

**Children's Voices
Inclusion Project (CHILYPEP)**

***CIRCLE OF FRIENDS,
SHEFFIELD***

**EVALUATION
REPORT**

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Introduction

The Circle of Friends Project has been developed in Sheffield through the partnership of Children's Voices and the Inclusion Project (CHILYPEP). The project was planned, developed and delivered by two members of staff, one from each agency.

The Circle of Friends Project sought "to develop meaningful friendships and support networks through attendance at a weekly lunch time club". The aim of the project was "to support marginalised /disadvantaged young people (8-13 years) to develop emotional literacy skills, friendships and to tackle bullying in a positive approach".

The plan for the project was to:

- Year 1 - pilot the project in two primary schools, at least one a special school, in the 2008 / 2009 school year
- Year 2 - continue the project in the initial two primary schools, delivering the project with school staff, and expand into a further two schools: consideration would be given as to whether to engage with early years and / or secondary school
- Year 3 – initial two primary schools deliver programme with own staff: second year schools programme delivered in conjunction with school staff

It was hoped that if the evaluation of the project was positive then a strategy would be developed so that Circle of Friends could be developed in all Sheffield primary schools.

Evaluation

The evaluation has been carried out by John Stead, NSPCC Education Advisor and Anti-Bullying Alliance Regional Adviser for Yorkshire and Humber.

The evaluation has considered:

- process – development of project in the schools
- impact – effect of programme on children involved and the schools
- potential for further development – in initial two schools and additional schools

The evaluation included:

- Meetings with facilitators at different stages – planning stage, during delivery stage and at the conclusion: semi-structured interviews
- Meeting at the end of the programme with the senior member of staff in school who was the project's link: semi-structured interviews
- Meeting at the end of the programme with pupils involved in the groups in both schools: in School B this was done with one of the facilitators: semi-structured interviews
- Analysis of programme structure
- Analysis of facilitator evaluations

Appendix 1: Interview Outlines

The purpose of the meetings with the facilitators has been to offer advice as well as collecting information for this report.

The evaluation could not consider the delivery of the programme in the two schools.

Circle of Friends

The concept of Circle of Friends originated in North America but the approach has been used successfully in the UK. The positive evaluation of the Children's Project, Glasgow which ran from 2005 to 2007 was influential in the development of the project in Sheffield.

Reference:

The Children's Project, Glasgow: Evaluation Report
ibk initiatives, January 2007

Circle of Friends is an approach to enhance the inclusion of children and young people who are experiencing difficulties in school by involving them with peers in establishing a mutual support group. Through the group the pupils involved develop meaningful relationships, have fun and together address issues and problem solve.

Within the group pupils are able to:

- explore friendships and emotions in a safe and secure environment
- learn social skills and strategies that are transferable
- start to evaluate what they are doing for themselves

The group is facilitated by adults who throughout retain the responsibility (and power) for determining overall boundaries and direction of the circle and well-being of participants, but whose role is to empower the group to make decisions and to be self-sustaining. The level of adult intervention is a matter of judgement and constant review.

Process

a. Identifying the schools

In August 2008 a letter was sent to head teachers of four primary schools in Sheffield. The letter outlined the aims of the project and referenced the outcome of a similar project in Glasgow, quoting the head teacher of one of the schools involved.

Appendix 2 – Initial letter to head teachers

The two staff involved had had considerable experience in working with children with special educational needs / disabilities and therefore it was planned that at least one of the two schools should be a special school.

Two schools, one a special school, responded almost immediately and the project staff arranged to visit to the schools. Both visits were very positive with schools expressing the opinion that they wanted to be involved. The reasons given by the schools for this were:

- Enthusiasm of staff
- Views of children and approaching to working with children
- Evidence of thorough preparation - clear about aims and able to outline how programme would meet these aims
- Experience of staff

For the special school the experience of both staff in working with children with special educational needs / disabilities was an important factor and their desire to “take a risk” by working with children with complex learning difficulties.

The project staff established at the outset that the schools involved had to identify a senior member of staff who would be the school link person who the project staff would:

- Meet to monitor the effectiveness of the programme
- Give feedback at the end of sessions
- Contact to discuss forthcoming sessions where there was the need for special facilities and additional resources
- Meet to discuss concerns and issues relating to individual pupils

This link has been critical to the success of the project in both schools.

b. Profile of schools

School A is a primary school that serves an area of considerable economic, cultural and racial diversity. It has 23 different first languages. It sees its diversity as a positive strength.

The school saw the project fitting into the work it was doing to develop the school ethos and its curriculum. It places a strong emphasis on its Healthy Schools Programme and the development of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). It saw Circle of Friends in terms of the work it is doing to develop small group work and the role of its non-teaching staff.

School B is a special school designated for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties, and caters for children with a wide range of complex learning difficulties and / or disabilities. Most pupils in the school have limited language. It covers the age group 2 – 11.

The school saw the project in terms of helping it to develop the emotional literacy of its pupils through involving them in group work that would provide

them with opportunities for discussion and thinking about different situations and feelings, their own and of others.

The school wanted to look at how it could adapt mainstream practice for a special school. The school is keen to develop its links with mainstream schools and saw its involvement in Circle of Friends as providing an opportunity for this. If the project worked in a special school it could be demonstrated to mainstream schools.

The school is looking at how it meets the Every Child Matters agenda and is looking at how its pupils can complete the Sheffield Every Child Matters Questionnaire.

c. Selection of pupils

The group size was determined at eight with the desire that within the group there should be some pupils who would be positive and who would already have empathy and social skills as well as target pupils. It was recognised from the outset that the school would have a role in ensuring that there were no existing conflict relationships that could destroy the group from the outset, or that there were pupils whose vulnerability was such that they were unlikely to benefit from the programme and could potential damage other pupils.

The project staff had wanted the children to be self-selected, and had hoped to talk to pupils in assemblies. This did not happen in either school, and it is now recognised, for the following reasons, that this would not have been feasible:

- If large number of pupils wanted to be involved there would need to be a selection process and consequently a number of pupils who would be disappointed
- Would not have provided balance required in group

In both cases the pupils were selected by the school.

In School A the group was made of 4 boys and 4 girls from Years 6 and 7. Half of the group were target pupils who for different reasons had issues of socialising. Some present challenging behaviours when with others whilst others were quiet or loners. Half of the group were role models chosen for their personal and social skills and ability to empathise. The school was open with these pupils about why they had been chosen.

The school was open that this would not be an “easy group”. Within the group there were pupils with strong personalities who could be difficult.

In School B the group was made up of 5 boys and 3 girls from Year 2 to Year 6. They were chosen for their ability to articulate and the expectation that they would have an understanding of concepts. Within the group there were pupils with severe behaviour issues who could challenge and dominate.

Pupils were offered a place on the programme and were able to turn down the place. The schools contacted the parents to give them information, offering to meet them if there were concerns and questions. In neither school did any parent raise issues, reflecting the trust parents have in the schools.

The schools did not give the project staff full information about the pupils in the groups before the programme commenced, although information was always shared when concerns and issues arose. Whilst project staff had expected information to be shared they are now unsure as to whether prior knowledge is desirable as it could influence the establishment of relationships and influence responses to pupils’ views.

d. Delivery of the programme

The programme was to be delivered as a lunchtime club, running for half an hour. The programme ran in both schools from the first half of the Autumn Term 2008 until the end of the Summer Term 2009.

In the case of School A the length of time was dictated by the structure of the lunchtime and it was recognised by both project staff and school staff that many of the sessions would have benefited by the opportunity to extend.

In the case of School B the length of time reflected the learning difficulties of the pupils, and both project staff and school staff believe that the time allocated was usually right, but that the ability to extend to better deliver and complete some activities would have been valuable.

In School A there is evidence that for some pupils it would have been better not to have run the programme until the very end of the Summer Term. This is a period when the school routine is disturbed, there are other attractions, and for Year 6 pupils thoughts are focused on the transition to secondary school. This was less a factor in School B.

In School A the programme was delivered by project staff only but in School B a non-teaching member of staff was involved from the outset in every session and she was joined by a colleague during the year. The school felt that given the learning difficulties of the pupils involved this was essential, and whilst the project staff had not originally wanted this arrangement they recognise that they could not have delivered the programme without this support. The members of school staff were not involved in the detailed planning of the sessions and the delivery was the responsibility of the project staff.

During the year, due to maternity leave of one member of the project staff, there was a change in the personnel delivering the programme. That this change in no way detracted from effectiveness of the programme is the result of the care and detail given to ensuring a smooth change. The new member of staff was involved in a number of sessions before the handover, initially as an observer but increasingly as a colleague involved in session planning and delivery. The pupils were fully informed about the change and the reasons for it and in both schools pupils have marked the birth.

The facilitators worked with the two groups to establish the Ground Rules, using “thought storming” around asking the pupils “What would make the group work?”.

When the rules were agreed pupils were asked to sign up to follow them. The exercise was difficult in School B, but in both schools the process of agreeing the Ground Rules was important in establishing the group. They were important in helping to build trust in the group, with pupils understanding that “confidentiality” would be observed by their peers.

Throughout the programme the Ground Rules were referred to when they were behaviour problems, and were added to when issues arose that were not covered.

The facilitators wanted to deliver the programme informally and to develop open, personal relationships with the pupils. They were clear that they did not want to be seen by the pupils as school staff, and that to try to establish a sense of “equality” they would be addressed by their first names. (In School A this was the practice with all staff.) They wanted to encourage pupils to share their concerns.

The facilitators were aware from the outset the difference between “being friendly” and “being seen as a friend”. Both schools are sure that the facilitators established and maintained professional boundaries with the pupils.

There were behaviour and relationship problems at times with the groups in both schools. The facilitators were quick to address the issues and in making the judgement whether they should use the behaviour as an issue that the group should resolve or whether to work with the individual outside of the group. They were able to be firm without changing the style or nature of relationship.

In School B the member of the school staff involved in the delivery of the programme was an important element in being able to address and isolate behaviour problems when they arose.

In School A where there was not a member of the school staff involved the facilitators were clear with themselves and with the pupils about the “limits of confidentiality” they could offer. Where necessary the facilitators shared issues that had arisen with the school immediately after the end of the session.

In both schools the lunchtime club met in a specific room. In both cases the room provided was adequate in allowing the facilitators to deliver the full range of activities. In both schools where a particular activity would benefit from a different space and / or additional resources were needed they were readily provided.

One of the aims of Circle of Friends is that the group should become “self-sustaining”. In School A, whilst the pupils increasingly influenced the programme, this did not really happen. In School B a “self-sustaining” group was never a possibility.

e. Programme content and session structure

The facilitators carried out research into available small group programmes, and where appropriate bought suitable programmes and resources. The programme was developed from the experience of the facilitators and from their research.

In developing the programme the facilitators were clear that “having fun” was critical and that they need to have in every session both a range of activities with a mixture of “doing” and “discussion”. The facilitators often used creative arts approaches. Given sessions lasted for only half an hour there had to be “pace”.

Whilst not surprisingly pupils found the “doing” activities their favourites, the evaluation shows the importance of the “discussion”.

In School B as only one of the pupils could write the pupil activities had to be adapted and if necessary changed. Pupils could easily become bored if not fully engaged or the activity went on too long. The facilitators had to make “special packages” for individual pupils.

During the session the facilitators had to make a decision whether they needed to amend and adapt what they were doing to reflect issues that were arising or to address the behaviour during or the interest in a particular activity. The facilitators were “flexible”, and became increasingly confident in making changes to the planned programme.

The facilitators did not have the programme written at the outset, although they had planned the first sessions in outline. They were able to put about half a day a week aside to plan the next session and to put together the resources they needed. Each facilitator would have a responsibility on leading for a particular activity.

In planning the next session the facilitators considered the evaluation of the previous session and issues that had arisen that should be addressed through the activities in the next session.

Both schools commented on the thoroughness of the planning and preparation that went into the programme, and also on the importance to its success of their flexibility.

The facilitators now have a considerable programme and resource bank that they can use in the future and this should reduce the time needed for planning and preparation.

f. Arising issues

The facilitators had planned to cover issues that primarily related to school, but, particularly in School A, the pupils increasingly raised personal issues that often related to home.

Whilst sometimes these were just addressed to the facilitators often they were raised within the group with the facilitators having to make careful judgements about how far these issues could be discussed in the group. Where appropriate the facilitators designed specific activities for the next session.

The issues raised were always shared with the school.

g. Programme evaluation

The facilitators evaluated every session.

The pupils were asked to give a simple “thumbs up – enjoyed / thumbs across – ok / thumbs down – didn’t enjoy” at the end of every session. In both schools this was an effective means of pupil evaluation and given the limited time available and language limitations most appropriate.

The facilitators briefly discussed the session at the end and then wrote up an evaluation of the session during the week. In School A, where there was not a member of school staff involved, there was often informal feedback given to the school at the end of the session. This was not necessary in School B.

There is a full evaluation record for the programme in both schools.

About half way through the programme the facilitators met with the school link member of staff to discuss how the programme was going. In both schools there was a positive response.

For the future, in order to be able to respond quickly to any problems, there needs to be more frequent meetings between the facilitators and the school link member of staff. The first meeting should take place relatively early in the programme, perhaps after the first month. Consideration needs to be given about the school's role in programme evaluation.

The facilitators carried out an end of programme evaluation meeting with staff and with individual pupils in both schools. This was done imaginatively to help engage the pupils. However in School B the language difficulties of the pupils meant that this was of limited value.

Impact

Both schools were extremely positive about what Circle of Friends had achieved and both are looking forward to the programme running again in the 2009 / 2010 school year. In the 2009 / 2010 the programme will be delivered by one project facilitator with one or two members of the school staff.

The project facilitators, school link staff and pupils, particularly in School A, were able to articulate the impact that Circle of Friends had had. That the pupils in School B were less able to do this reflects the nature of their special educational needs.

It is important that the project facilitators and schools consider how they can better measure the impact that the programme has on pupils. This should include carrying out a baseline assessment before / at the start of the programme repeating it again at the end of the programme, and perhaps as the programme lasts a full year at a suitable halfway point.

If possible the assessment should be done by the pupil and by a member (s) of staff who are best able to observe the changes in attitude and behaviour. Consideration should be given to involving parents / carers in this assessment.

There are a number of available emotional literacy assessment tools that are used in schools and other children's services based on "Strengths and Difficulties" and "What can I do?".

Appendix 3: Emotional Literacy Assessment Tools

a. Impact on pupils

School A

In School A where pupils chose to be involved in the group and were able to leave seven out of the eight remained until the end of the programme. Given that pupils were giving up playing with their friends at lunchtime this is impressive. Pupils were enthusiastic and generally looked forward to the sessions.

All the pupils interviewed were extremely positive about the programme: they had fun and enjoyed it. They had clearly developed a strong group identity with positive relationships and a group where there was such a level of respect and trust they believed they could share personal and sensitive concerns.

The facilitator / pupil relationship was a very strong one, and was quickly established. The pupils felt they were valued and talked about the calmness (didn't shout) of the facilitators and their ability as listeners. The facilitators were seen as having understanding, able to talk about their own feelings. Their use of praise was important.

Pupils liked the range of activities the programme provided, and particularly enjoyed those that were "doing" activities. They enjoyed role play. They felt they were fully engaged and increasingly able to influence the programme.

Whilst the pupils felt that there should have been less “talking” and “discussion” they positively described how they were able to talk about feelings and problems and about setting targets.

Some pupils, I suspect role models, expressed concerns about the behaviour at times of some pupils and the school said that initially they had difficulty in accepting this challenging behaviour. However as the programme went on they developed skills and strategies to cope with this, and often were able to involve themselves to positively influence those responsible.

The pupils said that they were better at:

- Working together to solve problems
- Making friends
- Listening to and understanding others
- Sharing feelings with others
- Providing help and support to others, not just within the group e.g. in the playground
- Dealing with bullying

The school was able to identify the gains made by both the target and role model pupils.

In the case of both the target pupils and the role models there was an improved feeling of self-worth was marked, particularly for the target group pupils:

For both groups the programme had:

- Encouraged feelings of responsibility towards and care for others: ability to empathise
- Given a sense of fun and enjoyment
- Given a sense of personal and group achievement

The school also identified the following positive developments for target pupils:

- Improving sociability: better able to make and sustain positive relationships with peers
- Developing more open and positive relationships with adults
- Consider thoughts, feelings and behaviour of self and others
- Developing better social skills: improved ability to work as part of a group
- Better at considering consequences of behaviour (gains and losses) and acting appropriately
- Improvements in school – attainment, attendance, behaviour
- Improvements at home (3 out of 4)

With the target pupils they were beginning to:

- Recognise “early warning signs” of negative feelings: able to control negative thoughts and avoid negative behaviour towards others
- Counter negative peer pressure: counter anti-social behaviour (including bullying) in others

In the case of the role model pupils these were:

- Considering thoughts, feelings and behaviour of self and others: growing ability to be reflective
- Ability to identify different feelings: ability to describe, discuss and share feelings with others (peers and staff) including own feelings
- Demonstrating assertiveness
- Ability to make positive personal choices: acting independently with individuality
- Ability to counter negative peer pressure: counter anti-social behaviour (including bullying) in others

- Ability to act as a leader able to positively influence others: able to be assertive when appropriate
- Recognise “early warning signs” of negative feelings: able to control negative thoughts and avoid negative behaviour towards others
- Ability to consider consequences of behaviour (gains and losses) and act appropriately
- Increased self-confidence and increased ability to “take risks” and “accept challenges”

School B

In School B the staff saw that the programme had been extremely successful, certainly more successful than they had anticipated. There had been some initial doubts about whether the practice could developed for a special school where the pupils had such a level of special educational needs.

The pupils enjoyed their lunchtime club and eagerly looked forward to it each week. All eight pupils remained members of the group throughout the programme and all were still enthusiastic at the end. In the evaluation session with the pupils all those interviewed said that they had enjoyed the programme.

Staff said that there was:

- Sense of fun and enjoyment
- Sense of personal and group achievement

The staff were surprised how quickly the pupils developed a group identity. They commented on how the group had developed their own rules, discuss behaviour and challenge themselves to keep under control.

As with School A the facilitators quickly established a strong personal relationship and with the member of staff involved in delivering the

programme. The previous special needs / disabilities experience of the two facilitators was important, perhaps critical, to establishing an understanding of the pupils' behaviour and needs.

In their evaluation, using photographs of the group and group activities, the pupils were able to say that they had:

- Made new friends
- Become better at talking to others
- Making / creating things

Through the pictures some pupils could describe feelings.

The school staff were able to describe the impact on the pupils, and how they had positively developed as a result.

The member of staff involved in delivering the programme described this development in terms of:

- Better at managing their own feelings
- Better showing feelings to others
- Better at working together: managing to take turns

The school link person identified the following improvements for all of the group:

- Helping in making and sustaining positive friendships with peers
- Helping in making for open and positive relationships with adults
- Encouraging feelings of responsibility towards and care for others: ability to empathise
- Considering thoughts, feelings and behaviour of self and others

- Helping to be able to identify different feelings: able to describe, discuss and share feelings with others (peers and staff) including own feelings
- Developing social skills that have improved ability to work as part of a group / team
- Ability to counter negative peer pressure: counter anti-social behaviour (including bullying) in others

Some of the group were able to demonstrate assertiveness.

b. Impact on school

Both schools are very positive about what Circle of Friends has achieved and will continue with the project in the next school year. In both schools other pupils have expressed the view that they want to be part of future groups.

Both schools are enthusiastic about demonstrating the effectiveness of Circle of Friends to other schools.

In School B there was an Ofsted Inspection whilst the programme was being delivered and it received an outstanding report. The school believes that Circle of Friends had impact with inspectors commenting about how the pupils were articulate, able to talk about their school and about their relationships with other pupils.

In neither school were other members of staff properly briefed about Circle of Friends and their role in assessing the impact of the programme developed. In School B with a member of staff involved in delivering the programme this was less of an issue, and her growing enthusiasm for the project resulted in the involvement of another non-teaching member of staff.

Both schools have identified that next year staff will be fully briefed and those who work with the pupils involved in the groups will be engaged in helping to assess the impact of the programme.

The project facilitators should prepare a staff briefing and presentation for the start of the Autumn Term 2009 that will be used in the existing and new schools.

School A

In School A the programme will be delivered by one project facilitator and one school teaching assistant in the 2009 – 2010 school year.

The school intends to then take on delivery of Circle of Friends using its teaching assistants.

Some of the school pupils expressed the view that they could run their own Circle of Friends and the school will discuss this with them in the Autumn Term 2009.

School B

In School B the programme will be delivered by a project with two school non-teaching staff. The school is considering running two groups, one being run by the school staff involved in delivering the programme this year.

The school next year is intending to involve pupils with a wider range of difficulties. It is considering how to involve the pupils who have been involved in Circle of Friends this year in a peer support role within these groups.

c. Sustaining impact

This evaluation was completed at the end of the programme in the two schools. Consequently it cannot assess whether the programme has any lasting impact on the pupils.

Consideration should be given by the project facilitators and the schools as to measuring whether the pupils maintain the positive developments shown at the end of the programme.

Key findings and recommendations

The evidence provided by the facilitators, school staff and pupils shows that Circle of Friends has been an overwhelming success in both schools.

The reasons for this success are:

- Qualities of the project facilitators – personalities, expertise, motivation and flexibility
- Thoroughness of process - planning, preparation, delivery and evaluation
- Ethos of the two schools – recognition of potential of the programme for school and pupils: aims and values of programme closely matched those of school
- Level of support provided to facilitators by the schools

The two schools are now very keen to ensure that Circle of Friends becomes embedded and to work with the project facilitators next school year so that in the third year the programme will be delivered entirely by school staff.

It is important that in year two that time is given for the project facilitator and school staff to properly plan and evaluate the sessions.

It should be recognised that both schools presented significant challenges for the project facilitators, and consequently given the success in these schools they are in a strong position to persuade other schools to engage with the programme. It is important that the project now engages two new schools for the 2009 – 2010. They should use the staff, and pupils if possible, of the two original schools in this process.

The project facilitators need to develop an information pack and presentation to ensure all the staff in the schools involved have an understanding of the programme.

There is strong evidence from the facilitators, school staff and pupils of the positive impact that Circle of Friends has had on the pupils.

Consideration now needs to be given to how there can be:

- Better measurement of impact – use of an assessment tool to measure progress from a baseline: measurement to demonstrate whether impact is sustained beyond the end of the programme
- Wider involvement of the appropriate school staff (e.g. class teacher) in the assessment of impact on pupils

In both schools the project facilitators were able to quickly establish good relationships with the school link staff. In both cases the link person was a senior member of staff. Trust was established and there was a good understanding of the appropriate professional boundaries.

It is important that in engaging new schools the link person is at a senior level in the school. Consideration should be given as to whether there is a need for a more formal agreement / protocol that outlines the responsibilities of both school and project facilitators and details the appropriate professional boundaries on issues such as “confidentiality” and “information sharing”.

The schools should consider the support the pupils need to maintain the positive developments shown at the end of the programme and how they can be given appropriate responsibilities to support other pupils.

Contacting the Circle of Friends Project

Children's Voices and The Inclusion Project (CHILYPEP) are based at the Remington Youth and Community Centre, 200 Remington Road, Parson Cross, Sheffield, S5 9AG.

The members of staff with responsibility for taking the project on are:

- Children's Voices – Clare Humberstone
Email: Clare.Humberstone@sheffield.gov.uk
- Inclusion Project (CHILYPEP) – Lesley Pollard
Email: Lesley.pollard@chilypep.org.uk

John Stead

NSPCC Education Advisor / ABA Regional Adviser

Email: jstead@nspcc.org.uk

Appendix 1a: Facilitating Staff Interview Outline

Circle of Friends: Areas for discussion

Setting up:

- Nature of partnership –Children’s Voices and Chilypep
- Initial idea – why / aim “to support marginalised /disadvantaged young people (8-13years) to develop emotional literacy skills, friendships and to tackle bullying in a positive approach”.
- Sheffield C&YP Plan – Strategy
- Composition of programme
- Schools – identification / establishing relationships and protocols / setting up / on going feedback
- Schools – aims
- Identification of pupils – focus pupils
- Parental consent – parent perspective
- Recommendations

Sessions:

- Time / place / space
- Establishing ground rules: maintaining ground rules
- Establishing boundaries: maintaining boundaries
- Facilitator changes mid project
- Recommendations

Programme:

- Programme content - activities
- Flexibility - respond to needs
- Ability / opportunities of pupils to influence programme

- Recognition of pupils
- Process for session evaluation
- Recommendations

Impact:

How far did programme allow pupils to?

- Explore friendships and emotions in a safe and secure place in school: reciprocal friendships
- Learn social skills and strategies that are transferable – see attached sheet
- Tackle bullying
- Start to evaluate what they are doing for themselves: promote personal choice, independence and individuality

How far did programme allow the group to come to?

- joint decisions and courses of action: sense of ownership
- become self-sustaining and provide support without need for a regular adult input

How far did programme impact on pupils' relationships and behaviour in school and at home?

What is the evidence of impact?

Recommendations

Appendix 1b: School Staff Interview Outline

Semi-structured interview based around the following questions:

1. Introduction – What are the key features that describe this school?
2. Why did the school want to be involved in the project? What did it hope to get out of the project – for the school / for the pupils?
3. What criteria did the school use to select the group? How important did the school feel it was important to get the composition of the group right – need to maximise opportunity for success? Briefly describe the composition of the group – how important was it to choose positive role models?
4. How were parents informed – did any refuse permission? What questions did parents ask about the programme?
5. What preparation and pre-planning was there before the start of the programme? Was this adequate? Explore role(s) played by those delivering the programme. What level of information was provided about the content of the programme?
6. Sessions – When were they held (day / time of day)? Where were they held? How long were the sessions? Reflections on appropriateness
7. Sessions – How long was the programme? Reflections on length of programme
8. Nature of programme – What were the main aims of the programme? What were the skills and qualities it sought to develop? To what extent were the programme and its activities appropriate for meeting its aims?
9. Evaluation – How were the sessions and overall programme evaluated?
10. Impact of programme - How far has the school and / or programme deliverers been able to measure the impact of the programme – on

individuals, on the group, outside of the group? Identify main positives and negatives for pupils involved?

11. Impact assessment methodology - What methods have been used to measure the impact of the programme? What methods will be used, if any, to measure whether impact is sustained?
12. What are the thoughts about the programme of – pupils involved, other pupils, parents and staff?
13. Qualities of programme deliverers – How did the programme deliverers go about building relationships with the school and staff, with pupils in the group, with other pupils and with parents?
14. Professional boundaries – How did the school and programme deliverers establish the protocols and trust with regard to the different professional boundaries, for example confidentiality?
15. Sustaining the programme – Will the school repeat the programme? Could the school deliver the programme through its own staff? What would be necessary for the school to be able to do this? Will the school recommend the programme to other schools and / or to the local authority?
16. General comments

Appendix 1c: School Pupils Interview Outline

Semi-structured discussion based around the following questions:

Composition of circle - Year group (s): Number of boys: Number of girls.

1. Can you tell me which parts of the Circle of Friends programme you feel went particularly well for your group – why was this?
2. Can you tell us which parts of the Circle of Friends programme you feel did not go so well for your group – why do you think this was?
3. What things do you think the Circle of Friends programme should have more of?
4. What things do you think Circle of Friends programme should have less of?
5. What did Circle of Friends make you think about what makes a good friend? Has the programme helped you to make new friends?
6. What did Circle of Friends make you think about your own and / or other people's behaviour? How would you like to behave to others in the future?
7. How would you describe what you have been doing in Circle of Friends to another pupil in your class who has not been involved?
8. How would you rate Circle of Friends overall?

Great / Good / OK / Not so good / Not useful

Appendix 2: Initial letter to Head Teachers

August 2008

Dear Sir / Madam,

Children's Voices and The Inclusion Project (Chilypep) are looking to pilot a "circle of friends" project in two primary schools over the next school year. This is an approach that has been used with great success in other areas of the UK to support children and young people to develop meaningful friendships and support networks through attending a lunchtime club. The sessions will be run by an independent facilitator with experience in advocacy and inclusion.

This approach was used in Glasgow and had an incredibly positive impact on the children, families, school and community. Here's what one Head Teacher had to say about the Glasgow Project:

"The Circle of Friends is absolutely invaluable to us because children in our school need to learn social skills that are completely transferable and they have to start being able to evaluate what they are doing themselves."

We are looking to pilot this approach in Sheffield in the hope that it will support children, especially children that are viewed to be vulnerable or marginalised, with some of the following issues:

- To develop reciprocal friendships
- To explore emotional literacy
- Promote personal growth
- To learn to speak out

- Tackle bullying and exclusion issues
- Signpost young people to other services, activities and opportunities in Sheffield
- Support young people to participate fully in all aspects of their lives
- To promote personal choice, independence and individuality

We would like to work in partnership with your school to run one session per week. We can plan and deliver the sessions and would simply need a space within your school to deliver them one lunchtime period per week. If you are interested in this project please contact either *Name* (Children's Voices) on *Telephone number* or *Name* (Inclusion Project, CHILYPEP) on *Telephone number*. We will then need to meet with the teaching staff and young people in September to discuss how to take the project further over the next school year. Many thanks.

Yours Sincerely,

Name

Appendix 3: Emotional Literacy Assessment Tools

There are a number of emotional literacy assessment tools that could be used by school staff, including non-teaching staff. These are based on assessing:

- Strengths and Difficulties
- What can I do?

Some have different elements allowing for responses from parents / carers and school staff as well as from the pupil.

Schools could approach their local authority services (e.g. behaviour support; educational psychology) or seek advice from a local voluntary agency. Within the local authority the Behaviour and Attendance Consultant and / or the Behaviour Improvement (BIP) Manager are important reference points. A number of publishers have behaviour / emotional literacy programmes that contain an assessment element.

www.luckyduck.co.uk / www.paulchapmanpublishing.co.uk / www.incentiveplus.co.uk / www.catalogue.fultonpublishers.co.uk /

A large number of statutory and voluntary social care services use the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). This is a brief behavioural change screening measurement developed by Professor Robert Goodman used extensively in the UK. It is an assessment tool that can be used by staff in schools. School staff and all the pupils in the groups completed the questionnaires at the start and completion of the programme, and perhaps at a later date to assess whether the changes have been sustained. There is also a questionnaire for parents. Full details, including how to “score” the questionnaires can be found on the website. The SDQs can be downloaded without cost.

www.sdqinfo.com

NfER Nelson has produced the Emotional Literacy: Assessment and Intervention programme for schools: Primary (7 – 11) and Secondary (11 – 16) based on the work developed by Southampton LEA. Other programmes from NfER Nelson that contain an assessment element are:

- Joseph Picture Self-Concept Scale – Younger 3 – 7 and Older 7 – 13
- Social Skills Training – Age 9 – 13
- Adolescent Coping Scale – Age 12 - 18

information@nfer-nelson.co.uk

The School of Emotional Literacy, led by Elizabeth Morris, is a national training institute specialising in the social and emotional education of children and young people. It has produced the following Assessment Tools:

- Insight – Assessing and Developing Self-Esteem (Pre-School; Primary and Secondary)
- Emotional Literacy Indicator (Early Years; Class, Individual, Young Adult, Whole School)

www.incentiveplus.co.uk

The Nurture Group Organisation recommends the use of the Boxall Profile.

The purpose of assessment is to determine the appropriate interventions. Following assessment an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be produced indicating the planned programme of work and process for monitoring and review.

Any assessment of a pupil's needs should be referenced in any CAF produced for a pupil. All school staff whose work relates to pupil / student welfare will need to be familiar with the Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People. It is "a nationally standardised approach to concluding an assessment of the needs of a child or young person and deciding how those needs should be met". The CAF will be used by all statutory and most voluntary support agencies.

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/delivering-services/caf