learning.

Learning behaviours observed

The programme has led to observable positive changes in learning behaviours among pupils. Pupils are more engaged and participative in class with a noticeable improvement in behaviour and fewer examples of dysregulated behaviour. Where these occur, staff feel better equipped to use appropriate language and strategies to support pupils with self-regulation. A particular success appears to be that the children are using the language ("do you think you could do [x] to help yourself", "Do you know what zone you are in?") and strategies to co-regulate as a class. One TA commented that as the year has progressed, "children are a lot better, helping themselves to regulate and accessing the resources more independently rather than having to be so heavily guided". Pupils are more able to explain how they feel (I feel frustrated) and less likely to show how they feel.

Impact on staff relationships

A notable impact of the training and work with the children has been an awareness of staff's own responses to regulation of their own feelings and behaviours. The focus group commented on their own 'window of tolerance', using this to be self-reflective and to support each other "[they] understand that we can't regulate a child if we are not self- regulated ourselves".

Learnings and adaptations

From the programme's implementation, some learnings and potential areas for adaptation have emerged:

1. **Impact on school culture**: The programme has positively influenced the school culture by promoting empathy, understanding, and mutual respect among pupils and staff.

2. **Need for flexibility**: There is a recognition that the programme must be adaptable to address the evolving needs of pupils. Regular feedback and reflective practices help in fine-tuning strategies to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

3. **Consistency:** Some staff are not yet fully immersed in the culture and values of relational inclusion and, whilst they are using some of these strategies with the children, it is not embedded and more of a box-ticking exercise.

4. **Scalability and sustainability**: Ensuring that the programme can be sustained and scaled is crucial. This includes maintaining ongoing training for staff and securing resources to support the various initiatives under the relational inclusion framework. Training has begun with midday supervisors middays but it is recognised that this is in its infancy. These staff have had language and strategies implicitly modelled to them but require more explicit training to fully understand and embed its practices. The group commented on potential support for families in using RI strategies for dysregulated behaviour in the home, particularly where data identifies particular parents and families that could be supported through targeted support and workshops.

5. **Sharing information:** TAs commented that it was sometimes difficult to know particular strategies that had been effective with individual specific children in classes with which they do not normally work. The leads should consider how this information might be shared more efficiently.