

'Inquiring Minds': Adapting and developing mental well-being resources for pupils with additional needs

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Background to the project

All children and young people with learning disabilities have a right to positive mental health (Carpenter, 2004; Carpenter et al., 2010), but they are at least four times more likely to experience mental health problems than their non-disabled peers (Dossetor, 2009; Emerson and Hatton, 2007). Kern et al. (2009) noted that emotional difficulties in children and young people are associated with poor behavioural, social and educational outcomes. However, according to Sripada (2014), the ability to self-regulate emotions leads to behavioural flexibility and wellbeing.

Therapeutic expressive writing interventions, including journal-writing, have been associated with reduced stress, behaviour difficulties, depression and anxiety, as well as improved coping strategies and educational outcomes (Maclean, 2013; Waters, 2010). Of children and their writing, Murray (2008) notes that 'children can...experience emotional validation, self-expression, and relief through writing'. However, there has been little research using a journal approach with children or children with learning difficulties.

Even with one-to-one support, children with physical and/or learning disabilities who are not resilient struggle to cope emotionally, socially and educationally. By supporting children's journeys towards emotional resilience through therapeutic self-expression and building on their strengths, this project hoped to increase their capacity to cope, learn and form relationships at school, and, hopefully, to sustain their lifelong wellbeing.

The 'Inquiring Minds' project took place between July 2015 and August 2016. As part of their Positive Mental Health curriculum development for their pupil population of children with physical and/or learning disabilities aged 3 to 19 years, Chadsgrove Teaching School carried out an investigation into ways in which a range of Mental Wealth journals written by author Marilyn Tucknott for supporting mainstream pupils' mental health and well-being could be effectively adapted for their pupils. There are four journals: one for each of Key Stages (KS) 1 to 4. The journals encourage children to develop thinking patterns, appropriate to their developmental age, that support the development of their self-esteem and resilience – described as 'mental wealth'.

In schools, the journals can be used by adult-led groups or 1:1 sessions. There is guidance for adults at the beginning of the journals, and each of the pages has an overarching 'therapeutic theme' that unifies activities and discussions. The teachers in the project found this useful. As one commented, that this meant 'if you do go off on a tangent – which you do – you can link it back'. Tucknott (2015) has suggested

that teachers' role is to facilitate a child-led journey towards developing 'mental wealth'. The children's progression through the journals is not target driven, and emphasis is on child ownership of their own journal. The journal is not handed in to be marked, and pupils do not need to share what they have written with others unless they want to. The journals enable children of different ages to:

- Find out more about themselves and their emotions
- Feel good about themselves
- Understand that there is no right or wrong way to be – just their way
- Understand what they can do to change how they feel
- Discover how they can be mentally healthy
- Find different ways to think about themselves.

Adaptation of the journals involved the scaffolding of themes and ideas, and the creation of physical resources, so that Chadsgrove pupils could connect with the key messages of the Mental Wealth journals, and experience an impact on their mental health and well-being. The research questions for this inquiry were therefore:

1. What are the emotional resilience challenges for individual pupils and pupil groups?
2. In what ways can adults (in this case, teachers and teaching assistants) personalise the Mental Wealth Journals to meet the needs of individual pupils/pupil groups?
3. What is the evidence for pupils' engagement and observable outcomes in and beyond mental wealth journal sessions?
4. What is the impact of the personalised emotional wellbeing/resilience support on parent/teacher perceptions of children's emotional wellbeing and resilient behaviours?
5. What suggestions would teachers and pupils advise to make the published journals more accessible to Chadsgrove pupils?

Methodology

This qualitative, school-based inquiry involved nine pupils who were 'subjectively sampled'. All pupils have complex needs with varying levels of physical and learning disabilities due to a range of causes. Although all pupils from the classes benefited from the Mental Wealth journal sessions, data was collected from two pupils from each of KS1, 2 and 4 classes, and three pupils from the KS3 class. Two KS5 pupils, who were asked to informally evaluate the KS4 journal.

Fully informed consent for pupils' participation was requested from parents/guardians, as well as for their own contribution in completing pre- and post-intervention questionnaires. The project methodology was reviewed and approved by the school's Senior Leadership Team, and the project was supervised by a steering group which included a Chadsgrove Teaching School parent governor, the mental wealth journals author, and an Educational Psychologist external to the school, as well as teacher participants. The British Educational Research Association's *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2011)¹ and the National Children's Bureau (NCB) *Research Guidelines*² were the ethical research references for this project.

¹ British Educational Research Association (2004) *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. [Online at <http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/guidelines/ethica1.pdf>; accessed: 1.7.2011]

² National Children's Bureau (2003) *Guidelines for Research*. [Online at http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open%20access%20-%20phase%201%20only/research_guidelines_200604.pdf; accessed: 1.7.2011]

Briefing and introductory training for teachers by the journal author took place in November/December 2015, with two follow-up 'master classes' taking place early in the intervention period (January and February 2016) to provide more in-depth and specific guidance. The four teachers also received training on data collection from the two project co-ordinators, who also met with teachers both formally and informally to discuss progress and data collection.

Teachers, together with their classes where possible, selected the journal that was most developmentally relevant. KS1-3 chose the journal designated for their Key Stage. KS4 pupils chose the journal designated for KS3. With their prior knowledge of pupils' needs, interests and concerns, and taking account of pupil responses throughout the intervention period, teachers selected pages from the journals that complemented these and connected with one another to create a coherent mental wealth 'journey'.

The core research group (project co-ordinators and teachers) adopted an exploratory action research, multiple case study approach. Data was collected in the following ways:

- Pre- and post-intervention checklists completed by teachers and parents
- Structured research diaries completed by teachers
- Pupil feedback sheets
- Engagement observations from videoed journal sessions
- Minutes of meetings variously between teachers, the journal author/trainer, research co-ordinators
- Post-intervention teacher group interview

Teachers also consulted documentary evidence in pupils' personal folders and learning records.

Research question 1: re Pupils' emotional resilience challenges

Pupils' emotional resilience challenges were identified through: teacher and parent responses to the relevant versions of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997; Goodman and Goodman, 2009); consulting pupils' personal folders and educational records; and related conversations with parents/guardians. Teachers also completed selected questions from the Developmental Behaviour Checklist (Einfeld and Tonge, 1995, 2002) and Boxall Profile (Bennathan and Boxall, 1998).

Research question 2: re Personalising the mental wealth journals

The Teachers used an exploratory action research approach to progressively adapt their selected pages, keeping records of adaptations and issue-solving decisions, outcomes and modifications on their structured research diary sheets. Selected mental wealth journal sessions were videoed which provided corroborative evidence.

Research question 3: re Pupils' levels of engagement and observable outcomes

KS1-3 classes periodically videoed their journal sessions so that levels of pupil engagement during activities could be assessed. Records from teacher research diaries, focus groups, group interviews and pupil feedback sheets supported this. KS4 pupils' discussions contained a lot of personal information so the teacher decided not to video the sessions.

Research question 4: re Impact of personalised resilience support on teacher/parent perceptions of pupils' emotional wellbeing

Pre- and post-intervention questionnaires were used to gain an overview of the impact of personalised resilience support on pupils' emotional wellbeing. These included the questionnaires described under the

'Research question 1' heading and an 'Inquiring Minds questionnaire for teachers' which requested information about pupil resilience risk factors, protective factors, existing school support, pupil self-regard and strategies and other related questions. Teachers' research diaries and meeting minutes also recorded ways in which the journals facilitated discussions about pupils' concerns and worries that would not otherwise have taken place.

Research question 5: re Journal suggestions from teachers and pupils

Suggestions for changes that could be made to the journals to make them more accessible for Chadsgrove School pupils came out of teachers' research diaries, group interviews, pupils' comments recorded during sessions or interviews, and two KS5 pupils who were specifically asked to informally evaluate the KS4 and 5 journals for their age group.

Results and discussion

Differentiating and personalising the mental wealth journals

All four teachers commented upon the enthusiasm of their pupils for having a book that they owned, that they could name and keep for themselves in their drawer. The KS1 teacher recalled:

I wrote their names on [the journals], and they were so happy that they'd got their own little book with their name. They were saying 'My name,' 'And my name.' Just to write his name on a book and just have it. They seemed so happy. They seemed to just love that. They never get that.

Three teachers (KS2-4) emphasised that pupils could choose whether or not to share what they had written in their diaries, they could write what they wanted to, and the books would not be marked.

KS2 teacher: It's the only time really when you shift the priority to the pupils not the ...lesson objective – have they got it... It's the only time in the week when you say 'This is yours.... There's no right or wrong. I won't give you ticks. It's yours, and if you don't want to share, you can [make that decision]. Actually doing that, some of them have really wanted to share what they've done.

KS3 teacher: Yeah. [It's] 'You can say whatever you want to say.' [It's not...] 'Now, you haven't answered a question today...'

One pupil commented that for once the journals sessions were all about the pupils, and not about the teachers.

All teachers adapted the journals for the pupils they worked with. Three teachers (KS2-4) commented that their pupils initially found it difficult that the adapted journal activities were external to the journal; they wanted to write directly into the journal. However, with explanations, they came to see that the activities related directly to the pages. All teachers supported pupils to stick evidence from their activities into their diaries. The purpose was to enable pupils to revisit their thoughts and findings through their journals, using them to build their resilience.

Teachers said that they would have remained longer developing certain topics to embed and extend pupils' understanding if they had not been part of a research project and needed to provide an overview of the journal appropriateness for their pupils.

Examples of adapted activities

KS2 activity: *Five-a-day – what we do to stay mentally healthy*

- For pupils with visual impairment: Writing too small to read; colour contrast unclear: visually clear A3 version of the page available
- Large hand-writing due to fine motor difficulties means there is not enough space for some pupils to write activity loves, likes and dislikes: provide pre-typed or -symbol led words to be stuck into book.
- Some pupils have difficulty reading: provide rebus symbols to support word understanding
- Some pupils find abstract thinking difficult, so needed sorting of choices to be concrete and kinaesthetic: provide a 'talking mat' with symbols of different activities to sort into 'Like'/'Love'/'Dislike' categories



Choices of 'Activities I love' that can keep us mentally healthy from a larger selection of activity symbols – made using a 'talking mat' – are glued into the journal



'Wanted' poster stuck into KS2 journal with space for the pupil's photo above and below for noting down the things that made the pupil 'unique'.

Example of adaptations for KS3-4



- This activity, which talks about internalised emotions, was too complex for the KS3-4 classes, so the teachers adapted it for where their pupils were in their emotional understanding.
- A key aim for KS3-4 classes was to extend the emotional language they used beyond 'happy' and 'sad' so that they could begin to understand and describe the different intensities of emotion that they experienced.
- Due to pupils' fine motor difficulties, this page in the book was too small for them to write words in, so the graffiti wall drawn as large individual wall posters that pupils could contribute words to.
- Emotion words (other than 'happy' and 'sad') that pupils used to describe how they were feeling at different times were added to the bricks in the 'walls' during Mental Wealth journal sessions, but were also collected during other lessons with the support of the teaching assistants.



One teacher commented:

[The emotion word wall] stops them from saying 'It makes [me] feel sad'; 'It makes [me] feel happy'. I said, 'We're not saying "happy" or "sad"; we're trying to think of other words,' and that's when [Pupil G] said, 'It makes me feel joyful.' [Pupil F] said his worst chore is drying the dishes, and I said 'Why don't you like it?'. And he said, 'Because you've got to wait for the person who's washing the dishes up and I don't like it. I don't like waiting.' I said, 'So how does that make you feel.' And it took a while but he said that it makes him feel 'impatient'. The TAs are on board with this, so that if [the pupils] talk about something in a different lesson, we'll put [the word] on the wall.

KS1

For the KS1 pupils, personalisation related to experience. Although they had been excited to have their name on the cover of their journal, they were not able to access the activity without the teacher due to lack of understanding or fine motor difficulties. She and the teaching assistant therefore developed and mediated personalised activities related to their chosen pages within a circle time setting. They were able to record these photographically to stick in the journal with the pupils. The KS1 journal therefore provided a framework and a record of pupil activities they could look back on with support.

The sessions focused on 'Smile' – making a smile; smiling at others; activities that make me smile.

KEY STAGE 1 GROUP – 'Being Me' Journal (4 sessions)

Journal pages/topics	Resilience journey	Therapeutic messages	Activities
Introducing the journals 'Smile' 'Move it'	'Smile' 'Me with others' 'Activities that make me smile'	When you smile at someone, they will smile back at you Smiling makes you and others feel good You can choose activities that make you happy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singing the 'smile' songs• Passing on the smile at circle time by smiling at the person sitting next to you (variations: e.g. to a peer; to a friend; using a mirror)• Bringing pupil's own and other's smiles to their attention (e.g. commenting, pointing it out, using a mirror, photographing the smile, etc.)• Activities which make pupils' smile (e.g. 'Boo' game, swinging, box of favourite sensory objects, etc.)• Pupils requesting 'more' of activities that make them smile• Pupils helping stick photo evidence into journals

Interestingly, the teacher and her class team discovered that while pupils would readily smile at and return the smile of adults during circle time, they were unconfident about smiling at each another. They identified the following possible reasons:

- Lack of practice – pupils more often interacted directly with adults than peers, and often adults mediated their contact with peers
- Seating – often teaching assistants and pupils were seated alternately around the circle so children most often interacted with an adult
- Chairs – pupils using wheelchairs were often higher than their peers making eye contact difficult; it was also difficult to manoeuvre the chairs within the circle so that pupils could face one another

- Recognising facial expressions as a smile – due to physical difficulties, one pupil’s smile may not be immediately recognisable as a smile by another pupil; also they may not be able to keep the smile on their face long enough for the other pupil to respond.

The class team therefore made adaptations that would overcome these issues. Seating was adjusted so pupils were closer to one another. The class practised smiling, and took part in activities (e.g. ‘Boo’ games, swinging) which meant they smiled naturally. Staff then photographed the pupil’s smile, called their attention to it, and, later, together with the pupil, stuck the photograph into their journal. The teacher created intermediate steps to pupils smiling at one another – for example, first smiling in a mirror before turning to their peer and handing them the mirror; seating pupils next to particular friends to increase the motivation to smile.

Pupils did not complete feedback at the beginning and end of sessions as their knowledge of emotions was experiential only, not reflective, but in her research diary, the teacher recorded both pupils’ positive and active engagement in all session activities. She described Pupil A in all sessions as variously showing enjoyment, happiness and contentment. She noted that Pupil B showed happiness, enjoyment, and tolerance of waiting his turn, as well as trying hard and persevering with activities. Her assessments were corroborated from video evidence.

KS2

The KS2 teacher and her class team were able to adapt activities directly related to the journal. The group were quite linguistically able, but were used to having adults support them to understand written text, and struggled with writing. They were able to discuss things, but emotionally they were below age-expected levels, and did not have the language or understanding to identify complex emotions.

The journal sessions were carefully structured to support the pupils in making learning/understanding connections. They were practical activity led, and the discussions and pupils’ recall of their experiences were closely related to these activities. The teacher created symbolled word banks with vocabulary that linked to the different sessions, supported pupil recall and conversations, and were used to extend pupils’ understanding. Journal sessions were more relaxed than academic lessons – pupils were free to move around the classroom and communicate with one another; and one session, which linked mood to colour, took place in the soft play room where pupils could experiment with different coloured light.

KEY STAGE 2 GROUP – ‘Understanding Me’ Journal adaptations (8 sessions)

Journal pages/topics	Resilience journey	Therapeutic messages	Activities
Introduction to journals	Understanding... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My different feelings 	We are all different and all enjoy doing different things – there is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking how people might feel in different situations (not related to self at this stage)

<p>'My feelings' 'About me' 'My five-a-day' 'Accept me' 'Who's afraid?' 'Do something'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why it is important to be mentally healthy • What I can do to be mentally healthy • The continuum of emotions and the different words that describe the shades of emotion • What makes me unique and special; ways we are different on the inside as well as on the outside (physical characteristics) • What others mean to me; what I mean to others; understanding others and being a good friend • What it means to be afraid and how it makes me feel • Things I can do to cope with fear • How we can make others feel better • The things I have done well or that are special 	<p>no right or wrong way to keep mentally healthy</p> <p>Feel all of your feelings - it is called being alive</p> <p>Nobody is happy all the time; it's normal to experience lots of different emotions at any time</p> <p>Everyone is different and this is a good thing</p> <p>It is not wrong to feel afraid</p> <p>It is good to be proud of your achievements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing how well rebus symbols for different emotion words relate to the word • Emotions hot seat – each pupil makes an emotional face and others have to guess what emotion it shows; take photos of the emotion faces to record in journal • Thinking about when pupils might feel those emotions • Thinking about things pupils enjoy and are good at • Making something to remind pupils of something they love doing so they can look at it when they feel down • Sorting a selection of symbols of things pupils do to keep mentally healthy into things they love/like/dislike • Visualising experiences – bringing them to mind to change their mood • Exploring different words/symbols for the same emotion • Personalising colours pupils relate to 'happy' and 'sad' and creating a happy/sad colour continuum on the computer; indicate where they are on the continuum • Making fingerprints to see how each person's fingerprints are unique • In pairs, pupils thinking of three things the same and three things that are different between them and their pair (e.g. likes/dislikes, situations, characteristics, etc.) • Presenting and discussing a story on the board with images related to journal page themes (e.g. Elmer the Elephant – being different; Brady Needs a Night Light – being afraid; My Many Coloured Days – different emotions); • Pupils telling others what they think they are good at or is special about them. • Finding out what pupils think is special about themselves; providing photo/symbol prompts of things they can be proud of
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Due to fine motor difficulties, both pupils found it difficult to write directly in the journal which was in A5 format. They therefore glued pre-prepared symbolled text (Widgit Software's Communicate in Print program) or pre-printed text into their journals. They also enlarged journal pages to make them more accessible.

Over the course of eight sessions, both pupils C and D were highly engaged in the sessions. Pupil C typically finds it difficult to listen to other pupils, always wanting to contribute their own point of view. In early sessions, Pupil C worked 1:1 with a teaching assistant so they would not dominate the other pupils' discussions. However, over the eight sessions, Pupil C became more ready to listen to other pupils' experiences and opinions. Pupil D is typically very reserved, rarely contributing to group discussions. However, over the intervention period, Pupil C became more willing to share with the group.

KS3

KS3 pupils – Pupils E, F and G – were able to discuss the topics directly related to 'Live Out Loud' journal across seven sessions. The teacher and her class team found that the activities were appropriate but that the concepts and language needed to be adapted to the pupils' levels of understanding. She found that she needed to scaffold their discussions, demonstrating how to use skills of visualisation and reflection, and providing them with concrete examples and reminders of key words and concept definitions (printed or symbolled text). She also checked frequently that they had properly understood concepts and that their understanding was sustained. She also related issues they were discussing to visual or descriptive resources (e.g. emotions colour wheel) and 'real life' experiences (e.g. things that they did in the half-term holiday and how these made them feel). The visual resources created by the pupils were secondary to the discussions, but very necessary for their full understanding.

The teacher was also keen to make links from session to session, and for pupils and staff to continue to think about journal topics in between to embed understanding. For some topics, the group created wall charts they could add to during the week, and there were some 'take home' thinking activities. At the beginning of sessions she found it helpful to include a 'starter' activity to stimulate pupils' thinking.

The teacher often enlarged pages so they were more accessible for pupils. As with all classes involved in the project, she found it essential to allow pupils extra time to process information and to respond. All her pupils could become obsessed with particular topics, so she made adaptations to the pages which might trigger these to prevent pupils' thinking getting stuck in a loop.

KEY STAGE 3 – 'Live Out Loud' Journal adaptations (7 sessions)

Journal pages/topics	Resilience journey	Therapeutic messages	Activities
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<p>'Best and worst' 'Graffiti wall' 'Being unique' 'FFFFFFFRIGHT!' 'It's my choice' 'Censored'</p>	<p>In general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing awareness • Learning to reflect • Learning to visualise • Benefiting from trusting and sharing in a safe environment <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending my emotional language beyond 'happy' and 'sad' • Understanding and describing my feelings and emotions • Reflecting on who I am: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ my uniqueness and value ○ my moods and what triggers them • Understanding the difference between being worried and being scared • Understanding self-esteem, what affects it and how we can overcome negative thoughts 	<p>Feelings are more than just 'happy' and 'sad'</p> <p>We are all different and all valuable</p> <p>You can take charge of your emotions by knowing your moods and what triggers them</p> <p>You can change how you feel about yourself by knowing what affects your self-esteem and what to do about it</p> <p>You can overcome your 'inner critic'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualisation of themes/topics/questions; for example, drawing how you imagine your 'inner critic' / 'inner praise' to look • Providing word, definition resources linked to that week, e.g. Creation of 'Graffiti wall' to extend emotion words away from 'happy' and 'sad' • Looking at resources that are matched to themes/topics/questions (e.g. definitions, visual representations such as mood monsters, poem, 'real life' examples, helpful quotes, etc.) • Discussion of pupils' personal experiences and how it made them feel; for example, half-term break activities, linked to consideration of 'My mood triggers', self-esteem' and the inner voice as an enemy • Discussions based on themes/topics/questions in journal; frequent checks for pupil understanding; where necessary simplifying concepts and providing opposites (e.g. for inner critic/inner praise: angel/devil, good/bad, etc.) • A 'take away' question to think about during the week linked with the session
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KS4

Pupils H and J and their class group were able to base their exploration largely on discussion, and the resources they created individually and as a group enhanced their understanding (e.g. emotion colour wheels; a 'graffiti wall' of emotion words, etc.). As their discussions were wide ranging and often very personal, it was not appropriate to video them. Discussions also included a lot of humour, prompting much laughter during sessions. On occasions, the teacher needed to direct the focus of discussions away from obsessional reminiscing. One of the pupils used an electronic 'talker' so she was conscious of giving him time to construct sentences and the space at multiple points during the discussion to share his thoughts.

Although pupils' understanding of language was relatively good, the teacher still needed to provide 'key words and definitions' resources, and explain unfamiliar phrases (e.g. trail-blazer; glass half full). She checked pupils' understanding of concepts throughout the sessions. Unexpectedly, none of the pupils had ever come across a postcard, which needed to be explained, as they were used to communicating their holiday news through Facebook and Instagram.

KEY STAGE 4 GROUP – 'Live Out Loud' Journal adaptations (8 sessions)

Journal pages/topics	Resilience journey	Therapeutic messages	Activities
'Stuff it's OK to know about me' 'Graffiti wall' 'It's my choice' 'It's all in the mind' 'The winner' 'Ooops' Postcards' 'Time travel' 'Make-over'	Exploring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How I'm feeling (beyond 'happy' or 'sad') • What I can do to feel better • What I can do when I feel down • How I see myself • What makes me laugh • How laughing makes me feel • How I feel in different situations • Feelings are temporary • What's important to me • What changes I can make • The choices I can make 	Knowing myself and my feelings is important for mental health I can change how I'm feeling I can change how I see myself Laughing helps Feelings are temporary My choices can change things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions around: what am I feeling now; how I make myself feel better; what makes me laugh • Discussion: healthy thinking habits; the person I am now; what I feel in different situations • Shades of emotion discussion and activities: talking about what other emotions do you feel besides 'happy' and 'sad'; creating a personal emotion colour wheel; creating a 'Graffiti wall' of emotion words) <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><i>He wanted to show Mum and Dad. He has made it into a game with a spinning arrow. This is how I feel now; this is how I may feel later.</i></p> • 'The winner' group discussion: bravery, coping, winning; challenges we have overcome; the feelings that go with this; discussion of 'Inside Out' film and characters • 'Ooops' discussion and activity: mistakes and emotions/memory/sense of humour; drawing mistakes cartoons • 'Postcards' discussion: Important things in your life – who, what, what next? • 'Make over' discussion: What would you do if...?; if you could change something, what would it be?; How do you feel about...? (focus: creativity, empathy, reflection)

Alongside the discussions, there was an emphasis on self-expression through creativity and colour. Pupils could use coloured pens to write in their journal, and were given opportunities to draw and create while exploring emotions. Due to their difficulties some pupils needed reading and scribing support from the class staff team.

Outcomes for pupils – engagement

Pupil engagement was monitored through teacher research diary report and by carrying out engagement-focused observations on video footage.

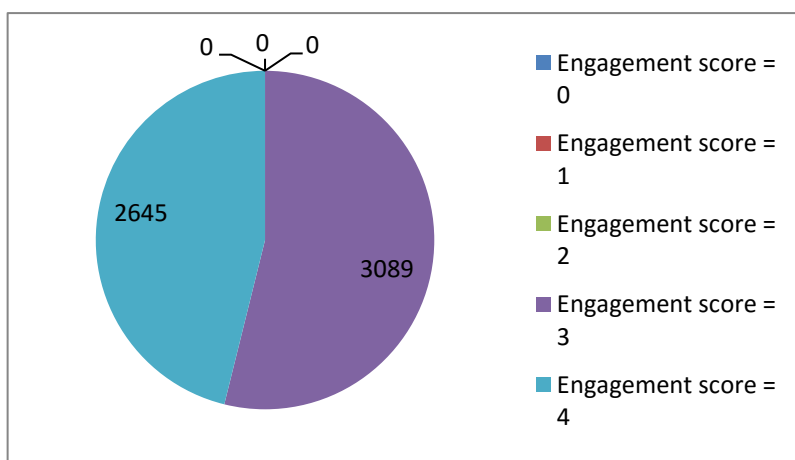
When observing video clips of pupils using the journals or resources, pupils’ engaged behaviours were identified under the seven engagement indicators of the Engagement Profile – awareness, curiosity, investigation, discovery, anticipation, persistence and initiation (Carpenter et al., 2011, 2015). Pupils in KS1 and 2 showed predominantly ‘mostly sustained engagement’ (score 3) or ‘fully sustained engagement’ (score 4) behaviours when they were directly interacting with their journals or resources linked to them. The remaining engagement scores – 0 (No focus); 1 (emerging/fleeting engagement); and 2 (Partly sustained engagement) – were not in evidence in direct relation to the journals/related resources. Sessions in which pupils did not demonstrate a wide range of engaged behaviours were rare and linked to an external reason. It is not proposed to discuss these further here.

However, the KS3 pupils provide an interesting contrast. In the following sections, the KS3 pupils – ‘E’, ‘F’ and ‘G’ – have been presented as a case study group.

Pupil E, as with most pupils from other key stages, was mostly or fully engaged throughout all videoed sessions. Her engagement pie chart, shown in relation to video clips of her two videoed, is typical of her levels of engagement during other sessions.

Table showing the time attributed to Pupil E’s typical levels of engagement during the 18.1.16 and 29.2.16 journal sessions

	Engagement score	Duration (s)
18.1.16	4	185
	3	974
	3	1440
	4	420
	4	210
	4	300
29.2.16	4	1320
	4	120
	3	675
	4	90

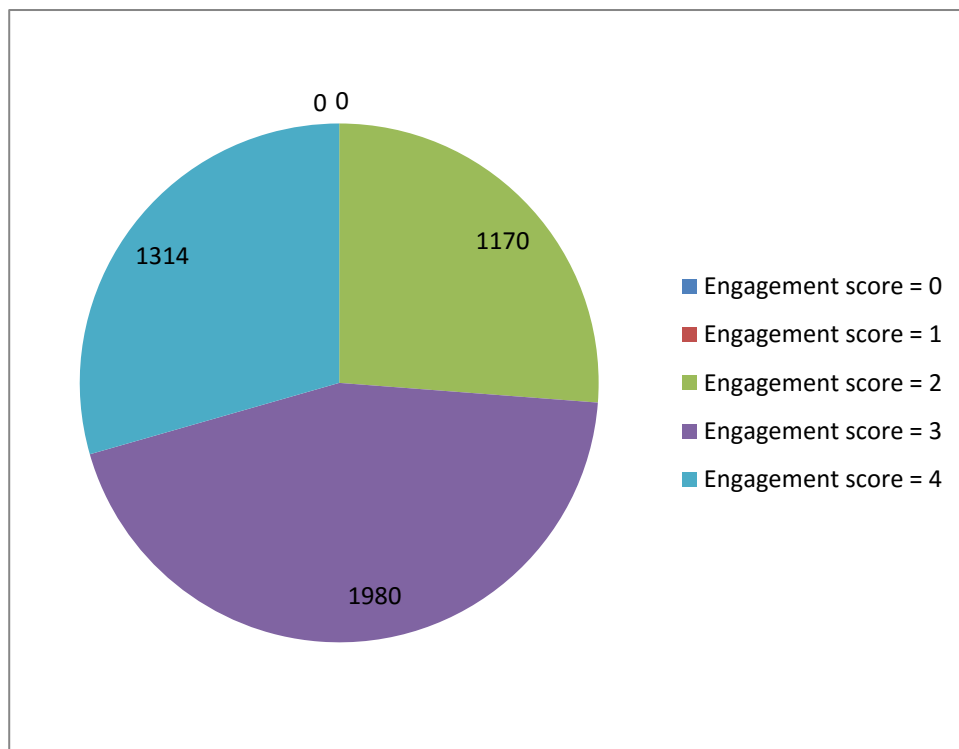


Pupil E: Overall video observation engagement scores for her two videoed journal sessions – 18.1.16 and 29.2.16 (Figures show time in seconds attributed to a particular engagement score)

In the course of the 18.1.16 mental wealth journal session, **Pupil F** increased his level of engagement as the session progressed from partially sustained engagement (score 2) in the earlier clips to fully sustained engagement later in the session. This is demonstrated by his engagement pie chart below. In subsequent sessions his engagement was fully or mostly sustained as he became more enthusiastic about the journals and related activities

Table showing the time attributed to Pupil F's increasing levels of engagement during the 18.1.16 journal session

Engagement scores	Time (s)
2	630
2	540
3	1980
4	24
4	1200
4	90



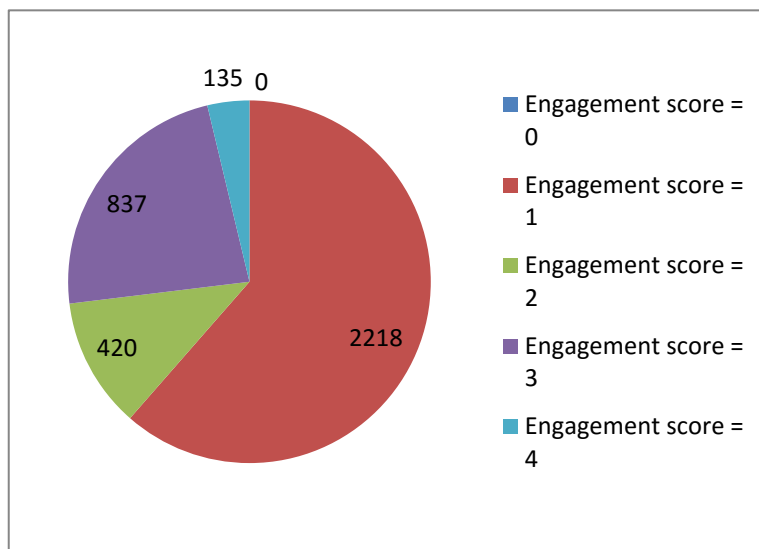
Pupil F: Overall video observation engagement scores for his 18.1.16 journal session (Figures show total time in seconds attributed to each engagement score)

Pupil G's increase in engagement took place over a much more extended period as shown by the table and associated pie chart below. It can be seen that the video clips for both the 18.1.16 and 1.2.16 journal sessions have very low levels of engagement. However, by 29.2.16 his engagement is either mostly or fully sustained throughout the session. This was the pattern of engagement in subsequent sessions.

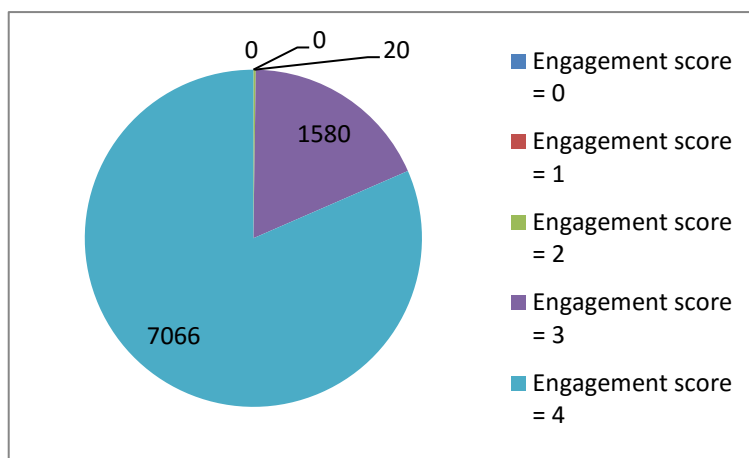
Table showing the time attributed to Pupil G's varying levels of engagement over three videoed journal sessions

(Journal sessions: 18.1.16, 1.2.16 and 29.2.16)

Date	Engagement score	Duration (s)
18.1.16	1	90
	2	420
	4	60
	1	1200
	3	612
	4	75
	3	120
	3	105
	1	568
	1	360
	1.2.16	1
29.2.16	3	90
	3	470
	3	1020
	4	90
	4	136
	4	6840
	2	20



Pupil G: Overall video observation engagement scores for the 18.1.16 journal session (above) and the 29.2.16 session (below). (Figures show total time in seconds attributed to each engagement score)



Pupil feedback for the KS3 group

Pupils were asked to fill in a pictorial feedback sheet at the beginning and end of each journal session commenting on how they felt. At the beginning of the session they could circle various options (e.g. 'happy', 'sad', 'angry', 'worried', 'don't know') which pupils added to themselves; at the end of the session they were asked to indicate on a 5-picture scale of 'happy' to 'sad' with a 'don't know' option how they felt. They were also asked whether they wanted to talk to someone about how they felt (whether happy or sad). This was to make sure that pupils were not left in a fragile emotional state at the end of the session without support.

Apart from the end of the first session, when Pupil E recorded 'neither happy nor unhappy', all her responses were 'Happy', which is typical for her. Pupil F started the first session 'Tired', but ended it 'a bit

happy'. His pattern was to begin sessions feeling 'Happy' and ended feeling 'A bit happy', apart from two which he started and ended 'a bit happy', and one in which he started 'Happy' and ended 'Very happy'. Pupil G started his first session 'Really tired', but ended 'Very happy'. All the following sessions, he recorded 'Happy' at the beginning and 'Very happy' at the end of the session. On one he commented he was 'so, so happy'.

Pre- and Post-intervention questionnaires

The questionnaires were customised for the project. Questions included the complete Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Teacher and Parent versions as appropriate). In addition, the teacher questionnaire also included items from the Developmental Behaviour Checklist and the Boxall Profile. When these questionnaires were completed, they showed interesting overall trends for pupils. For the intervention period, any differences in teacher and/or parent questionnaire outcomes were noted, together with the number of items that had changed. However, the outcomes recorded through the teacher and parent Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires (and the supplementary teacher questions) were not specific enough to be related directly to the 'Inquiring Minds' project as there were too many other variables for pupils. For this reason, the outcomes to these questionnaires are not presented here, but will be used by the school to support pupils more generally.

The 'Inquiring minds' questionnaire was more useful, being specifically related to pupil resilience behaviours and use of resilience strategies. Outcomes for the KS3 group have been analysed and the summaries of findings are below.

Pupil E

At school, although Pupil E always appears and says that she is happy, she is very self-contained. She gains pleasure from friendships and chatting with adults at school. She likes helping adults and peers, and looks out for ways she can help. Teachers and parents were concerned about her small emotional range of expression, and worried that she was struggling with puberty and other situations.

Before the project, her level self-esteem had been unknown; however lessons and discussions during the project, showed it was 'low'. Prior to and during the project, the school continued to support her with praise and support, providing an appropriate peer group, and giving her opportunities to talk.

The teacher reported that since the beginning of the project she had become more confident in general and much more sociable. The class team felt she now had a better emotional understanding, and could use different language to explain emotions. Whereas before the project, her relationships were focused on caring for younger or less able pupils, afterwards they observed that she was more confident, and had built closer friendships with peers, making more effort and seeming more 'in tune' with them.

However, she struggled with the concept of 'fear' and 'phobias', seeming unable to grasp them, so it was difficult to find out what she worries about.

Pupil F has a strong home base. He is making good progress in school, and enjoys a varied and active life out of school. However, he holds on to his anger about past situations. He struggles with feeling let down or left out. Before and throughout the project, Chads Grove has supported him by providing firm boundaries, showing him respect and treating him fairly and equally.

Before the project, he very much kept himself to himself. However, over the course of the project, he became more willing to share his thoughts and feelings. He used the journals to express things he found difficult, and shared this with the teacher they could discuss the issues. The teacher felt at the end of the project that she had a deeper relationship with him than before.

He has a very low self-esteem, putting himself down constantly and always pushing boundaries. However the teacher felt it had improved over the time of the project. He recognises others' mental health state, but doesn't show or communicate concern.

Pupil G has a very strong, supportive home base, and enjoys lots of activities outside school. He struggles emotionally and socially. He often thinks he's done something wrong - either behaviour or school work. He finds it difficult to explain what he is feeling and what is upsetting him. Puberty and seizure activity complicate this.

His self-esteem is variable – sometimes fragile; sometimes robust. He rarely comments on how well he's done at something. The school supports him through positive reinforcement making sure he has plenty of self-esteem boosting opportunities (e.g. after school clubs, activities he loves and short breaks). They also provide some 1:1 sessions re peer relationships through social stories.

He recognises when someone is angry or upset, but does not comment on it unless asked. He tends to shut down when he's anxious or say something irrelevant that he thinks the person with him might want to hear. Little has changed for him emotionally over the project, but whereas before the project his play with others tended to be too physical, it is now more appropriate.

He has responded well to journal activities. It's difficult to say if he found specific themes challenging. His mood was inconsistent in comparison to how he can be at other times. His teacher felt he may have responded better if the journal session had been at a different time to Monday morning!

Teacher perceptions of impact

Three of the four teachers were very positive about the journals' impact on pupils' social and emotional development, but also pointed out that differences in pupils' emotional understanding and behaviours might also have been due to other factors such as becoming more mature, settling into school, getting to know each other better, changes in home situation, etc.

It's hard to know what the journals have done and what being in a class together for a year has done. My group seem to have really, really come together as a group. [Talking of a pupil who was upset and her class mates]... They all came in and they all offered her comfort and support. At the beginning of the year, they would have come and told me that she was upset. They all thought of things [to help her]. It's hard to know if it's related [to the journals] or not. There are elements of the journals that have just meant they are more aware. (KS2 teacher)

Three of the four teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the impact of the journals in giving teachers opportunities to support pupils in a therapeutic way and pupils' opportunities to discuss issues

and concerns in ways they had not previously. They emphasised the importance of quality time to work with pupils on the journals.

The KS3 teacher commented:

'I've been teaching for years and never known quite how to help at such an important level... Because [these issues] are written down in the journals, I know that it's OK to talk about these issues.

The journals at each key stage reflect progressive stages in children's emotional development and understanding. The teachers noted that the thinking behind the journals was different to other PSHE materials, and that it was important to grasp this:

I think understanding where [the author has] come from in creating the journals is really important... [B]efore I had the opportunity to talk to Marilyn, I did see them more as a book of activities to promote mental wealth whereas since speaking to her, you know her logic behind creating them and the importance of it, and it makes a difference... her adavance that these are not text books or work sheets. And I think perhaps looking at all those themes and knowing that actually each was really carefully crafted and it wasn't just that it would be a nice thing for [pupils] to feel more positively about themselves and other people; it was that [emotional] journey in [the books]. (KS2 teacher)

Teachers noted change in pupils' emotional understanding before and after the mental wealth journal intervention. Before the project, it had been generally agreed that pupils were below age-expected levels emotionally. One teacher commented in the final group interview:

It's increased language; it's the awareness; it's the acknowledgement of their feelings; and just about recognition. That's definitely what's changed. It's like all of the different levels [of feeling] that they didn't even know existed before... even have not experienced but now, in terms of empathy, recognising that other people have experienced things that they haven't, and the differences there as well.

They also noted the change in relationships between the pupils:

KS2 teacher: They like the subject [journal sessions], because they're all relating to it in their own way, but actually they're listening to each other as well.

KS3 teacher: They're really interested.

Co-ordinator (BC): Because they don't know other people's experiences. The interest, from [Pupil G] especially... Watching everybody's... listening to everybody's answer. They're interested in hearing other people's experiences...

KS3 teacher: It's completely different isn't it?" Nobody tries to top each other. [Slight disagreement re couple of pupils]

There were also benefits from finding out the good things their peers saw in them. One teacher described their class session:

You could see the body language of the children change as they heard nice things about themselves. Then I said what are they proud of, and they actually came out with things that were entirely different to what other people had said about them. Someone was saying about [one pupil] that they were kind, they were thoughtful and had a good sense of humour. And then I said [to the pupil], 'What are you proud of?' And they said 'That I go in my stander even when I don't want to'. But if it wasn't for the things that people had said to them, there was no way that they would have said that. *[gender specific pronouns replaced to protect identity]*

Opportunities for pupils to talk about issues

Teachers felt that the journals lowered barriers within the class group and gave pupils opportunities to discuss issues that otherwise would not have been discussed. All the teachers talked about how few opportunities pupils with disabilities get to relate to one another and talk about what they really feel, and how much they bottle up, with the risk of future mental health implications. Teachers described group conversations with pupils during the journal sessions about things that upset them they had never shared before – about being teased about their disability in mainstream schools; their anger about incidents or circumstances in the past; about the loss of people close to them; the personal impact of their disability. When pupils did this, they found their peers had had parallel experiences and feelings. As the KS3 teacher asked rhetorically, 'Without the stimulus of the journals, when would we ever have had that conversation? When else would we have talked about it?' The teachers felt that the journals had created an 'environment of trust'.

One effect of pupils not being used to talking with one another is that they were very reliant on adults to mediate interactions with each other. This was particularly noted by the KS1 teacher. The KS2 and 3 teachers agreed. The KS2 teacher remarked that her pupils would ask each other questions if she prompted them to, but rarely spontaneously, while the KS3 teacher commented of her pupils that 'Some of them genuinely cannot think of anything [in response to journal questions]. They do not know how to respond...' She had also noticed that when pupils spoke in class they 'take on an adult role as though they are in charge, not interacting'. However, later in the journal interventions, her class had become more used to group discussions: 'Through talking, they were communally gaining an understanding of what we were trying to think of.' The KS4 pupils, however, had grasped the idea of discussion from the beginning. Their teacher observed: 'They're into discussion. They want to talk about things together.'

Teachers also described the need to model openness, trust and sharing for their pupils if they were expecting them to do the same:

'I think I talk more about my own feelings about things during the day...– the mood I'm in, and things that have happened and how I reacted to them' (KS2 teacher)

They talked about the positive outcomes of this, and KS4 teacher agreed, saying, 'I think it makes them feel safer,' and also the pupils' relationship with their teacher 'the children begin to see you're a person' (KS3 teacher). However, the KS3 teacher went on to say that one of the pupils had started to probe in a slightly inappropriate way, and that teachers would have to beware of that and be careful not to overstep professional boundaries.

Journal impact outside journal sessions

Three of the four teachers also talked about the impact of the journal sessions going beyond the sessions: 'They've talked a lot more about feelings and emotions through other subjects' (KS2 teacher). The pupils also remembered the journals from week to week, and asked about them. One teacher commented:

Last week [a pupil] who was using the journals I thought was least bothered about using them, said 'Are we not doing the journals today?'. And I said, 'Yeah, we are.' And he said, 'Oh – yes!' ...That really surprised me

Pupils also applied what they learned from the journals in different situations. One pupil, seeing two peers involved in a disagreement, commented to his teacher, 'Do you think he's remembered his journals, and what we should do about friendship?' The teacher noted, 'There was a problem...he made that link directly with the journals.' Another pupil to make himself feel better when he felt down, chose to look at what he really liked in his journal to cheer himself up.

Teachers spontaneously reflected on how ways they were bringing points from journal sessions through into other lessons. For example, reminding a pupil, 'What was our strategy when faced with something we couldn't do?' Learning from the journals also gave the pupils insights into other lessons. The KS3 teacher, also the music teacher, observed that 'In September [before the project], if I had said that the song is about raising self-esteem, they wouldn't have known what I meant; now they totally get it'

Future work with the journals

Working with these new resources in a new way as part of a development initiative, teachers appreciated the opportunities to meet together with the research co-ordinators, the journal author and each other: I don't think we would have done it differently. We've had times when we thought 'Oh are we doing this right, but because we've had time to discuss as a group and sessions with Marilyn [the author], we've been... I know we've been anxious, but you [Bev] saying 'This is really good,' 'This is really positive' – just having that encouragement – [helped us get over it]. (KS3 teacher)

Suggestions for making the journals more accessible

As a result of teachers and pupils working with the journals, as well as the informal evaluations from the KS5 pupils, the following recommendations were made for making the journals more accessible for pupils with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities.

- Pupils wanted to use their actual journals rather than enlarged photocopies of the pages. It would have helped for journals to be in A4 format (like the KS1 journal) to allow for larger text and more room for large writing / symbolled text and photos to be stuck in (This comment was also fed back from KS5 pupils about the KS4 journal.)
- Extra pages to record what pupils wanted to (as in the KS2 journal) due to fine motor skill difficulties/larger handwriting
- A larger text font and a better colour contrast to make the text easier to read
- In the KS3 journal, grungy colours are suitable for many teenagers, but the KS3 teacher mentioned her pupils would have liked the artwork to be more exciting and visually attractive
- The KS4 teacher felt that the journal for KS3 was pitched at a good level for her KS4 group:

Although some of the words were a little bit hard – things like.... Words like, ‘Comedians’. There’s some, like J, who know what it means when you say the word but not when they read the word. They know about ‘Comedians’... You know, Russell Howard... all sorts of comedians. [After you’ve given them an example,] they are right there with their knowledge

- KS5 pupils’ feedback suggested online versions of the journals would make it easier for pupils to record their journal entries, including those who use eye-pointing technology, ‘so we can totally personalise, add, reduce, add pictures’
- In the KS3 journal, some references (e.g. to postcards) could be updated to reflect the electronic communication of the IT generation
- In the KS4 journal, the teacher felt that quotes could be updated to include those from younger role models

While the KS5 pupils could use ‘Live Out Loud’ (KS3 journal) independently, they needed teacher support and group discussion to access ‘It’s All in the Mind (KS4 journal)’. The pupils commented that: the journal made them think about things they would not usually think about; that it made them think more deeply about things than usual (sometimes too deep!). They commented that it was more complicated than ‘Live Out Loud’ (KS3) and was a bit too abstract for them. One pupil said they liked the quotes. The other pupil said they enjoyed looking through the book, but wanted more structure – the teacher asked whether a ‘mid-way’ book with KS4 content but a KS3 structure might work.

Conclusion

Three of the four teachers involved in the project were whole hearted in their recommendation that Chadsgrove Teaching School committed itself to introducing the Mental Wealth journals across the school as part of the Positive Mental Health curriculum. They felt that the benefits to the pupils involved and their own PSHE teaching had been significant. However they emphasised that the benefits had come largely from training received from the journals’ author, which promoted a therapeutic rather than a target based approach, and deeply influenced the way they approached the journal sessions with the pupils. They were keen that the pupils involved in the project should continue with the journals so that the benefits they had experienced in increased emotional understanding, opportunities to share within a safe environment, and increased well-being should continue. The teachers were also clear that, as a therapeutic emotional wellbeing approach, weekly quality time needed to be set aside for pupils embarking on the Mental Wealth journal journey, that it should continue across their school careers following the series of journals and that it should not be seen as expendable or part of a pick-and-mix approach to PSHE.

A key aim of the journals’ emotional wellbeing journey is that pupils develop access to a range of resilience thinking strategies and behaviours that will continue to support their ‘mental wealth’. Over the course of the project, this process was started, and pupils showed evidence of applying their new thought strategies in other situations in school, but for these strategies to become embedded and extended so that pupils are able to use them automatically, ongoing work and support is needed. Teachers also reported that they had spontaneously begun to highlight concepts taught through the journals within other lessons, which helped to embed mental wealth strategies for their pupils. It would be helpful if this approach became recognised and encouraged across the school to help support a ‘total’ mental health curriculum

To continue to build their resilience behaviours and strategies – their ‘mental wealth’ – pupils also need to understand how to use favourite activities to lift their mood when they felt down, worried or anxious, for example. As a first step for one KS1 pupil, the teacher created a box of favourite sensory materials – hard

materials and objects that made a noise when rubbed and made them smile. The intervention period finished before the teacher could develop subsequent stages, enabling the pupil to request and use the box to lift their mood. This development would be a useful focus for future research, building on the present project. Another interesting focus for future research would be the impact of mental wealth journal training and use of the journals with pupils on teacher professional development in PHSE teaching.

As mentioned above the 'Inquiring Minds' questionnaire was more useful than the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (and supplementary questions), being specifically related to pupil resilience behaviours and use of resilience strategies. It would be useful to explore if any existing resilience checklists generated relevant information on resilience behaviours and strategies, and if not, whether the 'Inquiring Minds' questionnaire could be developed into a checklist format. It would also have been useful, if unrealistically time consuming, to video sessions more frequently. Teachers and teaching assistants found that, once the videos had been analysed and shared with them, it gave them insights and ideas about pupil resilience development that they had missed in the practicalities of directing the session.

Thinking about outcomes for pupils, three of the four teachers felt that the most important gain for them could be summarised in a corroborated statement voiced by one of them:

[T]he biggest thing to come out of the journals has been that you can be anything, [feel] anywhere between [happy and sad], and *all* of them are OK. So [pupils] often talk now about being sad but they [also] talk more about why and explain it; and they can identify it more than they could before... They've got more [understanding] that it's temporary.

The teachers also shared thoughts on how they felt using the mental wealth journals had made a difference to their relationship with pupils. One commented:

I do think I've seen a different side to them, definitely. I do feel it's given me opportunities... This is just completely different, and you do get a real insight into their lives and how they think about things and... I would say 'Yes, I do think it's made a difference.'

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