BrainCanDo

CIRL
Tony Little Centre for
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in Learning

THE TONY LITTLE CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH IN LEARNING

RESILIENCE PROJECT IMPACT REPORT

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From July 2019 through to July 2020 BrainCanDo worked with The Tony Little Centre for Innovation in Research in Learning (CIRL), Eton College, to design, implement and evaluate a classroom-based character education intervention. The purpose of this project was to develop a programme that could be readily adopted and implemented into existing PSHE and wellbeing programmes in a range of different secondary school contexts for pupils in Key Stage 3 (Year 9).

A total of ten varied secondary schools from across the South East of England were recruited to trial the character education programme. The secondary settings comprised co-educational comprehensive schools, single sex grammar schools, and single sex and co-educational independent day and boarding schools. In November 2019, key contacts in each of the participating schools were invited to nominate members of staff who would have responsibility for delivering the character education programme to attend a one-day training session held at CIRL, Eton College. During this training day, teachers were introduced to the character education framework and given the opportunity to comment on the resources and materials produced to support the delivery of the programme. Following from this training day a repository of resources accompanying the programme were made available to all teachers through a shared Dropbox folder (further details and a programme for this initial training day can be found in Appendix 1).

The character education intervention was composed of six individual sessions, each focusing on a core character attribute connected to building resilience, drawing upon the work of Peterson and Seligman (2004). We advised that schools incorporate the delivery of these six sessions into existing PSHE and wellbeing programmes running within their schools and deliver the sessions consecutively between January–March 2020 (the Spring/Lent term). The timescale for the implementation and evaluation of the programme across participating schools included the recruitment of schools, the training, and the implementation of the intervention over January to March 2020.

Due to Covid-19 there was some disruption to the timescale for the project that left many of the participating schools unable to complete the post surveys. However, all of the schools recruited to the project were able to complete pre-survey measures; and the majority implemented the character education programme and provided feedback via focus groups that were conducted before school closures were announced (see Table 3 for a summary of the administration of the character education programme across all schools).

This report contains the findings from the qualitative feedback collected via focus groups and the data that was collected in the pre surveys completed by all participating schools and the pre and post-survey comparative analyses for the small number of schools able to complete both survey measures.

The main findings to emerge from the focus groups indicated:

- Pupils and staff valued the opportunity to explore the concepts and themes in the character education programme.
- The opportunity to share reflections about one's strengths, goals, and emotions was felt to be normally lacking during a busy school day and the students welcomed the opportunity to pause and reflect.
- Pupils in this year group do not typically have the opportunity to consider such concepts within existing PSHE and wellbeing programmes, and teachers and pupils alike felt it was important to introduce these concepts at this age or even at a younger age.
- Staff and pupils mentioned that when it came to the implementation of the programme there was not enough time to really reflect upon and embed the concepts covered. It may be beneficial to consider expanding the length of time during which the programme is implemented to allow more time for reflection and application of the concepts discussed
- Even though students did not always explicitly recognise how the concepts they covered in the course link to resilience, they were able to talk about them in a way that showed the benefits of adopting them in their everyday lives.
- The pupils saw keeping a journal as beneficial.
- The pupils expressed positive opinions about completing the surveys as this process gave them the opportunity to reflect upon areas they would not normally reflect upon.

Analysis of the quantitative data collected through the pre and post-survey measures yielded some interesting findings:

- Analysis of the pre-survey data indicated that, overall, males had significantly lower scores on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) than females. This shows that at the start of the project female pupils were self-reportedly experiencing greater difficulties than male pupils were, or those who identified as neither 'male' nor 'female'.
- Although female pupils reported experiencing greater difficulties than male pupils, they also reported significantly higher scores for the Prosocial Scale, indicating that at the start of the programme the female pupils reported engaging in more prosocial behaviours than the male pupils, or those who identified as neither 'male' nor 'female'.
- Analysis of the CD-RISC scale indicated that males had a significantly higher score than female pupils, showing higher levels of resilience as measured on this scale. Taken together these findings indicate that at the start of the programme the male pupils reported experiencing fewer emotional and behavioural difficulties, engaging in fewer prosocial behaviours, but showing higher overall levels of resilience than female pupils.

Although a very small sample of pupils completed the pre and post surveys (n=30), we were able to find some interesting preliminary results:

- Comparison of responses demonstrated that, overall, the scores on the SDQ were significantly lower in the post surveys than in the pre surveys. This indicates that pupils reported experiencing fewer difficulties in the post survey than in the pre survey.

- When further comparisons were run for each of the sub-scales of the SDQ the externalising scores were significantly lower in the post surveys than in the pre surveys. Taken together, the pre and post-survey comparisons indicate that participation in the character education programme may have impacted on pupils' ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour so that they experienced fewer emotional and behavioural difficulties at the end of the programme than they did at the start.

The early findings to emerge from this project and the analyses carried out on a very small sample size are promising, showing that pupils valued participation in the programme and there was a significant decrease in self-reported experiences of emotional difficulties after they had completed the programme. With a larger sample size and extension of the character education programme over a longer period to allow more time for reflection and pupil engagement, we would expect this programme to have an even greater impact on pupils' ability to manage themselves emotionally and behaviourally. The researchers acknowledge that because of the disruption in the administration of the post surveys and the closure of schools it is not appropriate to make generalisations at this stage. However, the character intervention has displayed promising early results; and we aim to conduct further research using the materials we developed, taking the feedback from pupils and staff into account.

It is now widely acknowledged that schools have a responsibility to develop the character of their pupils. Since September 2019, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), which is responsible for school inspections in the state sector, has evaluated the personal development of learners by inspecting the extent to which schools support pupils to develop their character, defined as 'a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others' (GOV.UK, 2019).

There is growing recognition of the link between the development of character strengths and wellbeing in children and adolescents. For example, several constructs such as social connectedness, gratitude, empathy, growth mindset and resilience, among others, have been found to be have a positive correlation with wellbeing and happiness (for example, Tough, 2012; Bernard, 2004). There have also been numerous studies which outline the link between character strengths and wellbeing (for example, Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Kleiman et al., 2013, among others). More specifically, the above studies have found links between perceived wellbeing and one's ability to reach one's potential. Even though the studies do not establish a causation between developing the character strengths and wellbeing, the positive link between character strengths, resilience and a flourishing, purposeful life has led many educators to research the outcomes of interventions which are based on positive psychology. There have been several articles written which promote such interventions in schools to enable pupils to fulfil their potential (for example, Lavy, 2018; Bates-Krakoff, 2017, among others). Such interventions have been found to have many positive outcomes, from life satisfaction to happiness and well-being predictors.

Duckworth et al. (2007) suggest that some positive attributes are important to one's academic success. Among those listed are 'creativity, vigour, emotional intelligence, charisma, self-confidence, emotional stability, and physical attractiveness' (*ibid*., 1087). However, they suggest that one character trait in particular is crucial if an individual is to achieve success in whichever pursuit they are engaged in: grit. Grit is defined as 'perseverance and passion for long-term goals' (*ibid*.). Grit entails working strenuously towards challenges and maintaining effort and interest over extended periods despite failure, adversity and plateaus in progress. The 'gritty' individual approaches achievement as a marathon; his or her advantage is stamina. Whereas disappointment or boredom signals to others that it is time to change trajectory and cut losses, the gritty individual stays the course (*ibid*., 1087–88).

Closely linked to grit, resilience refers to a person's ability to bounce back after adversity, hardship or failure: 'abandoning the imprint of the past' (Cyrulnik, 2009, 5). Moreover, Southwick and Charney (2012) note that resilience is a 'prized characteristic' among employers, a fact emphasised by the World Economic Forum (2015), which listed 'grit, persistence and adaptability' as key character attributes that will increasingly be in demand (as cited in Weston, 2019, 12). According to Bernard (2004), resilience is associated with students who have higher levels of social skills and

have problem-solving skills, a sense of autonomy and self-efficacy and a sense of purpose, hope and optimism.

Karen Reivich (2008) has suggested seven learnable skills that teachers can promote in the classroom to help students develop their resilience:
1. emotional awareness
2. impulse control
3. realistic optimism
4. flexible thinking
5. empathy
6. self-efficacy
7. risk-taking

The purpose of this project was to develop, implement and evaluate a short classroom-based character education programme to be delivered to pupils aged 13-14 years during existing PSHE and wellbeing programmes in a range of different secondary school settings.

More specifically, the research questions for this study were:
1. To what extent does a three-month long intervention affect resilience levels in Year 9 pupils?
2. To what extent does the intervention have an impact on the mental wellbeing of Year 9 pupils?
3. What are the barriers and opportunities in developing school-wide interventions across schools?

OUTLINE OF THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Strengths of character is a classification model by Seligman and Peterson drawing on positive psychology. Their ideas which are outlined in their book *Character Strengths and Virtues* (2004) classify character strengths which for the authors show some common traits, namely being morally valued in their own right; being trait-like, manifest in thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and being somewhat consistent across situations and time; and being distinct from the other character strengths in the classification.

The classification includes the following virtues and character strengths (Table 1). For the purposes of this study, we decided to include sessions on perspective, persistence, social intelligence, teamwork, self-regulation, gratitude, and hope. These character strengths cover all the virtues in the classification model. Even though there is nothing preventing those responsible for the education of young people from concentrating on one or two of these character strengths, as Park and Peterson (2009) suggest this would not allow them to have a more holistic view of good character. It is also difficult to extract one from another when it comes to character development; all of the below character strengths are equally important in promoting a good life.

Virtues	Character strengths
Wisdom	Creativity, curiosity, love of learning, judgment, perspective
Courage	Bravery, persistence, zest, honesty
Humanity	Love, kindness, social intelligence
Justice	Teamwork, fairness, leadership
Temperance	Forgiveness, prudence, self-regulation, humility
Transcendence	Appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, spirituality

TABLE 1: THE VIA CHARACTER STRENGTHS CLASSIFICATION

The character education programme consisted of six separate sessions, each related to a different core character quality that could be delivered as stand-alone sessions to Year 9 pupils. Each of the sessions is built around a model of reflexivity and is designed to help pupils to explore a range of strategies and skills they can employ in order to build their resilience and enhance their wellbeing. For each session in the programme, teachers were provided with a number of resources to support delivery. These included a skeleton lesson plan with suggested follow-up activities alongside a 'Reflective Journal' with activities for pupils to complete to help them to engage further with the concepts covered during each session.

The sessions were designed so that teachers could guide pupils towards engagement with the core concepts delivered throughout the resilience programme. Each session provided an opportunity to **explain** the core concept and **engage** pupils with it. Teachers were then encouraged to use the time in each of the sessions to **explore** the concept by giving further illustrations and examples and allowing pupils time to work through concepts by collaborative discussion and by individually completing the exercises presented in the Reflective Journal. Each session closed with a challenge for pupils to consider for themselves how they could **extend** the concept they had discussed in the session to other areas of their lives or in school lessons over the coming weeks before the next session.

Each of the sessions had a primary focus but was designed so that the various character traits that we were seeking to develop were woven throughout all of the sessions (see Table 2 for a breakdown of the sessions and the character concepts covered in each one).

Session 1	Self-control	Persistence and teamwork
Session 2	Persistence	Self-control and perspective

Session 3	Gratitude	Social intelligence and perspective
Session 4	Perspective	Self-control and social intelligence
Session 5	Social intelligence	Teamwork and gratitude
Session 6	Teamwork	Persistence and gratitude

TABLE 2. OUTLINE OF THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

METHOD

PROCEDURE

Ten secondary schools were recruited to participate in the project. The sample was composed of a mix of secondary school settings including co-educational comprehensive schools, single sex grammar schools, and single sex and co-educational independent day and boarding schools. In November 2019, representative teachers from all participating schools were invited to CIRL, Eton College, to participate in a one-day training to prepare them to deliver the character education programme in their own schools. The same training was delivered on two different days to accommodate as many teachers as participating schools chose to send. The training day included an introduction to the current educational landscape concerning character education, an explanation of the framework adopted for this character education programme, and an introduction to some of the course materials. There was also time to discuss the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from teachers and pupils in the schools to enable us to evaluate participation in the programme. The ethics of data collection were discussed alongside the timeframe for the delivery of the project. Throughout the day the representatives were invited to give their feedback on existing materials and resources in preparation for the delivery of the programme (for an outline and programme of the day see Appendix 1.). At this stage we had resilience education expert Dr Kathy Weston and character education expert Professor Bill Lucas participate in and help to shape the training days to provide additional resources and support for the delivery of the programme.

Following on from the feedback and discussion with teachers through the training days, a repository of resources was collated and made available to nominated teachers via Dropbox. Resources included a 'Teacher Handbook' with lesson plans for the delivery of the six sessions, an accompanying 'Reflective Journal' for pupils to use in each of the sessions and a series of PowerPoint presentations to guide the delivery of each of the sessions. It was made clear that the resources provided a guide for the delivery of the character education programme but that each

school was given the freedom to implement the programme in a way that was most suited to them in their particular school setting.

Each school was asked to begin the character education programme with a 'launch' to the pupils and the distribution of an information letter and 'opt out' consent form to parents and pupils two weeks before the administration of the pre-survey (see Appendix 2). PowerPoint slides were prepared to assist schools with the launch of the programme and members of the core research team were also available on request to visit each of the schools to support the launch of the programme. Schools were further supported by members of the core research team who arranged to visit every school partway through the implementation of the programme to gain feedback from a selection of pupils and staff on their experiences of the programme via focus groups.

In order to maximise the ecological validity of the research and enable a real-world trial of the programme in such varied school contexts, we purposively allowed a degree of flexibility for schools in how and when they chose to implement the character education programme and administer the pre and post surveys. The majority of schools chose to run the programme during the Spring/Lent term from early January through to the beginning of March 2020. All schools were asked to complete a project plan (found in Appendix 3) detailing how they would implement the character education programme within their schools and the timeframe they would follow. In order to evaluate the impact of the character education programme on pupils' wellbeing and resilience, schools were asked to administer pre and post-survey measures. Schools were instructed to administer the pre surveys after the launch of the programme and before the first session and to administer the post surveys during the week following completion of the final session in the programme. Although the majority of schools recruited to the project were able to implement the character education programme and to facilitate focus group visits, there was some disruption to the quantitative evaluation due to Covid-19. UK school closures were announced on the 18th March 2020 and this interfered with the timetabled completion of the post-survey measures for the majority of schools that had chosen to implement the character education programme from January through to March. Details of the timeframes for evaluation of the character education programme and Covid-19 disruption across each participating school can be found in Table 3. To maintain full anonymity and confidentiality all participating schools will be referred to by a code number 1- 10. The information included in Table 3 is taken from the project plans each school completed together with information on the dates when the pre and post-survey measures were actually completed, and the focus groups conducted.

School Total number of students (n=957)	Pre survey % response rate	Post survey % response rate	Pre survey date	Post survey date	Focus group date
1	100% (N=16)	N/A	12-20/01/2020	N/A	N/A

2	81% (N=33)	78% (N=32)	20-22/01/2020	16-25/03/2020	02/03/2020
3	22% (N=33)	N/A	28/01/2020 to 05/02/2020	N/A	10/03/2020
4	90% (N=161)	N/A	15-20/01/2020	N/A	24/02/2020
5	94% (N=129)	9% (N=42)	10/01/2020	16-19/03/2020	16/03/2020
6	84% (N=130)	N/A	12/12/2019 – 9/01/2020	N/A	13/03/2020
7	73% (N=63)	N/A	9/01/2020	N/A	09/03/2020
8	85% (N=60)	60% (N=12)	08/01/2020	04/03/2020	12/02/2020
9	100% (N=60)		12/12/2019	N/A	N/A
10*	91% (N=58)	N/A	12/03/2020	N/A	N/A

TABLE 3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME ACROSS 10 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

This school was recruited and administered the pre survey but was unable to trial the character education programme due to Covid-19 disruption.

PARTICIPANTS

Due to Covid-19 disruption one school was unable to deliver the character education programme. Therefore, the programme was delivered to approximately 890 Year 9 pupils from across nine secondary schools.

A total of 957 pupils completed the pre survey at the start of the resilience programme, representing an approximate 78% total response rate to the pre surveys.

Due to the disruption caused by Covid-19 the majority of schools were unable to complete the post surveys. However, a total of 86 pupils from across three secondary schools completed the post surveys, representing an approximate 35% response rate to the post surveys.

	Total (N)	Males (N)	Females (N)	Other* (N)
Pre survey	744	368	352	24
Post survey	86	72	9	5

TABLE 4. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PRE AND POST-SURVEY RESPONSES SPLIT BY GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY MEASURES

The quantitative data collected through the pre and post surveys comprised two survey scales: the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Conor-Davison Resilience Scale (CD-RISC).

THE STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ)

The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire designed for use with 3-16 year olds. It exists in several versions to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists and provides a measure of wellbeing. It can be divided into five sub-scales each comprised of five items to give five distinct measures of different aspects of respondents' behaviour and wellbeing:

       1.1. Emotional Problems Scale (labelled 'EP')
       1.2. Conduct Problems Scale (labelled 'CP')
       1.3. Hyperactivity Scale (labelled 'HS')
       1.4. Peer Problems Scale (labelled 'PPS')
       1.5. Prosocial Scale (labelled 'PS')

Each question in the SDQ is rated on a Likert scale from 0-2 (0 = not true; 1 = somewhat true; 2 = certainly true). The highest possible total score for the SDQ is 50.

The 'total difficulties' score for the SDQ is generated by summing scores from the emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems sub-scales, and results in a score that ranges from 0-40.

The sub-scales from the SDQ can also be combined to give a total 'internalising' and 'externalising' score. The externalising score ranges from 0-20 and is the sum of the conduct and hyperactivity scales; as such it gives an indication of the extent to which the young person is displaying problem behaviours. The internalising score ranges from 0-20 and is the sum of the emotional and peer problems scales; it represents the extent to which the young person may be experiencing emotional difficulties that are not necessarily reflected through overt problem behaviours.

For each sub-scale within the SDQ, a higher score indicates greater expression of the traits being measured in that sub-scale. For example, a high score on the hyperactivity scale would indicate high expression of hyperactive behaviours and a high score on the prosocial scale would indicate a high expression of prosocial behaviours.

The SDQ was used in a large national survey of child and adolescent mental health carried out by the Office for National Statistics and funded by the Department of Health. This representative British sample included 10,438 individuals aged between 5 and 15. Complete SDQ information was obtained from 4,228 11-15 year olds (see Meltzer et al., 2000). Because the SDQ has been standardised on a large sample of UK children aged 14-17 years it has been made possible to classify scores attained using the data found in Table 5.

	Close to average	Slightly raised (/lowered)	High (/Low)	Very high (/low)
Total difficulties score	0-14	15-17	18-19	20-40
Emotional problems score	0-4	5	6	7-10
Conduct problems score	0-3	4	5	6-10
Hyperactivity score	0-5	6	7	8-10
Peer problems score	0-2	3	4	5-10
Prosocial score	7-10	6	5	0-4

TABLE 5. SCORING CLASSIFICATION FOR THE SDQ BASED ON UK POPULATION STANDARDISED NORMS

THE CONNOR-DAVIDSON RESILIENCE SCALE (CD-RISC)

The CD-RISC is a scale that has been used with various populations as a measure of resilience. The CD-RISC is designed as a self-rating scale in which the respondent is directed to consider a series of statements with reference to the previous month. Respondents are instructed that if a particular situation in the statements has not arisen in the previous month, then the response should be determined by how the person thinks they would have reacted.

The CD-RISC is comprised of 25 items each rated on a Likert scale from 0-4. There are no sub-scales for this survey. Scoring of the scale is based on summing the total of all items, each of which is scored from 0-4. The full range of scores is therefore from 0-100. Higher scores on this scale indicate greater self-reported levels of resilience.

QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUPS

Qualitative feedback on the experiences of trialling the character education programme in schools was collected from a small sample of staff and pupils within each of the participating schools (see Table 3 for details of which schools participated in the focus groups). We asked staff to identify six to ten students who would take part in the focus groups and we also asked staff to participate in focus groups themselves to discuss what barriers they faced and to allow us to better understand how we can refine the programme further.

An open interview format was followed for the focus groups to allow the development and exploration of lines of interest that emerged during the discussions. We used a semi-structured interview schedule to allow for flexibility in exploring the discussion in depth while also ensuring that a similar format was used in all focus groups.

At the start of the focus group sessions with teaching staff the researcher explained the purpose of the session and requested verbal consent to record the session and to include some of the comments and feedback in the final written report. Staff were assured that any contributions would remain anonymous and would not be identifiable as belonging to any individual or school in the final report. The questions for staff followed the skeleton template found in Appendix 5.

In order to ensure that parents gave their fully informed consent for their child's participation in the focus groups, schools were asked to send an information letter and 'opt-out' consent form to the parents of all pupils that were selected to participate in the focus groups. At the start of the focus group sessions, the researcher explained that the pupils had been selected to participate in the focus group and although we valued their feedback they had the right to withdraw at any stage should they not wish to answer any of the questions presented. Pupils were then given an information letter and asked to give their own written consent to participate in the focus group and for their comments to be recorded and included in the final written report. Again, pupils were assured that any contributions would remain entirely confidential and would not be identifiable as belonging to any individual or school in the final report. The questions for pupils followed the skeleton template found in Appendix 4.

The focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed by a member of the core research team and then analysed using thematic analysis following a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Straus, 1967).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSES: FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

Of the ten schools recruited to the project, we were able to visit seven to observe one of the sessions being delivered and to conduct focus groups with a selection of staff and pupils in the school in order to record their experiences of participating in the character education programme.

PUPIL FOCUS GROUPS

In the seven schools we visited we met with a selection of pupils who had completed all six sessions of the character education programme. The focus groups were recorded and a written transcript was generated. A grounded theory approach was adopted and responses from across all seven schools were coded using thematic analysis, then combined and grouped according to four main themes:

1. Helpful aspects of the character education programme
2. Character education programme delivery
3. Understanding of the concept of 'resilience'
4. Long-term impact of the character education programme

This report summarises the main findings to emerge from these focus groups across these seven secondary school settings.

HELPFUL ASPECTS OF THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME (PUPIL FEEDBACK)

Although pupils noted a variety of ways in which they felt they had benefitted from participation in the programme, it was universally acknowledged across all schools that pupils did feel that the character education programme had helped them in some way, and that it had introduced new concepts for them to think about. A number of pupils commented that they had learned new skills and thought about things in a different way, or had adopted a new approach to situations after participating in the programme.

A consistent thread to emerge throughout all of the focus groups was that pupils valued having dedicated time during their school day in which to reflect upon their thoughts and feelings. Second to this, a number of pupils also noted that they valued the opportunity to discuss personal issues with others in the safe space provided in school. It was also noted that pupils enjoyed taking time to really consider themselves, their characteristics and the kind of people they wanted to be. The sessions that pupils mentioned as being particularly beneficial were those related to goal-setting, empathy, persistence, optimism and gratitude.

"It's good to reflect on what you've done, don't really get that opportunity"

"I liked when we were doing character strengths, when we had to find a person to want to be more like - that person could be anyone and I liked that"

"I think that it really makes you think about certain traits that you may not necessarily have, and it makes you want to improve. If I'm not very resilient I may work on becoming more resilient in the future"

"Liked writing a letter about being thankful - wrote one to my mum and then went home and told her. It made me happy and it made her happy."

"It was genuinely really good to help make you a better person, and it has made me think no matter what difficult situation you are in, it has helped us to know what to do in that situation and what's the right thing."

[Boys] "Don't really discuss this normally but felt fine discussing, we can talk to each other most of the time but not personal things"

"Good way to express your feelings. Trust each other not to tell, be honest"

"It helps us talk to friends, and open up about problems"

"Enjoyed thinking about when things didn't go to plan, how to fix and reflect"

"Enjoying the discussion. A lot of different opinions and views expressed in class. I can be persuaded"

"It is really interesting, new and helpful"

"The fact you can look at that growth personally is very self-motivating"

"Gratitude was like a wow! I don't really remember where I am grateful – it was an eye opener

"I never think of being grateful it just happens"

"Generally, all really good to make you a better person"

[The last session on optimism] "Makes you see the brighter side of things"

"Learnt something new in every session"

"Course is good as asks you questions about things you never think about."

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY (PUPIL FEEDBACK)

One of the things pupils valued most about the character education programme was the opportunity to discuss their thoughts, feelings and opinions with others and as such it was suggested that pupils would like to have less of an emphasis on written reflection and more on discussion throughout the programme. In a similar vein, another theme to emerge was that across secondary school settings pupils would like to have more time for discussion, reflection and practical implementation following each of the sessions. It was felt that delivering all six sessions of the programme consecutively did not allow enough space for this level of engagement that

pupils would like to have. Pupils suggested that it would be helpful to revisit some of the concepts covered the following year as they move into Year 10 and towards public examinations.

The journals were valued as a safe space in which to express personal thoughts and feelings, and pupils liked having their own book rather than separate sheets of paper for each session. It was suggested that the journal could be made more visually appealing and could include a greater range of interactive activities.

"Bit more interaction, not so much writing"

"Personally, I find it more helpful to talk than write"

"Could do more with the sessions"

"I think there should be less written – we should still write stuff but should be more like note-taking than a sheet to fill out"

[we would like more time too] "Discuss other people's opinions"

[The journal] "Made me feel safer and comfortable to say what was actually on my mind"

[It was useful to] "Read back what you have written"

"Nice to have it all in one place and not sheets of paper"

"Needs to be more interactive, reflective journals more pictures"

"Be good to go back to them, in year 10"

"Like idea of a booklet, helps quiet people"

[The journal] "Gives you a feeling that someone is hearing, relieving that someone is listening"

"A lot of people would be scared of voicing their true thoughts. Writing down what you really think is useful. Having it on paper keeps it more private"

"If the booklet was a little bit smaller if we were to discuss it and write a couple of points but not writing loads. We want to write because we want to remember but just put down little bullet points about what has been said"

"I think we need to change it to more verbal – for me that would be much better and more enjoyable"

UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF 'RESILIENCE' (PUPIL FEEDBACK)

Across all settings, pupils had a very good grasp of the concept of resilience and were able to articulate clearly what they understood by the word 'resilience'. Responses included an ability to bounce back, being reflective and strong, learning from mistakes, not giving up, maintaining a sense of gratitude, having inner strength and being brave.

"When there are barriers, carrying on, whatever you want to do you can do it"

"Like building inner strength"

"Even if things are really bad looking at things in a better way so you can come out the other end, if that time comes you know how to handle it"

"If you're in a sticky situation, keep trying, until you find a solution"

"Don't give up when you fail at something, no matter what the challenge is"

"Be grateful for times going well but also when it doesn't go well, can grow through that."

"Not being afraid to comment of something you might get laughed at for"

FEELINGS ABOUT HOW THE PROGRAMME MIGHT HELP THEM IN THE FUTURE (PUPIL FEEDBACK)

When considering the more long-term impact of participating in the programme there was a range of quite mixed responses. One of the themes we identified was that pupils felt that the programme had impacted on more than resilience and had a much broader reach. Some pupils felt that the benefits of participating in the programme were more short-term; whereas others expressed the ways in which the skills they had learned throughout the programme could be of use to them in their future lives.

"I don't think it has helped my resilience. I feel like it has given me good things in other areas. My resilience has not improved but other areas have."

"Some aspects of the course have boosted everyone's confidence e.g. saying something positive to each other" [gratitude]

"We've learned how different people may feel in different situations - they may react differently – this is helpful to know"

"Optimism has helped me – you have to always look on the bright side instead of always thinking negatively"

"I feel like let's say you're on a sport team and you mess up and get put on the bench, this could help you in this scenario, not to be negative, opportunity to grow and improve your skills"

"When you are faced with challenges you can be optimistic."

"Good life skills, can use later"

"Good, helpful in life, it teaches life skills"

[It can help my] "Attitude. A bad attitude is going to give up. You need to keep persevering in life"

"If feeling down, think about what you are grateful for, can make you happier thinking about what you have"

"Gratitude – discussion with family, actually helps us in our lives, even if people don't realise it"

"Secondary school is the time you decide to deviate and find out who you want to be, where you want to go and what you want to do. So, having these guidelines really allows us - it's a really good spring board to bounce off of/into whatever we have chosen... the scaffolding to shape our skills and our personalities, because if we keep these moral guidelines we can allow ourselves to follow all our original goals."

"It definitely made me more positive in the moment but I'm not sure we've had long enough on it to help me in the long run"

TEACHER FOCUS GROUPS

In six of the schools we visited we met with selected staff who had delivered the character education programme. The focus groups were recorded and a written transcript was generated. A grounded theory approach was adopted and responses from across all six schools were coded using thematic analysis, then combined and grouped according to five main themes:

1. Conceptual challenges
2. Character education programme delivery
3. Logistical issues
4. Impact on pupils
5. Suggestions for future development

CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES (TEACHER FEEDBACK)

Across some of the secondary school settings teachers noted that the concepts covered in the character education programme were quite demanding for Year 9 pupils to engage with. It was recognised that for many pupils of this age this would be the first time that they were introduced to these concepts and as such they may find it challenging to express their ideas and responses in writing. Pupils may need more time unpacking the definitions of key terms such as 'optimism' before being able to engage fully with the course materials.

"It's been tricky – some of the concepts are hard for pupils to get their head around"

"It's a young age to be bringing in these ideas - I've not seen it with people this young. Quite a novel course for third form"

"They like the discussion but struggle to write it down. Struggle for the maturity to write down their thoughts"

"Year 9 is quite young to get to this self-reflective place – they remember what they have done but not much self-reflection"

"Need a definition at the beginning of each session"

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY (TEACHER FEEDBACK)

The majority of schools visited chose to implement the character education programme across a series of 30-minute sessions that were delivered consecutively. One school allocated one hour to deliver each session; they felt that this was too long and there were not enough course materials to support a session of this length. Those schools that were able to deliver the session in smaller groups where staff and pupils already had strong prior relationships reported the greatest level of engagement and valuable discussion in their pupils.

Teachers felt that the Reflective Journals were useful as they provided a structure and the use of booklets meant that pupils valued them more and were able to revisit what they had written in previous sessions. It was noted that perhaps an online version of the journal could be a helpful way for pupils to maintain privacy and keep a written record of their progress.

Similar to the feedback gathered from pupils, teachers across all secondary school settings suggested that it would be beneficial to have more emphasis on discussion with less written work, and to include a greater variety of activities for pupils to complete in the Reflective Journals. Some practical application of concepts covered was also suggested as a way in which to further engage pupils in the programme and support them to apply some of what they had learned to their daily lives.

The PowerPoint slides were viewed as helpful as they provided structure and reduced the amount of preparation time needed to deliver the sessions; and the clips provided by Dr Kathy Weston were noted as a valuable resource for the delivery of the programme.

A common thread to emerge across secondary school settings was that delivery of the programme felt quite rushed and that it would be beneficial to space the delivery over a longer period within an academic year, e.g. over two terms or across different year groups. The suggestion to integrate the character education programme in all year groups throughout the school was raised as a way in which to enable concepts to be revisited and processed more deeply by pupils as they moved through the school.

The concepts covered in all sessions were viewed as valuable; however, there was a general feeling that Session 1 did not seem to fit with the other sessions and that there was more work needed to integrate that initial session more fully into the programme.

"1 hour is too long"

"Reflective journals should be their own and keep private. Not on paper, "not their world", would prefer online"

"Online journal would be my view, saved in an area, issue about privacy can be overcome"

"I was surprised to hear people have done it over an hour that would be too long. 30 mins works well for us. Maybe we haven't always finished the activity or follow-up activities during the week"

"All-encompassing slides can be talked through – no problem at all. A little bit like it would be if we were delivering a PSHE lesson – slides really useful – not onerous could just open them up and talk through them"

"Reflective journals are really useful because it provides a solid template but there could be more scope for more natural feedback with video entry – a digital entry? Or reflections 1:1 on a camera – video diary"

"Useful to have in a booklet. Normally PSHE is on paper which is scrappy. They care more for a booklet"

"Make it more appealing visually, few pictures and some brainstorm activities rather than block sections where they just write, that would be quite good"

[The School had] "Chosen to deliver the session in quick 30-minute lessons. Then stage 2 is the next day in tutor groups, this gives an opportunity to reflect"

"Session 1 didn't fit in with the rest"

"Our school is small classes, safe, know you very well. Confidential, trust teacher and students, inclusive and open. Unsure how it would work in big classes"

"Really liked 'learning to feel' - Students really engaged with that"

"Revisiting topics, spiral curriculum. Good to visit in more detail"

"Found it much easier to get pupils talking than writing things down – the reflective journals have been a battle some weeks to get them to fill it out meaningfully e.g. one-word answers"

LOGISTICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES (TEACHER FEEDBACK)

Some of the technical, logistical and practical issues that arose during the delivery of the character education programme were that some of the course materials were difficult to access via Dropbox and the link to the initial character strengths survey did not work for some schools. Teachers valued the support offered to project leads via the training days at the start of the programme but suggested that this support could be extended to all teachers with a responsibility for delivering the programme. It was recognised that a clear launch at the start of the programme was important to get the 'buy in' of pupils and staff. Other issues were very specific to the contexts of each school around timetabling and integrating the character education programme into existing PSHE and wellbeing classes within the school. It was suggested that a September launch could be beneficial as pupils would have no prior expectations of 'PSHE' lessons and so may find it easier to adapt to the structure of the character education programme.

"Would logistically be better over two terms"

"Support for the project lead is a priority and is necessary"

"It needs the project lead to have one day of training and then half a day to disseminate to other teachers"

"Would like to come back and reflect on the material"

"Dropbox is a nightmare to use"

"Session 1 needs to introduce course"

"Reality of it didn't quite work" – session 1

"Organisationally having the PowerPoints has been useful because it makes staff lives easier to use materials"

"Implementation during the Lent term is tough – on paper this works but on practice this is challenging due to disruption to wellbeing sessions"

"September roll-out could work because no prior expectations of what PSHE lessons are like for pupils"

IMPACT ON PUPILS (TEACHER FEEDBACK)

A common thread to emerge across secondary school settings was that teachers felt that in order for the programme to have a lasting impact on pupils it was necessary to regularly revisit the concepts covered over a longer timeframe. Overall, teachers felt that those pupils who engaged more fully and participated more thoroughly in the sessions were the ones who would benefit most. It was suggested that small-group follow-up after delivery of each of the main sessions could be a useful way to build greater pupil engagement. Similar to the pupils' reflections there was also a question around whether this programme specifically linked to resilience or had a broader appeal to other areas related to pupil mental health and wellbeing.

"Some seem to be more engaged in school and are a bit more reflective, tentative and considerate. All the rest continue to be teenagers!"

"If anyone has taken anything out of it then it is the most engaged that have benefitted the most"

"Where does resilience stop, and mental health begin?"

"Students have really taken it on board"

"Students are so interested"

"Students feel they are learning personally – learning about themselves"

"Students enjoy reflecting on their own choices/behaviour/looking at themselves in objective way, growth mindset – not something they would normally do"

"Good engagement – discussion in class and in journals"

"There has to be some follow-up for it to be a long-term change"

"I wonder if it would be better to deliver to my tutor group who I know and see regularly – they might be more open to talking in this setting because some sessions are quite personal"

"For some of the quieter ones in the class it's difficult to get them talking about some of this stuff"

"Because they only think about this for 40 minutes a week I don't think they will find the link to resilience"

"They really do appreciate getting chance to talk about feelings and reflect."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT (TEACHER FEEDBACK)

In considering how the character education programme could be developed in the future, teachers from across the full range of secondary school settings had many suggestions: for example, integrating the programme more fully throughout the school and expanding the delivery of the programme over a longer timeframe. Teachers also suggested that the inclusion of additional sessions on concepts like 'kindness' and 'perfectionism' could be beneficial.

"Additional session could be on Perfectionism (suggested as topic of interest of another member of staff not currently taking part in the programme)"

"Good to be extended and revisited. Same topics, see how they feel in later years"

"5-year diaries, a whole year has passed, what's happened since then?"

"Would be good to have 6-8 topics, delivered over a term, in line with school's agenda and school's values, integrated in with PSHE, same term every year, revisit topic, another step, can see growth, endorse and be interested"

"Staff wellbeing committee would also like to take part in this, clearly topical"

The pre-survey data collected from all ten participating schools was analysed. This included descriptive statistics and further inferential statistical comparisons of pre-survey responses split by gender and school. A total of 744 pupils from across ten secondary schools completed the pre-survey measure.

Total	Male	Female	Other*
N=744	N=368	N=352	N=24

TABLE 6. TOTAL NUMBER OF PRE-SURVEY RESPONSES SPLIT BY GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

School	Total (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)	Other*
1	16	15	0	1
2	33	20	10	3
3	33	32	0	1
4	161	83	72	6
5	129	64	63	2
6	130	75	52	3
7	63	0	62	1
8	60	56	0	4
9	60	22	36	2
10	58	0	57	1
Not listed	1	1	0	0

TABLE 7. TOTAL NUMBER (N) OF PRE-SURVEY RESPONSES SPLIT BY SCHOOL AND GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

The analysis in Table 8 below shows the scores for each sub-scale of the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in this combined sample from all ten schools relative to UK-standardised norms. The 'total difficulties' score was derived from the combination of the Emotional Problems (EP), Conduct Problems (CP), Hyperactivity (H) and Peer Problems (PPS) sub-scales of the SDQ.

All of the scores obtained from this sample were 'close to average' in comparison to the UK Average (see Table 5 for descriptors).

SDQ measure	UK Average			Total Schools Average (1-10)			
	Total *(N=4228)*	Male *(N=2135)*	Female *(N=2093)*	Total *(N=744)*	Male *(N=367)*	Female *(N=352)*	Other *(N=25)*
EP	2.8 (2.1)	2.6 (1.9)	3.0 (2.1)	3.62 (2.44)	2.86 (2.17)	4.44 (2.4)	3.42 (3.1)
CP	2.2 (1.7)	2.4 (1.7)	2.0 (1.6)	2.51 (1.77)	2.61 (1.74)	2.36 (1.7)	3.29 (2.73)
HS	3.8 (2.2)	3.9 (2.2)	3.6 (2.2)	4.19 (2.34)	4.07 (2.3)	4.3 (2.32)	4.46 (3.1)
PS	8.0 (1.7)	7.5 (1.7)	8.5 (1.4)	6.95 (1.97)	6.7 (2)	7.4 (1.8)	5.42 (2.9)
PPS	1.5 (1.4)	1.6 (1.4)	1.4 (1.4)	1.93 (1.78)	1.89 (1.8)	1.92 (1.72)	2.75 (2.67)
Total Difficulties	10.3 (5.2)	10.5 (5.1)	10.0 (5.3)	12.26 (5.7)	11.43 (5.38)	13.03 (5.55)	13.92 (9.86)

TABLE 8. SUMMARY OF THE UK AVERAGE (STANDARD DEVIATION) AND TOTAL SCHOOLS AVERAGE (SD) PRE-SURVEY SCORES FOR THE SDQ SUB-SCALES

PRE-SURVEY STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ): TOTAL DIFFICULTIES ANALYSES

The total difficulties score is a measure of the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced and as such is an indicator of overall levels of wellbeing. The total difficulties score was calculated for each participant by summing the EP, CP, HS and PPS sub-scales of the SDQ. The total difficulties score does not include the Prosocial Scale (PS) and as such has a maximum score of 40.

The average total difficulties SDQ scores are split by gender and school in Tables 9 and 10 respectively.

Total	Male	Female	Other*
12.15 (5.7)	11.43 (5.4)	12.87 (5.7)	14.13 (9.7)

TABLE 9. AVERAGE (SD) PRE-SURVEY TOTAL DIFFICULTIES SDQ SCORES SPLIT BY GENDER

School	Total	Male	Female	Other*
1	10.50 (5.7)	10.60 (5.9)	-	9.00
2	12.09 (5.4)	11.00 (4.7)	15.70 (5.7)	7.33 (2.5)
3	11.79 (7.0)	10.94 (5.0)	-	25.00 (21.2)
4	13.42 (6.1)	11.98 (5.8)	15.01 (6.0)	14.17 (6.0)
5	10.65 (5.2)	9.98 (5.0)	10.98 (4.8)	21.50 (13.4)
6	11.62 (5.9)	11.52 (5.7)	11.79 (5.6)	11.00 (15.7)
7	12.48 (5.0)	-	12.31 (4.9)	23.00
8	12.17 (4.9)	12.05 (5.1)	-	13.75 (2.2)
9	13.28 (5.8)	13.05 (4.8)	13.64 (6.1)	9.50 (13.4)
10	13.67 (5)	-	13.82 (4.9)	5

TABLE 10. AVERAGE (SD) PRE-SURVEY TOTAL DIFFICULTIES SDQ SCORES SPLIT BY SCHOOL AND GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

Examination of the descriptive statistics presented in Tables 9 and 10 indicates that there are differences in the scores for the total difficulties sub-scale of the SDQ as a function of both school and gender. Further inferential statistical analyses demonstrated that there were significant differences in the total difficulties SDQ score in pupils of different genders and across different schools.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted that examined the effect[1] of school and gender on the students' total difficulties SDQ score. There was a significant main effect of school $F(9) = 3.583$, $p<.001$ a main effect of gender $F(2) = 8.413$, $p<.001$ and a significant interaction between school and gender $F(13)=3.888$, $p =<.001$.

Further post-hoc Tukey tests indicated that overall males had significantly lower total difficulties score compared to females ($p <.001$, d=0.3 small effect) (see Figure 1).

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[1] Since we found a statistically significant difference in the SDQ scores from respondents across different schools we draw the conclusion that pupils in school A respond significantly differently on the SDQ than pupils in school B – we refer to this difference in performance across the schools as an 'effect' of school. Similarly for gender we found a statistically significant difference in the SDQ scores in pupils of different genders and refer to this as an 'effect' of gender.
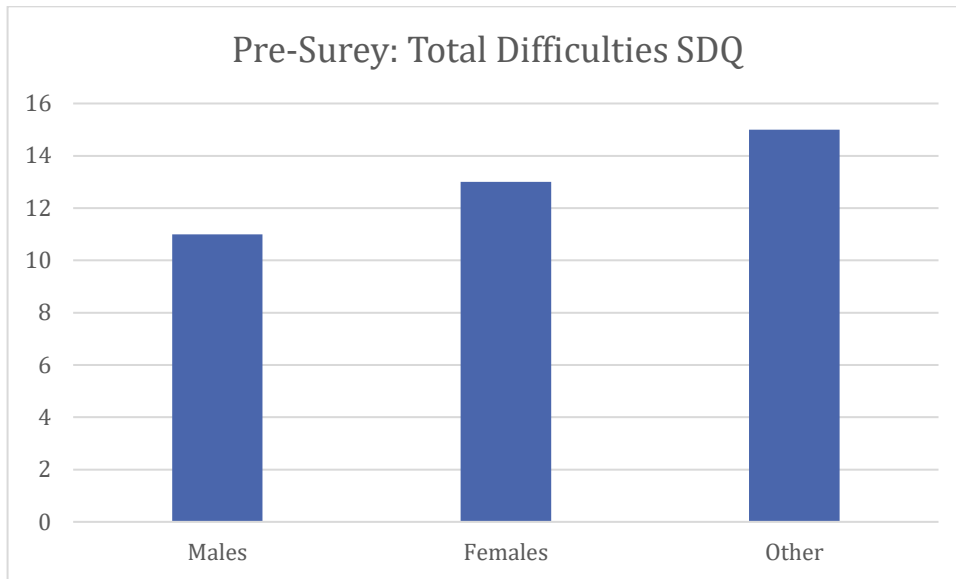
FIGURE 1. AVERAGE PRE-SURVEY TOTAL DIFFICULTIES SDQ SCORES

When looking at the comparisons of total difficulties scores across schools it was found that School 4 had significantly higher total difficulties scores than School 5 ($p<.001$) but there were no significant differences found across any other schools.

These findings demonstrate that at the start of the character education programme female pupils overall were reporting experiencing significantly greater difficulties with their wellbeing than male pupils (and that this was largely independent of school context). Having said this, the small effect size indicates that the differences in reported difficulties between the genders were relatively small in practical terms.

PRE-SURVEY STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ): PROSOCIAL ANALYSES

One sub-scale of the SDQ specifically measures the extent to which pupils report engaging in prosocial behaviours. The next series of analyses looked at the spread of scores for the prosocial sub-scale of the SDQ across gender and school (see Tables 11 and 12 respectively).

Total	Males	Females	Other*
6.95 (1.97)	6.7 (2)	7.4 (1.8)	5.42 (2.9)

TABLE 11. AVERAGE (SD) PRE-SURVEY PROSOCIAL SDQ SCORES SPLIT BY GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

School	Total	Male	Female	Other*
1	7.56 (1.5)	7.67 (1.5)	-	6.00
2	6.82 (1.7)	6.85 (1.9)	7.10 (1.3)	5.67 (0.6)
3	6.73 (2.4)	7.16 (1.7)	-	-
4	6.48 (2.2)	5.88 (2.1)	7.11 (2.1)	7.17 (1.7)
5	7.43 (1.8)	7.11 (1.7)	7.86 (1.7)	4.50 (4.9)
6	7.02 (1.9)	6.69 (1.8)	7.67 (1.7)	3.67 (3.2)
7	7.38 (1.5)	-	7.39 (1.5)	7.00
8	6.85 (1.9)	6.89 (1.9)	-	6.25 (2.6)
9	6.87 (2.3)	5.82 (2.1)	7.81 (1.6)	1.50 (2.1)
10	6.84 (1.8)	-	6.8 (1.8)	9

Table 12. Average (SD) Pre-Survey Prosocial SDQ scores split by school and gender

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

Examination of the descriptive statistics presented in Tables 11 and 12 indicates that there are differences in the scores for the prosocial sub-scale of the SDQ as a function of both school and gender. Further inferential statistical analyses demonstrated that there were significant differences in the prosocial SDQ score in pupils of different genders and across different schools.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted that examined the effects of school and gender on the students' Prosocial SDQ score (PS). The analyses demonstrated that there was a significant interaction between the effects of school and gender on the SDQ score, $F(13) = 3.376$, $p<.001$. The main effect of school was significant, $F(9)=2.786$, $p=.003$ and the main effect of gender was significant, $F(2)=10.906$, $p<.001$.

Further Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed all gender groups differed significantly from each other (all $p<.001$, d=0.4 small to medium effect). Hence, Females had the highest prosocial score, followed by Males and the Other group, and the scores of all of these groups were significantly different from each other (see Figure 2).
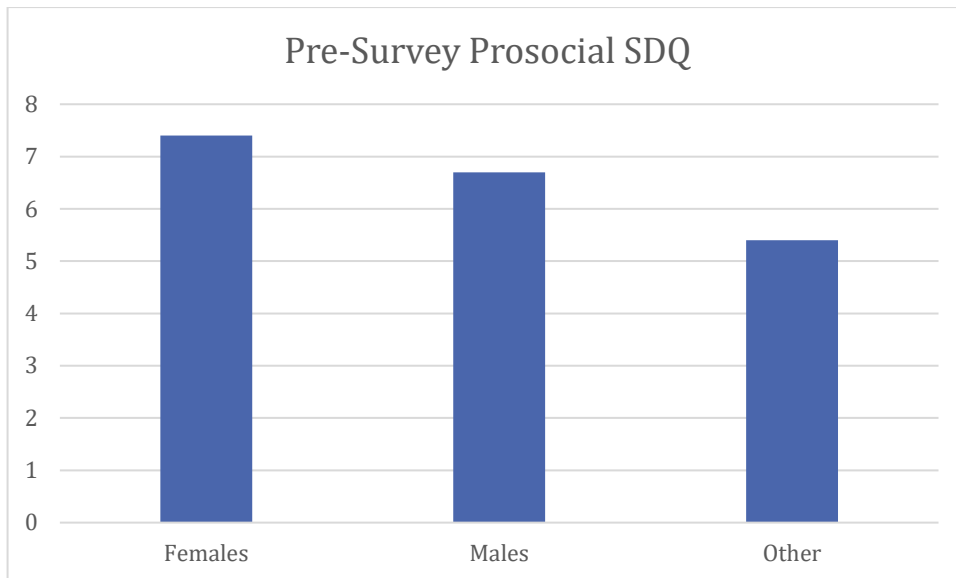
Pre-Survey Prosocial SDQ

FIGURE 2. PRE-SURVEY PROSOCIAL SDQ SCORES ACROSS GENDER

There were very few differences in the reported prosocial scores across the different schools; however, Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed School 4 had significantly lower prosocial scores than School 5 ($p<.001$) and School 7 ($p=.034$).

These findings demonstrate that at the start of the character education programme female pupils overall were reporting engaging in significantly more prosocial behaviours than male pupils. There was very little impact of school context on the extent to which pupils reported expressing prosocial behaviours.

PRE-SURVEY CONNOR-DAVIDSON RESILIENCE SCALE (CD-RISC): RESILIENCE ANALYSES

A total resilience score was calculated for each participant with data taken from The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). The scale comprises 25 items, each rated on a Likert Scale from 0-4, with a maximum score of 100. Higher scores indicate greater resilience. The average CD-RISC scores are split by gender and school in Tables 13 and 14 respectively.

Total	Male	Female	Other*
59.4 (15.55)	62.17 (15.4)	57.1 (14.86)	50.7 (19.16)

TABLE 13. AVERAGE (SD) PRE-SURVEY CD-RISC SCORES SPLIT BY GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

School	Total	Male	Female	Other*
1	69.19 (10.1)	68.87 (10.4)	-	74.00
2	63.76 (11.7)	65.20 (11.1)	63.40 (12.3)	55.33 (15.2)
3	66.18 (16.7)	68.90 (11.7)	-	24.00 (32.5)
4	59.07 (14.8)	62.25(15.9)	55.71(12.9)	55.50 (12.9)
5	61.84 (13.01)	63.48 (11.5)	60.33 (14.6)	56.50 (0.7)
6	63.96 (15.7)	64.23 (16.6)	64.50 (13.8)	48.00 (23.1)
7	60.89 (12.2)	-	60.82(12.3)	65.00
8	63.38 (11.0)	64.20 (10.1)	-	52.00(18.1)
9	55.33(12.5)	57.36 (14.6)	54.89 (10.9)	41.00 (11.3)
10	55.17 (13.6)	-	54.72 (13.78)	81

TABLE 14. AVERAGE (SD) PRE-SURVEY CD-RISC SCORES SPLIT BY SCHOOL AND GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

Examination of the descriptive statistics presented in Tables 13 and 14 indicates that there are differences in the scores for the CD-RISC as a function of both school and gender. Further inferential statistical analyses demonstrated that there were significant differences in the CD-RISC scores in male and female pupils from across the different schools.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted that examined the effect of school and gender on the students' CD-RISC score. There were significant main effects of school $F(9) = 2.621$ $p=.006$ and gender $F(2) = 10.968$ $p<.001$ and a significant interaction between school and gender $F(13) = 2.007$, $p=.018$.

Further post-hoc Tukey tests demonstrated that females had significantly lower CD-RISC scores than males ($p =<.001$, d=0.3 small effect) but they did not differ significantly from the 'other' group. Males had significantly higher CD-RISC scores than both females and the 'other' group ($p =<.001$, d=0.3 small effect). Hence, males had significantly higher CD-RISC scores than all other gender groups (see Figure 3).
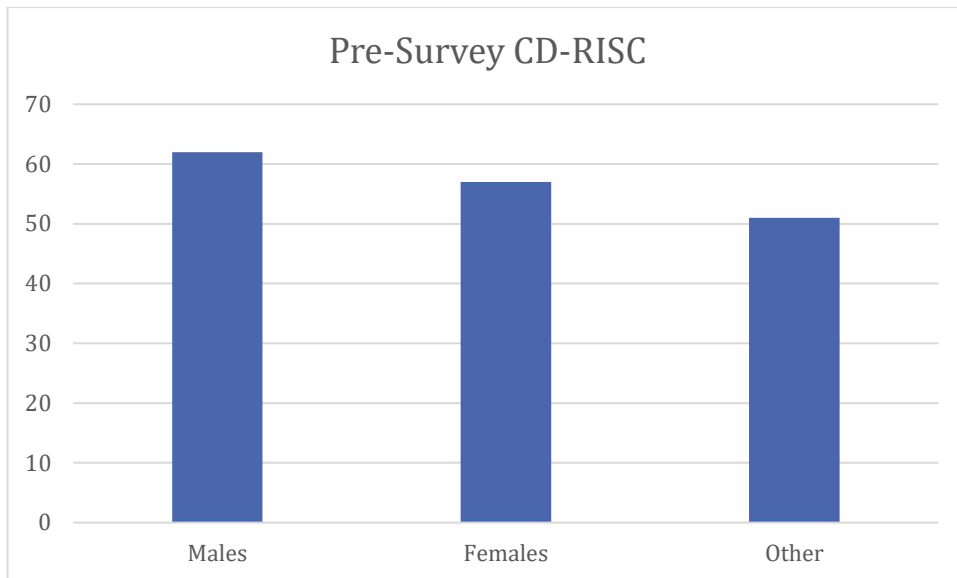
FIGURE 3. AVERAGE PRE-SURVEY CD-RISC SCORES ACROSS GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

When further examining the differences across schools we found that these differences were driven by School 9 who showed significantly lower CD-RISC scores than pupils in School 1 ($p=.008$), School 2 ($p=.041$), School 3 ($p=.003$), School 5 ($p=.013$), School 6 ($p=.001$) and School 8 ($p=.022$). There were no significant differences in CD-RISC scores across any of the other schools.

Taken together the analyses of the CD-RISC indicate that at the start of the character education programme females reported significantly lower resilience scores than males and pupils who identified as neither male or female.

Due to the Covid-19 disruption to the project we were only able to collect a very small number of post surveys from a minority of participants across three schools (see Table 3 for a breakdown of response rate for pre and post surveys). The post-survey data collected from the three schools who were able to issue post surveys to some of their pupils were analysed.

A total of 86 pupils from across three secondary schools completed the post-survey at the end of the character education programme.

School	Total (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)	Other* (N)
2	32	22	9	1
8	42	38	-	4
5	12	12	-	-
Total	86	72	9	5

TABLE 15. TOTAL POST-SURVEY RESPONSES SPLIT BY GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

POST-SURVEY STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ): TOTAL DIFFICULTIES ANALYSES

A total difficulties SDQ score was calculated for each participant by summing the EP, CP, HS and PPS sub-scales of the SDQ. The total difficulties score does not include the Prosocial Scale (PS). This gave a maximum score of 40. The average total difficulties SDQ scores are split by gender and school in Table 16.

School	Male	Female	Other*
2	11.86 (6.58)	15.33 (5.61)	8
8	12.11 (5.1)	-	14 (3.6)
5	10.25 (5)	-	-
Average	11.72 (5.5)	15.33 (5.61)	12.8 (4.1)

TABLE 16. AVERAGE (SD) POST-SURVEY TOTAL DIFFICULTIES SDQ SCORES SPLIT BY SCHOOL AND GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

Further inferential statistical analyses demonstrated that there were no significant differences in the total difficulties SDQ score in pupils of different genders and across different schools. This indicates that in this sample of pupils who completed the post-survey measures there were no significant differences in the self-reported wellbeing as a function of gender or school context.

POST-SURVEY STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE (SDQ): PROSOCIAL ANALYSES

The next series of analyses looked at the scores for the Prosocial sub-scale of the SDQ across gender and school in the post-surveys.

School	Male	Female	Other*
2	6.14 (2.19)	7 (2)	7
8	6.87 (1.63)	-	5.5 (1.73)
5	7 (1.8)	-	-
Average	6.67 (1.85)	7 (2)	5.8 (1.64)

TABLE 17. AVERAGE (SD) POST-SURVEY PROSOCIAL SDQ SCORES SPLIT BY GENDER

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

Further inferential statistical analyses demonstrated that there were no significant differences in the Prosocial SDQ scores in pupils of different genders and across different schools. This indicates that there is very little difference in the self-reported prosocial behaviours of pupils who completed the post surveys depending on gender or school context.

POST-SURVEY CONNOR-DAVIDSON RESILIENCE SCALE (CD-RISC): RESILIENCE ANALYSES

A total resilience score was calculated for each participant by summing responses to all items on the Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). The scale is composed of 25 items, each rated on a Likert Scale from 0-4, with a maximum score of 100. Higher scores indicate greater resilience. The average CD-RISC scores are split by gender and school in Table 18.

School	Male	Female	Other*
2	63.32 (15.29)	60 (18.44)	67
8	67.33 (8.23)	-	59 (6.93)
5	64.42 (13.64)	-	-
Average	64.57 (13.36)	60 (18.45)	60.6 (6.99)

TABLE 18. AVERAGE (SD) CD-RISC SCORES SPLIT BY GENDER AND SCHOOL

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

Further inferential statistical analyses demonstrated that there were no significant differences in the CD-RISC scores in pupils of different genders and across different schools. This indicates that there is very little difference in the self-reported levels of resilience in pupils who completed the post-surveys depending on school or gender.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES: PAIRED PRE AND POST-SURVEY COMPARISONS

Given the level of disruption to the post-survey data collection and the very different response rates for pre and post surveys we did not think that meaningful pre and post comparisons could be drawn through a simple comparison of all pre-survey and post-survey data collected. Instead, the unique anonymous ID codes were used to match respondents individually who had completed both pre and post-survey measures. This allowed for a confident match of a total of 30 respondents who completed both the pre and post surveys and the data to be analysed using paired-samples t-tests (see Table 20).

School	Total (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)	Other* (N)
2	21	14	6	1
5	9	9	-	-
Total	30	23	6	1

TABLE 19. TOTAL (N) PRE AND POST SURVEY RESPONSES SPLIT BY GENDER AND SCHOOL

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)

Using this carefully matched data a series of paired-samples t-tests were carried out to determine the extent to which responses on any of the sub-scales within the SDQ and the CD-RISC scale changed significantly between the pre and post measures. A summary of the findings can be found in Table 20.

	Pre-Survey Mean (SD)	Post-Survey Mean (SD)	Difference between the Means	T-test statistic	Significant difference P-value	Effect Size Cohen's d
Total SDQ	19.27 (7.18)	17.5 (5.24)	1.77	2.346	Yes (*p*=0.026)	Small effect (d=0.43)
Internal SDQ	5.2 (2.91)	5.1 (2.72)	0.1	0.313	No (*p*=0.756)	No effect
External SDQ	7.17 (4.5)	5.7 (3.49)	1.47	2.947	Yes (*p*=0.006)	Medium effect (d=0.53)
Hyperactivity SDQ (HS)	3.8 (2.88)	3.2 (2.5)	0.6	3.168	Yes (*p*=0.004)	Medium effect (d=0.58)
Emotional Problems SDQ (EP)	3.37 (2.25)	2.67 (1.71)	0.7	2.498	Yes (*p*=0.018)	Medium effect (d=0.5)
Conduct Problems SDQ (CP)	3.37 (2.25)	2.5 (1.36)	0.87	2.077	Yes (*p*=0.047)	Small effect (d=0.38)
Peer Problems SDQ (PPS)	1.83 (1.37)	2.43 (1.81)	-0.6	-2.632	Yes (*p*=0.013)	Medium effect (d=0.5)
Prosocial SDQ (PS)	6.9 (1.35)	6.7 (1.84)	0.2	0.947	No (*p*=0.351)	No effect
Resilience (CD-RISC)	65.17 (10.11)	66.8 (10.68)	-1.63	-1.138	No (*p*=-0.265)	No effect

TABLE 20. PRE AND POST SURVEY COMPARISONS FOR EACH SUB-SCALE OF THE SDQ AND THE CD-RISC

(Other group: non-binary, prefer not to say, transgender female, transgender male, not listed, or blanks)
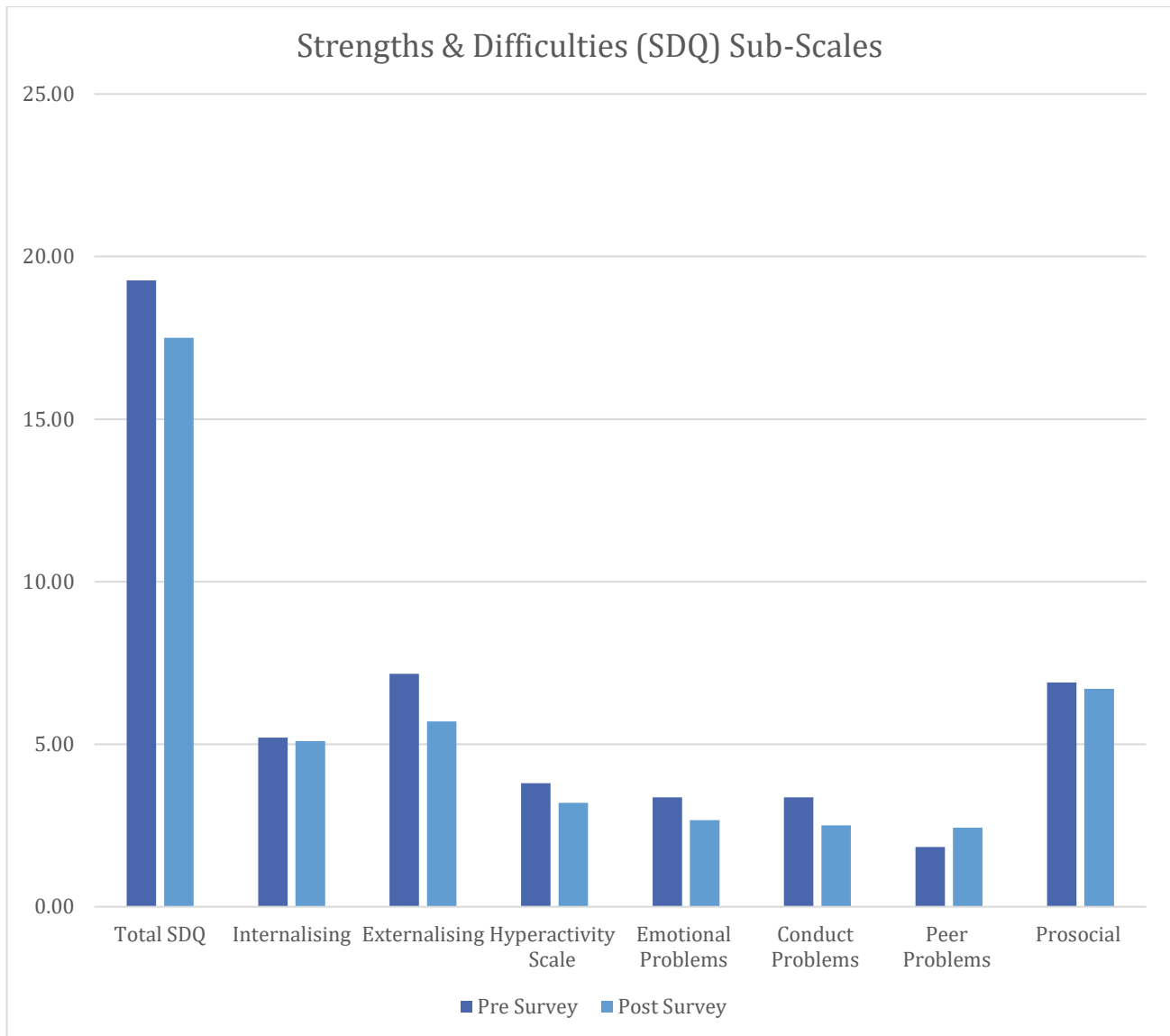
Strengths & Difficulties (SDQ) Sub-Scales

FIGURE 4. PRE AND POST SURVEY COMPARISONS FOR EACH SUB-SCALE OF THE SDQ

Overall there was a statistically significant difference in scores overall on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire ('Total SDQ') in the pre survey (Mean = 19.26, SD = 7.13) and post surveys (Mean = 17.5, SD = 5.24); t(29)=2.346, *p=0.026*, d=0.43 thus demonstrating a significant overall reduction in scores on the SDQ in the post survey compared to the pre survey. Although this overall difference in the SDQ scores in the pre and post surveys was significant, the effect size was small which suggests that although this change is statistically meaningful it makes a small actual difference to scores in practical terms with a sample of this size.

Further analyses of each of the sub-scales within the SDQ revealed that scores were significantly lower in the post surveys compared to the pre surveys for the Hyperactivity Scale, the Emotional Problems Scale and the Conduct Problems Scale (see Table 20 for summary analyses).

The post survey scores were also significantly lower than the pre-survey scores for the externalising factor of the SDQ with a medium effect size t(29)=2.947, *p*=0.006, d=0.53. There were no significant differences found in the Prosocial Scale element of the SDQ.

Taken together these findings suggest that in this small sample of pupils there was a significant reduction in emotional and behavioural difficulties as expressed through the Emotional Problems, Conduct Problems and Hyperactivity sub-scales of the SDQ in the post surveys compared to the pre surveys.

Although the mean difference between scores on the CD-RISC were not significant we do see a higher mean score in the post surveys as compared with the pre surveys.
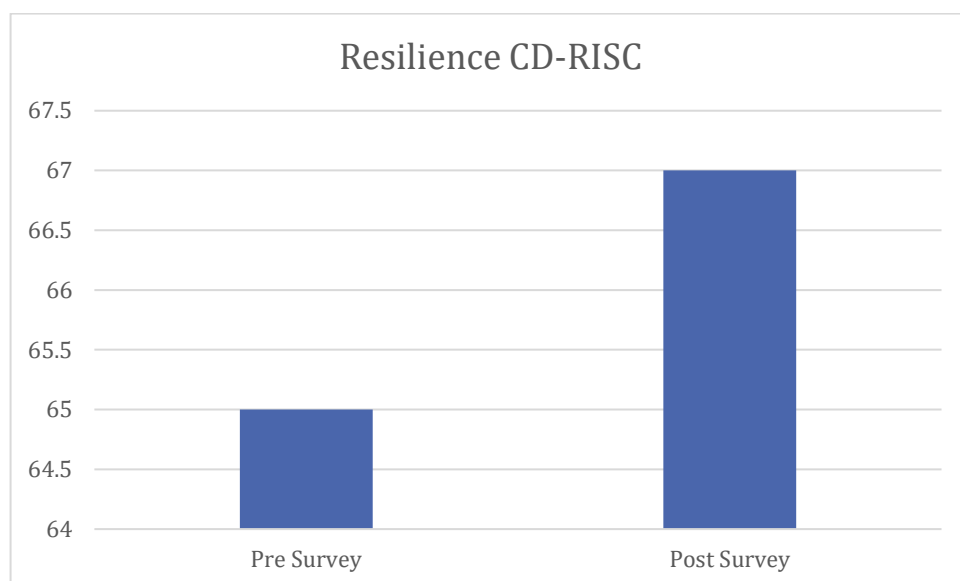

FIGURE 5. COMPARISON OF TOTAL SCORES ON THE CD-RISC RESILIENCE SCALE IN THE PRE AND POST SURVEYS

PUPILS SELF-REPORTED EXPERIENCES OF COMPLETING THE PRE AND POST-SURVEY MEASURES

At the end of both of the surveys pupils were asked an open question: *"How did you find this survey?".* It is often assumed that students do not like surveys, but we do not often ask them to give us their opinion on what they thought of the survey or if they found it useful. We thought it might be interesting to get their views on this.

The responses to this open-ended question were coded for positive and negative responses. Neutral and nonsensical responses were excluded from the analysis. Overall, 87% of the responses were positive.

Key words the students used to describe the survey were "interesting", "long" and "helpful".

Some valuable comments on the survey (which demonstrate a mixture of opinions) were:

- "Very insightful and interesting to ask myself questions about myself."
- "The questions were quite vague. I don't face many daily challenges."
- "I found this survey very personal but also a good way to reflect of myself and catch up on how I act around others and in situations that are difficult. I really enjoyed it and thought it was fun."
- "It directly reflects on my emotional problems, a very good survey"

WORD CLOUD 1. ALL OF THE STUDENTS' RESPONSES

WORD CLOUD 2. THE STUDENTS' RESPONSES AFTER CODING FOR THEMES.

Ten different secondary education settings schools were initially recruited to participate in the character education programme. The programme was fully implemented and trialled with 13-14 year-old pupils in KS 3 (Year 9) from January-March 2020 in nine of the original ten schools.

Analyses of the qualitative data collected via focus groups indicated that the majority of pupils who participated in the focus groups from across a range of different secondary school settings felt that they had benefited in some way from taking part in the programme. Of particular importance was the space and time that the programme allowed for pupils to stop and to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings. It was recognised by pupils that they do not often have the time nor the opportunity to pause and reflect within a typical school day and they valued the chance to do this. Participation in the programme also helped to develop pupils' own understanding of the concept of resilience and things that they could do to try to build their own resilience. Overall, the focus group feedback suggested that pupils valued participating in the programme and felt that it conferred some long-term benefits as a result of the skills that they had learned.

The teachers felt that the concepts introduced through the character education programme were definitely novel to this year group and not something typically introduced to pupils in Year 9. They recognised the value inherent in introducing this form of character education into the curriculum but also recognised some of the challenges, particularly around when to schedule sessions and how to integrate the programme meaningfully into existing PSHE and wellbeing initiatives within the school. The most successful implementation seemed to be through allowing 30 minutes to deliver the body of the session and explore the main themes within that session and then to follow this up with more focused discussion and reflection in smaller groups with a trusted member of staff.

Overall, the feedback from the teachers mirrored that of the pupils in recognising that pupils seemed to value having dedicated time within the school day to reflect and discuss their thoughts and feelings. The framework offered through the character education programme was recognised as a useful way to introduce the different concepts covered in each session and the resources and materials helped to provide further structure and support to the sessions. It was suggested that some more activities could be incorporated into the Reflective Journals for pupils to complete in each of the sessions and the journals could be made available digitally rather than in printed form.

A consistent theme that came through the focus groups with both staff and pupils was that when it came to the implementation of the programme there was not enough time to really reflect and embed the concepts covered. With this in mind, we recommend that future implementation is spread over a longer timeframe so that pupils have more time to reflect and get to a point of practically applying some of the concepts to their own day-to-day lives, and thus bring about behaviour change. Interleaving the sessions in the character education programme into existing PSHE/wellbeing programmes that span an entire academic year may be preferable to delivering the programme in its entirety in consecutive sessions across one school term. One of the suggestions to come from staff and pupils was to embed the character education programme in all year groups throughout the school. This would enable concepts to be revisited and developed using

a spiral curriculum and, in this way, could build greater engagement and deeper learning in pupils across the years. These suggestions have been invaluable as we work through an action research framework and look to improve the structure and resources based on feedback. We recognise that each school adapted the delivery based on the requirements and timetable of their context and as such we acknowledge that any materials provided will need to be adapted by teachers even within schools. However, the common patterns we saw across in the qualitative data give us some confidence in the fact that teachers applying their professional judgment on how they deliver the sessions can have a positive impact.

In terms of the quantitative analysis, one of the big challenges of evaluating the project is that we were unable to collect post-survey measures from the majority of pupils and schools that participated in the programme. However, analyses of the pre-survey data collected from all ten participating schools yielded an interesting insight into the complexity surrounding pupils' mental health and resilience in schools.

Taken together the analysis of the pre-survey data indicated that there are many differences in the self-reported levels of prosocial behaviours, emotional and behavioural strengths and difficulties and levels of resilience across genders and in different school settings. This analysis begins to shed some light onto the complexity into which any educational programme or intervention targeting wellbeing or resilience falls and it is important to remain mindful of this when seeking to implement a meaningful intervention. It is imperative that schools are suitably trained and equipped with resources but then encouraged to integrate and deliver the programmes in such a way as to meaningfully connect with the pupils in their own differing school contexts. One of the advantages of this character education programme is that it was designed to offer a clear programme but allowed for flexibility in the implementation and delivery. This meant it could be integrated into the different organisational structures in a range of secondary school settings and adapted to address the priorities particular to each school setting.

Using anonymous ID codes for the pre and post-survey measures enabled the matching of pre and post-survey responses from a total of 30 pupils from across two of the secondary schools. Although this was a very small sample size and only reflected a small proportion of the number of pupils who participated in the character education programme there were some interesting findings to emerge. Firstly, there was a significant reduction in the total difficulties scores on the SDQ which suggests that after completion of the character education programme, pupils were reporting experiencing fewer emotional and behavioural difficulties. Further analyses of each of the sub-scales of the SDQ confirmed that post-survey scores were significantly lower for the hyperactivity scale, the conduct problems scale and the emotional problems scale. This contributed to lower scores on the externalising factor of the SDQ thus suggesting that pupils reported experiencing fewer overt behavioural difficulties after they had completed the character education programme. Although we need to be extremely cautious in interpreting the findings from such a small sample and generalising these findings beyond the current project, we can conclude that in this sample of 30 pupils who completed the pre and post surveys their scores for externalising difficulties were lower after completion of the character education programme than at the start. This may indicate that in this very small sample of pupils, participating in the character education programme may have impacted on their ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour more effectively so that

they were experiencing fewer overall behavioural and emotional difficulties. This interpretation chimes with findings that emerged from the focus groups in which pupils identified that participation in the character education programme had helped them to develop skills and to think in a more optimistic way and to begin to regulate their moods by reflecting on those things that made them feel 'happy' or 'positive' (see direct quotations from the pupil focus groups re. *helpful aspects of the character education programme*).

The quantitative analysis of the pre and post-survey responses demonstrated that there were no significant increases in scores on the CD-RISC measure of pupil resilience; however, we can see that on average there was a slight increase in scores on this measure indicating greater reported resilience in the post-survey measures than in the pre surveys. With a larger sample of pupils it would be interesting to see if this change persisted and was statistically significant.

Analysis of the final open-ended question on the survey '*How did you find this survey?*' yielded an interesting insight into the inherent value of enabling further reflection through the administration of survey questions like those found in the SDQ and the CD-RISC. The observation that 87% of pupils' responses to the pre and post-survey measures were positive suggests that the act of merely allowing time for pupils to stop and think about how they feel and behave may be of value in itself.

It was clear that there were some practical and logistical issues with the administration and delivery of the programme that could be addressed in future. First, the way in which pupils were asked to generate their anonymous ID codes for the pre and post surveys was problematic and many of the ID codes were completed incorrectly making it very difficult to match the pre and post-data. One of the reasons that pupils may have completed the ID codes incorrectly is because they feared that they would not necessarily be anonymous and their responses could be traced back to them. In future we need to consider how to include an anonymous ID that is easy for pupils to remember and yet reassures them of their anonymity. It was also recommended that greater support and training be put in place for all teachers who actually have the responsibility for delivering the character education programme in their schools. Thus, in future it may be that the initial training days are offered to all teachers who will be delivering the programme rather than just to a few nominated members of staff. To make this feasible it may be necessary to visit all participating schools before the start of the programme to offer this training to participating teachers. In terms of the programme materials, it may be helpful to explore other digital options for the reflective journal and to look at ways in which to make it more visually appealing and engaging for pupils to use; for example, through the incorporation of pictures and activities.

Although the findings from this initial pilot of the character education programme are promising, they also raise some questions about how long-term the impacts of participation will be for pupils. The pre and post-survey measures indicated that there were statistically significant reductions in the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire in a very small sample of pupils and it would be interesting to follow up a few months after the completion of the project to see if these changes endured over a longer timeframe. It would also be interesting to find out if these significant changes persisted with a larger and more representative sample.

In conclusion, the early findings from this pilot are promising with many pupils and teachers indicating that they had valued their participation in the character education programme. With a larger sample size and extension of the character education programme over a longer period it would be very interesting to see what enduring impact participation in this programme had on pupils' ability to manage their emotions and behaviours. We acknowledge the limitations of this study in terms of sample sizes due to the closure of schools because of Covid-19. Even though the results we have are promising we recommend further research by taking into account the considerations, suggestions, and feedback given by pupils and staff.

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Eton Resilience and Wellbeing Research Training Day

Monday 18 and Wednesday 20 November

09:00	Arrival
9:30-9:50	Welcome and introductions
9:50-10:30	An overview • Emerging evidence - how to develop character • Why choose the VIA framework and positive psychology • The role of the teacher in research • Culture, role modelling and language • Where are you/your school on the journey?
10:30	An overview of the research project • Timetable • What we will do to support you • What we'd like you to do • Resources to help you
11:00-12:30	Working through the lesson outlines to become familiar with the intervention and understand the scope within which individual teachers can operate Discussion
12.30-13:30	Lunch
13.30-14:15	Lesson-planning (continued) Q&A and discussion

14:15-15:00	Evaluation • Administering the CD-RISC and SDQ • Arranging focus groups/interviews • Reflective Journals • Our professional learning network
15:00-15:30	Next steps and support

For each school to circulate to the parents of all pupils participating in the character education programme:

[NAME OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOL HERE] are working in partnership with **CIRL, Eton College** and **BrainCanDo** (https://braincando.com/), on a project designed to measure the impact of character education in schools on pupil resilience and wellbeing.

School activity

As part of the PSHE and pastoral programmes, Year 9 pupils from a selection of 10 schools in the South of England will complete a classroom-based character skills programme. The purpose of the programme will be to teach strategies and skills associated with resilience and wellbeing.

To help us to assess the impact of this programme we will ask participating pupils in each school to complete a short survey at the start and the end of the character programme. Responses on the survey measures will be anonymised by issuing each pupil with an anonymous ID code so that individual responses cannot be traced back to individual pupils.

A complete report summarising the findings from all schools on these survey measures will be produced at the end of the academic year but there will be no individual pupil identifiable data in this report.

Research activity

BrainCanDo will work with The Tony Little Centre, Eton College and Dr Iro Konstantinou to collect and analyse the data collected through the survey measures.

The **aim** of this research is to assess whether there is any change in the responses given on the survey measures before and after the character education classroom intervention.

All pupil data will be fully **anonymised** before being released from the schools so that pupils will be identifiable through a code number only. It will not be possible to identify any personal information from

the data. Dr Amy Fancourt (BrainCanDo) is the only person external to participating schools who will have access to these data to carry out the research.

The results of this research project will be written up as a **report** for The Tony Little Centre, Eton and will also be circulated to participating schools and potentially other school leaders and colleagues. The report will not include any information about specific pupils or schools but summarise the general findings of the research.

Opt-out consent for the research

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and should your child wish to withdraw their data they may do so at any stage by contacting either Dr Amy Fancourt at BrainCanDo (info@braincando.com) or your child's school office up to July 2020, when the analyses will have been completed.

Although optional, I hope that you will give your permission for your child's data to be used for this research project. If you would like more information or if anything is not clear, please do contact the researchers (full details listed below) or speak to me directly.

If you do not wish for your child's data to be shared with BrainCanDo then please inform the school office before *NEED DATE HERE*

Yours Sincerely, *DESIGNATED CONTACT IN EACH PARTICIPATING SCHOOL HERE

Researcher's contact details

Dr Amy Fancourt, BrainCanDo, Amy.Fancourt@braincando.com, info@braincando.com, 0118 918 7343

To be circulated to all pupils to read before completing the pre survey:

Character Research in Schools

What is this research project about?

[NAME OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOL HERE] are working in partnership with **CIRL, Eton College** and **BrainCanDo** (https://braincando.com/), on a project to design and run a character skills programme in school for pupils in Year 9.

We would like to know how much taking part in a programme like this helps pupils to manage and control their emotions and build resilience.

What will I be asked to do?

To help us to measure the impact of the character programme that you will be taking part in we are going to ask you to complete two short survey questionnaires.

Each survey will take around 15 minutes to complete and will ask you a range of questions about how you are feeling about yourself and others.

Can you trace the answers from the survey back to me?

When completing the surveys it is important that you take them seriously and give us your honest answers to each of the questions. At the start of the survey you will be asked to create your own anonymous ID code which means that the research team at BrainCanDo will not be able to trace back any responses to you directly. All responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Do I have to take part?

No. We hope that as many students as possible will participate in this research so that we can contribute a lot to our understanding of how best to help students to build their resilience in schools but you are under no obligation to complete these survey measures. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, or do not wish to continue with the survey, you have the right to stop answering the questions. If after completing the survey you would like for your data to be removed from the project you can withdraw your data up to 6 months after it has been collected by contacting Dr Amy Fancourt (amy.fancourt@braincando.com).

The Resilience Project: Key Contacts and Dates

School Name	

No. of students in Y9	

Lead Contact Name	
Title	
e mail	
Telephone number	

Please note the details of anyone else delivering the sessions and/or involved with the project management.

Name	
Title	
e mail	
Telephone number	

Name	
Title	
e mail	
Telephone number	

Name	
Title	
e mail	
Telephone number	

Key Dates

Please complete the following table giving details of your proposed dates and times for the delivery of the different stages of the project. All sessions to be delivered in the Spring Term (Jan-Easter 2020).

Event	Planned date and time	Notes
Letter to Y9 parents, communication with staff		
Launch project to Y9		
Online survey: pre measure 15 minutes via Survey Monkey		
Session 1: Self-Regulation		
Session 2: Learning to Fail		

Session 3: Gratitude		
Session 4: Learned Optimism		
Session 5: Empathy		
Focus Groups		
Session 6: Problem-Solving		
Online survey: post measure 15 minutes via Survey Monkey		
Focus Groups – end of summer term		

Please complete this information and then send a copy to

Dr Iro Konstantinou I.Konstantinou@etoncollege.org.uk

Dr Amy FancourtAmy.Fancourt@qas.org.uk

Nancy MulliganNancy.Mulligan@qas.org.uk

Pupil Focus Group Questions

1. **What did you think about the course?**

2. **What did you like best about the sessions?**

3. **What did you like least about the sessions?**

4. **Have you used the Reflective Journals?**

5. **Can you describe to me what you understand by resilience?**

6. **Do you believe the course has covered areas that can contribute towards resilience?**

7. **If you could do this course next term what other things would you like to cover?**

8. **How likely are you to use what you have covered in the course in other areas of school life? Can you give me examples?**

9. **Is there anything you would like to add?**

To be sent to the parents of pupils selected to participate in the focus groups:

The Resilience Project   Spring Term 2020

Parent Information – Focus Group Opt-Out

As you know [NAME OF SCHOOL HERE] are currently working in partnership with Eton College and BrainCanDo on a project designed to measure the impact of character education in schools on pupil resilience and wellbeing.

Throughout this term, all students from Year 9 have been participating in a series workshops to teach them helpful strategies and skills associated with resilience and wellbeing .

At the start of the programme all students completed an anonymous short survey, which they will repeat again at the end of the programme. The aim of this research is to assess whether there is any change in the responses given on these survey measures before and after the workshops.

In addition to these analyses a small selection of Year 9 students will be invited to participate in a short focus group to share their thoughts and opinions on the programme with the research team. To obtain an accurate summary of the feedback, the discussion will be typed and in some cases the research team may record the discussion with auditory recording equipment. No students will be videoed at any stage.

All student responses will remain anonymous.

Any recordings will be held securely and destroyed at the end of 5 years.

Participation in this research remains entirely voluntary and if you would prefer your child to not be involved in the focus group please contact either Dr Amy Fancourt at BrainCanDo (info@braincando.com) 0118 918 7343 or your child's Head of Year before 12 March.

If selected, we hope you agree to your child participating in the focus group. If you would like any further information please contact the Dr Fancourt at any time.

Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. **What do you think about the programme generally?**

2. **How do you feel about the 6 sessions?**

– **what do you like best / has worked well**

– **what do you like least / has not worked so well**

3. **How well prepared do you feel to deliver the session? Materials helpful?**

4. **Have you covered some of this material before in wellbeing PHSE?**

5. **How do you think the sessions have been received by the students?**

6. **Do you believe the course has covered areas that can contribute towards resilience?**

7. **Have you noticed any changed behaviour in the students? Examples?**

8. **Administration of the survey: any issues, questions, feedback?**

9. **Is there anything you would like to add?**

CIRL, Eton College commissioned BrainCanDo to develop, implement and evaluate this character education programme.

The team comprised:

Dr Iro Konstantinou, Head of Research Programmes at CIRL

Dr Amy Fancourt, Director of Research, BrainCanDo

Nancy Mulligan, Research Manager, BrainCanDo

This report was compiled by Dr Amy Fancourt and Dr Iro Konstantinou and our thanks go to Jessica Dawson for assistance with data collection and analysis.

We also want to extend our thanks to Professor Bill Lucas for his guidance throughout the project.

June 2020

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