

CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE EAST DEVON SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP (EDSSP)

This pack includes:

1. A summary of the project, produced by the EDSSP.
2. An evaluation of the Emotional Health and Well Being workstrand, produced by the Jurassic Coast Teaching Schools Alliance.
3. An evaluation of the project, excluding Emotional Health and Well Being, produced by the University of Exeter



The Axe Valley Community College



Honiton Community College



The King's School



SIDMOUTH COLLEGE

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Department
for Education

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PROJECT SUMMARY

As the East Devon Secondary School Partnership (EDSSP), we were awarded a Character Education Grant by the Department for Education to deliver a 12-month project across five secondary schools (Axe Valley Community College, Clyst Vale Community College, The King's School, Honiton Community College, and Sidmouth College).

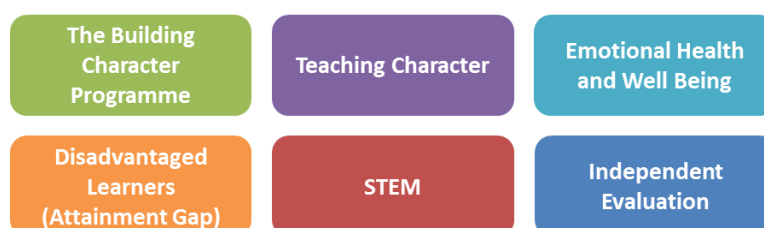
Development of character can have a direct effect on our students; not simply as successful learners in school but as individuals who will lead a richer and more fulfilled life.

We wanted to provide opportunities and experiences for our students to learn what character is and how it can be developed. By addressing emotional health and wellbeing and disadvantaged learners we have also explored how barriers to character development can be challenged

Our key aims?

1. To build learners with the following characteristics: resilience & perseverance; a sense of community & social responsibility; leadership (vision, drive and team skills); and, curiosity and open-mindedness;
2. To develop effective teaching and coaching practices for Character Education within the EDSSP and to share best practice;
3. To reduce the attainment gap for disadvantaged learners;
4. To improve emotional health and well-being outcomes for learners;
5. To engage more learners in STEM subjects at both Key Stage 5 and Higher Education; and,
6. To provide an independent, research-led evaluation of the programme and to disseminate this across the South West.

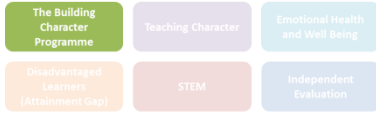
To achieve these aims, our project had six associated work-strands:



Project Staffing:

Each school appointed a Character Education Lead, who took responsibility for co-ordinating the delivery of the project in their school and a STEM Lead. The Head Teachers and a Governor from each school provided strategic direction and oversight in a Project Board. An Assurance Group was formed with the evaluators from the University of Exeter and the Jurassic Coast Teaching Schools Alliance (JCTSA) together with a Head Teacher, a Governor and a School Business Manager. The project was administered by a Project Manager and Project Officer.

Our approach for each work strand is set in the following pages.



1. THE BUILDING CHARACTER PROGRAMME & AWARD

Our main aim was the introduction of a **Building Character Programme** (BCP) at each school, which was focused on our core characteristics of Resilience, Community, Leadership and Curiosity.

Underpinning the BCP, we developed a cross-partnership **Building Character Award** (BCA). The Award enables to students to demonstrate their understanding of Character, and to log their achievements of developing their character. We piloted the award with Years 10 and 12, at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. The premise of the Award was that the evidence required should be flexible, in order to recognise that the same level of Resilience, for example, may lead to different outcomes for students from different backgrounds.

One of our five schools also piloted the Award as a **Tracker**, used in Tutor Times. This simplified tool was used as the basis for conversations between tutor and tutee, and was highly valued by staff and students.

BUILDING CHARACTER – OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

One of our first actions was to undertake an analysis of each school's existing provision of opportunities to develop the core characteristics. We identified any areas of strength or development for individual schools and the partnership as a whole, and then undertook to implement initiatives as and where required.

School Specific Initiatives

Students in Years 10 and 12 received classroom-based input, assemblies and tutor-time input about character and what it means, and to introduce them to the Programme and Award. The key aim here was to provide our students with the understanding of the importance of character and the language to discuss associated issues.

Schools also introduced new opportunities for students to develop character, for example:

- School A: Introduction of a School Newspaper; expansion of Sixth Form mentoring in Maths; a number of sixth formers trained in coaching.
- School B: Mindfulness activities have been integrated across subjects and tutor times with staff and students. 6th form students are trained in delivering Mental health sessions to students in lower school regularly. A new 6th Form Teen health group has been set up to look at EHWP of students in the school.
- School C: Sixth form Mentoring in Science, Introduction of a School Magazine run by sixth form students
- School D: Students trained as Student Character and Learning Leaders in order to develop learning habits that support character development; Year 7 and 11 trained as Dementia Friends.
- School E: 6th Form Students have set up a fund raising committee (with elected officers) to help support a local community charity. The school's Character Education Lead is supporting them by delivering leadership skills training to help them work with students from all year groups across the school.

Cross Partnership Initiatives

- We worked with Floyd Woodrow to deliver a one-day Leadership Course for students with potential **leadership** skills, who would benefit from additional input.
- Ben Hunt-Davis, the Olympic Rower, delivered a talk at each school about his experiences and how he developed his **resilience** and motivation.
- We entered into a partnership with a local landowner (Clinton Devon Estates) to develop curriculum-based fieldwork opportunities for students to develop their **curiosity** around a local **community** issue.
- We established “East Devon 6th (Form)” Sports teams in Rugby, Football and Netball to ensure that all students can access competitive sport in 6th Form and promote the development of **leadership** skills.
- We also asked students to complete a Resilience Survey, so that we could attempt to measure any changes in their self-assessed Resilience levels over the course of the Project.

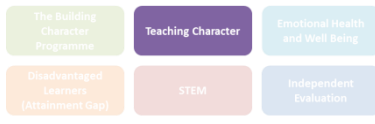
Building Character Programme Key Evaluation Points

- The building character programme focused on Resilience, Community, Leadership and Curiosity. A cross partnership Building Character Award was developed and piloted in years 10 and 12. The programme included classroom-based input, assemblies and tutor-time input about character for the students, and each school introduced a variety of new opportunities for students to develop character.
- Key positive findings from qualitative interviews with Character Education leads and pupils included the chance for multiple schools to collaborate, the experience of hosting external speakers, awards providing recognition/ extra content for older students’ CVs or personal statements,
- Key negative findings from qualitative interviews included difficulty with timings of the project and individual sessions, the booklet seeming too prescriptive or judgemental, and taking too long to complete, confusion around the different award levels, and problems with contextualisation and continuity compared with existing work.
- Suggestions for improvements included using the tracker to trigger discussions in tutor groups, digitising the booklet and issuing more guidance for use of the booklet.
- Both teachers and pupils felt it was difficult to report on outcomes in the limited time frame; the booklet seems a good way to record behaviour but may not develop behaviour unless it is embedded into the school setting longer term.
- Connections between activities from the STEM strand and Building Character Award were highlighted, with resilience, teamwork, and curiosity mentioned as a key aspect of many of the activities.
- The quantitative analysis reported suggests that pupils generally felt negatively about the booklets, mixed about the tracker, and more or less positive about the programme overall, depending on which school they attended. Results (mean scores) are slightly difficult to interpret without knowing the range of the scale after summing scores. Despite mixed reviews, pupils often provided suggestions for improvements in the qualitative interviews, showing some positive engagement with the programme.
- The pre- and post-programme surveys with 383 pupils showed no statistical difference in scores of resilience overall, indicating no overall effect of the programme on developing resilience. However, mean scores varied by school, with a large difference seen in one school, small difference in another, and a negative score from the last two. Again, knowing the scale range would aid interpretation. The authors note that parametric tests couldn’t be used due to non-normal distribution, transformations may have helped to correct for this, and in large samples the central limit theorem states that normality can be assumed regardless.
- The qualitative and quantitative results combined show that pupils and teachers felt the programme has potential to aid in character development. This worked best in schools that were already familiar with the style, and embedded it into their day. Materials and guidance should be developed further, and implemented over a longer timescale to give a better chance of measuring impact successfully.

What Next?

Across the partnership, over 1,551 students used either the Award Booklet or the Tracker. The evaluation by the University of Exeter shows that these students valued the project and were enthusiastic about its aims. We are now in a position to use the feedback from this pilot cohort to refine the Award, before re-launching to the next cohort of students in September 2016.

There is a commitment to continued collaboration for the Award, but each school will continue to build and develop their bespoke initiatives. For example, School A will develop their Head Boy / Girl, Tutor Captains and Sports Captains roles to develop more verticality leading to peer mentoring and further developing the leadership and community strands.



2. TEACHING CHARACTER

In addition to explicit teaching about character as part of the Building Character Programme, we also wanted to look at how lessons are taught in the schools, and how we can weave opportunities for students to build desirable characteristics into our lessons.

2.1. BUILDING LEARNING POWER (“BLP”) - LEAD PRACTITIONERS

Character education can be used by all staff in their classrooms as a method by which to deliver learning outcomes: for example, work on electricity can be introduced in science by using skilful questioning to trigger students’ curiosity. We believe that the use of Building Learning Power (BLP) techniques in the classroom enables all students to develop key character traits in the skills and habits needed that will provide them with success in their learning.

Thirty staff across the partnership received one day of training in BLP by Graham Powell. These Lead Practitioners were encouraged to experiment with these ideas in their classrooms, before all the schools were brought back together for an afternoon to share good practices and lessons that had been learned.

Each school also followed this up with activities within their schools. For example, teachers at School B delivered a training session to all other staff on “Teaching Character”. Another school, who have been using these techniques for a number of years, looked at how this can be built into the staff appraisal process.

Staff have started to share ideas and activities which can be used across the partnership and exploring ways of creating systems to encourage student ownership. By informing all teachers’ pedagogy, the project has a direct effect on how character is developed for all learners.

What Next?

All schools have subsequently met with their Senior Leadership Teams to discuss how this can be embedded further into each school and across the curriculum. Due to the wide variation in starting points at each school, there is a significant difference in each school’s next steps; however there is also a commitment to continued collaboration and sharing of knowledge in this area.

For example: School A will focus on developing Resilience within lessons following the Building Learning Power audit completed this year. School C would like to work in collaboration with the schools with more experience in this area, to train up more staff and broaden the impact on all students. School D have trained students to observe lessons to focus on how the students are using learning habits. All staff at School D will also be observed by a Learning Habits Champion and receive a coaching session to evaluate the impact of BLP in their classrooms.

2.2. ACTION RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Ten staff undertook **Action Research** in their classrooms, in partnership with the University of Exeter, looking at issues related to Character Education. Staff valued the guidance provided by the University in keeping their

research focused and on an appropriate scale. As a partnership arrangement, the University provided staff with a research summary of other activity in their topic area.

The research addressed a wide variety of questions, including:

- “How can I increase students’ sense of responsibility for their own work?”
- “How can I phrase and respond to questions in a way that will encourage Year 9 students to take more responsibility for their learning during science lessons?”
- “What effect does giving students a choice about what to read have on their willingness to participate in independent or group reading?”
- “Can I promote motivation in KS4 students on C/D borderline in mathematics through using self-directed learning materials?”

What Next?

Staff will share the results of their research across the partnership in the coming months.

2.3. STAFF RESILIENCE INSET

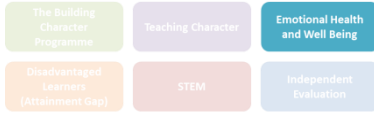
When we initially launched the project to all staff in September 2015, we started with an inset session looking at staff’s own levels of resilience and actions staff can take for themselves. This was delivered by Mark Solomon, of Successful Lives. The philosophy was that staff resilience was an important element in modelling successful habits for students and that by that by developing useful techniques for themselves they would be better-placed to teach and support students as appropriate.

Responses to the feedback forms completed after this session showed that staff strongly believe that their own resilience and that of students is important, and that they do have the power to address and make changes to this. Staff appreciated that this initiative extended to their own personal well-being and the majority felt it would be useful to them in their own lives.

What Next?

The feedback from this Inset has been used in the planning process for 2015/16.

Schools have adopted strategies that will continue to support staff resilience and health and well-being such as mindfulness, Zumba,



3. EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL BEING

Note: Clinical Psychologists from the University of Exeter were involved in the design and implementation of this work strand. Therefore it was not evaluated by our main evaluation team, who were also from the University of Exeter (Graduate School of Education). Instead, a colleague from the Jurassic Coast Teaching Schools Alliance undertook the qualitative evaluation of this strand.

The Clinical Psychology Team from the University of Exeter used a team of analysts from the University to evaluate the students' well-being data. The results of this are presented in the following section.

3.1. LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

We delivered an eight-week programme, written by psychologists from the University of Glasgow, entitled "Living Life to the Full (for Young People)" (LLTTF). All staff across the partnership participated in an awareness session about the course, which was delivered by psychologists from the University of Exeter. The purpose of this session was to ensure that all staff were aware of the content and purpose of the materials, so that they could recommend them to appropriate students as required.

In addition, up to eight individuals from each school (key staff, and for two schools – two 6th formers each) received one and a half days' in depth training by psychologists from the University of Exeter and LLTTF on the content of the course and how to deliver it.

The University of Exeter then supported each school by co-delivering it with staff members to the first cohort at each school. Student feedback was captured after every session and again once all sessions were completed. Eight students at each school participated in a structured interview to capture their thoughts.

The Schools implemented this programme as follows:

- **School A:** all of Year 10 (145 students) were taken off-timetable.
- **School B:** two PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) classes undertook the programme, which was condensed into a 4 week programme.
- **School C:** targeted group of 13 students from Year 9.
- **School D:** one PSHE class
- **School E:** one class of Year 10s, of mixed ability and mixed gender, who were taken out of P.E. lessons to receive this programme. The class included 14 students that were identified by the Student Welfare Co-ordinator as students who would potentially benefit from this type of intervention.

Health and well-being strand evaluation Key evaluation points:

- This entailed an 8 week programme written by psychologists. All staff participated in an awareness session, whilst up to 8 staff per school took part in in-depth training. A large number of students took part in the 'Living Life to the Full' programme.
- Measurement data from 283 pupils showed that overall well-being increased to a statistically significant degree after participating in the programme. However, the increase was only seen in pupils who had low levels of well-being prior to participating, indicating that the programme may be more useful targeting those with existing low well-being levels.
- A large number of pupils were included, but some more detail on the age range/ gender split etc. of pupils included in this analysis would be helpful to judge the representativeness of this findings, as well as knowing the maximum possible score on the scale to aid interpretation (since an increase of

0.99 from 45.72 to 46.71 may seem a small difference to be so highly significant). The scores were also based on self-perception so may be less accurate than other sources of data.

- Schools implemented the programme in a variety of ways, from different starting points; an additional reason that the findings should be interpreted with caution.
- Qualitative feedback was in the main positive with students noting it would help in a variety of settings, helped them to get active, and to learn to control negative responses that might get them into trouble.
- The programme may benefit from standardizing the method and timing of delivery after feedback relating to group sizes being too large, missing favourite lessons and teachers not having enough time to plan or complete sessions. A mix of quantitative and qualitative data from teachers and pupils provides convergent evidence that the programme was successful in its aims. However, implanting over a longer time scale with some baseline measures would provide more robust evidence.

What Next?

We are now working closely with the authors of the programme to further refine the materials based on our experiences of implementing the lessons this year and on the data that we have collected as part of the evaluation. All schools intend to continue using LLTTF, and will look to use these materials more widely across all year groups from September.

We will use the results of the evaluation to consider: target audience; 4 session versus 8 session delivery; which sessions were most useful; and which parts of each session were most useful.



4. DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS (ATTAINMENT GAP)

4.1. COACHING AND MENTORING

Resource Pack

Across all five schools, various coaching and mentoring structures already exist for Disadvantaged Learners. The Project Board identified that this could be improved with the creation of resources and training materials for external volunteers that work with our students.

The Project worked with staff from two of the schools to generate the materials, and conducted an analysis of materials used by other educational establishments (notably the Hackney Mentoring Programme). Having designed resources based around the GROW coaching model (Sir John Whitmore), these were then reviewed by two external coaching practitioners.

Coaching Training for Learning Support Assistants

Having looked at the difficulties involved with scheduling and managing external volunteer coaches, the Project also opted to provide training in coaching techniques for approximately twenty Learning Support Assistants across the partnership. Schools can now use these practitioners to coach in schools much more flexibly than using external volunteers.

Staff who received the coaching also fed back that the tools and techniques will be valuable in their day-to-day roles, as well as any additional coaching.

What Next?

Schools will continue to use the Resource Pack. School B is looking to continue to offer coaching via external volunteers, and to build on the work done during this Project.

4.2. ACCESS TO OUTDOOR EDUCATION

All our schools participate in the Ten Tors and Duke of Edinburgh Award Schemes, providing excellent opportunities for character development via outdoor education. However, there can be significant barriers for disadvantaged learners in accessing these programmes.

Schools identified students for whom equipment was a barrier, and were then able to purchase resources to support these students. In addition, one school has also allocated a tutor to provide additional mentoring support to those students over the summer term to encourage their participation in these activities.



5. STEM

5.1. STEM LEADS AND STEM CLUBS

The project aimed to engage more learners in **STEM** subjects at A- Level and encourage greater progression into Higher Education STEM courses.

Each school has also allocated time and a budget to their STEM Leads, which has been used to expand the opportunities to students. The STEM Leads meet on a regular basis, and work collaboratively in this area.

5.2. THE “LOWER OTTER RESTORATION PROJECT” WITH CLINTON DEVON ESTATES

We have worked closely with **Clinton Devon Estates** to develop meaningful local field work opportunities in STEM-related areas.

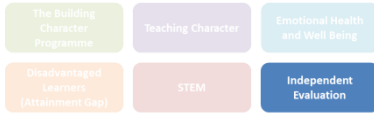
A Resource Pack has been created, and schools will continue to add to this as more field trips occur. The STEM Leads will also encourage its use across a wider range of subjects.

The pack will be available to other schools beyond the Partnership, through the Clinton Devon Estates Countryside Learning Officer and their Website.

What Next?

Schools and STEM Leads have greatly valued the knowledge-sharing and collaboration that has occurred as a result of this Project. STEM Lead meetings will continue on a half-termly basis.

We will continue our partner work with Clinton Devon Estates, and to take advantage of what they can offer in terms of curriculum-based field work.



6. AN INDEPENDENT, RESEARCH-LED EVALUATION

The Graduate School of Education, from the University of Exeter were appointed to provide an independent, research-led evaluation of this project. Due to the involvement of the Clinical Psychology Team from the University in implementing the Emotional Health and Well Being (EHWB) strand, we requested support from the Jurassic Coast Schools Teaching Alliance to provide the evaluation for this strand.

EHWB has a significant amount of quantitative data associated, including the Edinburgh Warwick Well Being Scale. The analysis of this quantitative data was conducted by researchers at the University, directed by the Clinical Psychology Team.

Our Approach

Over the course of the project, we have worked closely with our evaluators from the University of Exeter and the Jurassic Coast Teaching Schools Alliance (JCTSA).

Both the University and JCTSA sat on our Assurance Group, and also attended the half-termly meetings with Character Education Leads. This had the benefit of providing them with a clear over-arching view of the Project, but also allowed the Project to respond quickly to any questions, comments or concerns that might be raised.

By involving the evaluators early in the process, and by sharing information throughout, we feel that the evaluators have a full and accurate picture of the work that we have undertaken.

The results of these three aspects of the evaluation are presented in the following sections.

Wellbeing Results

Quantitative Analysis conducted by researchers from the Clinical Psychology Department at the University of Exeter, (directed by the implementation team)

Total participants = 337.

Thirty six participants were excluded from the analysis as they only had either pre- or post-test data (and not both). Of the remaining 301 participants, 113 were from Clyst, 28 were from Sidmouth and 160 were from Kings.

Overall Wellbeing

Each participant's overall wellbeing scores at time 1 (T1) and time 2 (T2) were calculated. Participants with missing data items were not included. The means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of these scores can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of participants (N), means (M), and standard deviations (SD) of the overall wellbeing scores.

	<u>Pre-test</u>			<u>Post-test</u>		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Overall wellbeing	289	45.72	8.62	294	46.71	8.92

A paired t-test revealed a significant difference between the pre- and post-test overall wellbeing data, $t(282) = 3.01$, $p = .003$. Participants' wellbeing was significantly higher post-test compared to pre-test.

Wellbeing by Individual Items

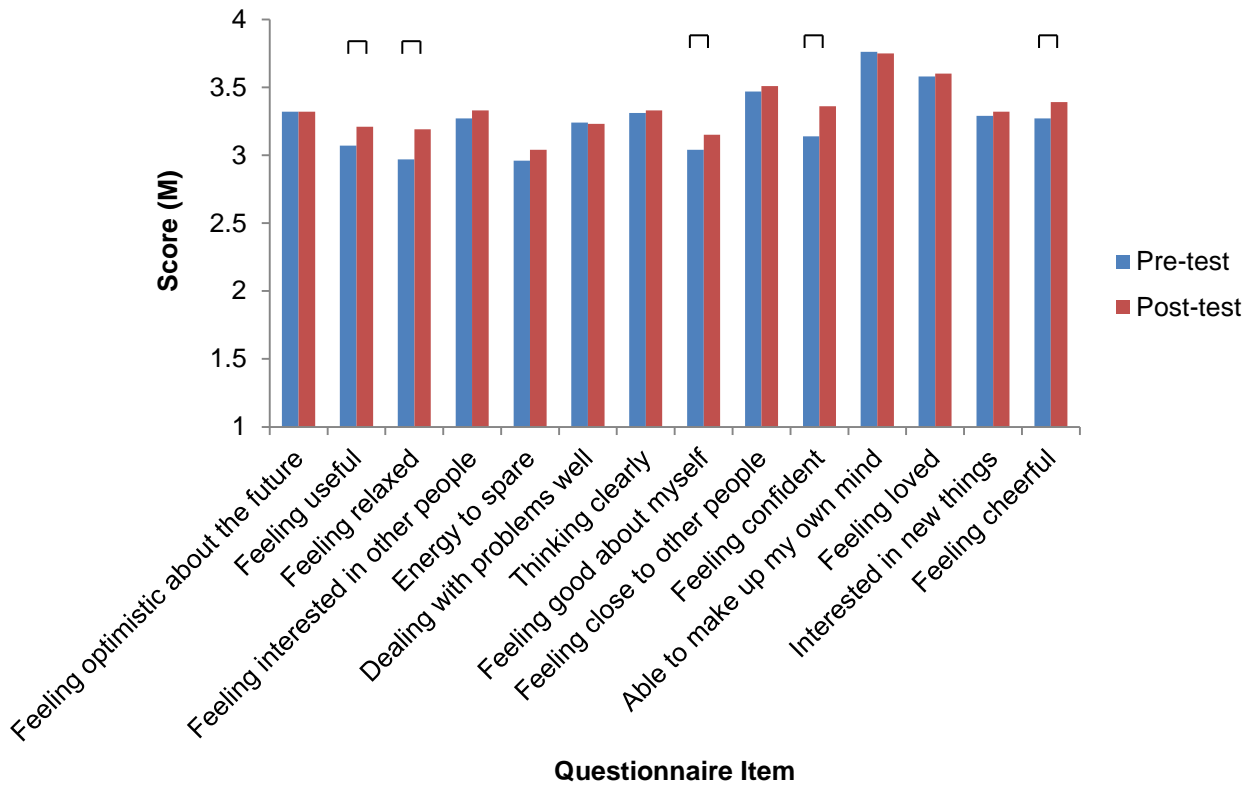
Next the means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for each item of the questionnaire were calculated, and paired t-tests were carried out on each of the item's pre- and post-test data. These, along with the number of participants (N) who completed each item can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of participants (N), means (M), standard deviations (SD), and t-test results of individuals items on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Questionnaire.

Item	Pre-test			Post-test			T-test
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	299	3.32	0.90	301	3.32	0.90	0.21
I've been feeling useful	301	3.07	0.83	301	3.21	0.83	2.79**
I've been feeling relaxed	301	2.97	0.97	300	3.19	0.98	3.97***
I've been feeling interested in other people	297	3.27	0.92	300	3.33	0.93	1.30
I've had energy to spare	300	2.96	1.02	300	3.04	1.05	1.45
I've been dealing with problems well	301	3.24	0.94	301	3.23	0.97	0.18
I've been thinking clearly	299	3.31	0.88	300	3.33	0.92	0.33
I've been feeling good about myself	300	3.04	1.02	301	3.15	1.02	2.03*
I've been feeling close to other people	299	3.47	0.92	301	3.51	0.92	0.61
I've been feeling confident	299	3.14	1.06	300	3.36	1.04	3.59***
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	300	3.76	0.86	300	3.75	0.87	0.07
I've been feeling loved	298	3.58	1.06	300	3.60	0.97	0.29
I've been interested in new things	299	3.29	1.06	301	3.32	1.00	0.44
I've been feeling cheerful	300	3.27	0.94	301	3.39	0.91	2.24*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .005$, *** $p < .001$

The scores (M) can also be seen in the graph below:



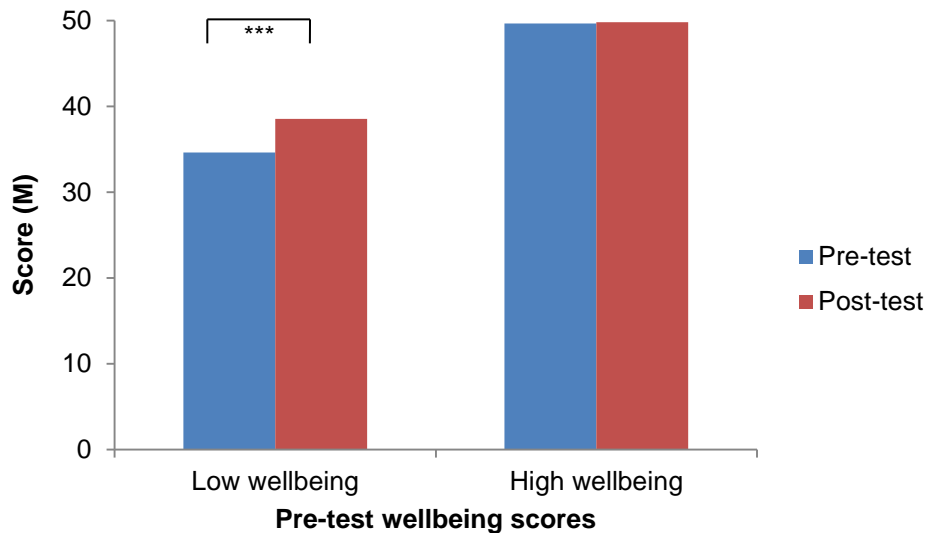
Post-test wellbeing scores by low and high pre-test scores

It has been found that individuals who score <41 on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Questionnaire are at high risk of mental illness (Taggart, Stewart-Brown & Parkinson, 2015). Therefore the participants in this study were split into two groups: those with pre-test scores equal to or lower than 40 (low wellbeing) and those with pre-test scores higher than 40 (high wellbeing) to determine what impact the intervention had on these two different groups.

Pre-test wellbeing score	<u>Pre-test</u>			<u>Post-test</u>			<u>T-test</u>
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	
Low wellbeing	76	34.63	4.90	75	38.52	8.47	4.44***
High wellbeing	213	49.67	5.71	208	49.81	6.91	0.47

*** $p < .001$

These results suggest that the intervention significantly increases overall wellbeing scores for individuals who have low pre-test wellbeing scores (40 or <40). Participants with high wellbeing scores at pre-test continue to have high scores at post-test; these do not significantly change.



EVALUATION OF THE DELIVERY OF THE 'LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL' (LLTTF) PROGRAMME WITHIN THE EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRAND OF THE CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

BY DOT WOOD – OF THE JURASSIC COAST TEACHING SCHOOLS ALLIANCE (JCTSA)

The aim of the Emotional Well-being strand was:

'To support young people with emotional health and wellbeing issues; a barrier that prevents many learners from achieving their potential'.

The questions addressed in the evaluation are:

1. Did we make a difference to students and improve their emotional wellbeing?
2. Was the programme effectively implemented at each school?
3. Should schools run the Living Life to the Full programme again in the next academic year?

The evaluation has drawn upon interviews with students and staff from each school and feedback forms from each delivered session. A series of questions was agreed by the Project Assurance group and the same evaluation questions were asked in each school. Each school selected eight students to be interviewed in pairs. The teacher responsible for coordinating the programme was also interviewed.

All interviews were recorded and have been transcribed.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Summary of Student Interviews:

The student interviews showed a positive, mature and sensible attitude to questions. All students interviewed were very happy to discuss the project and all agreed it was important to address the issues relating to student health and well-being in schools. The issue of stress around examination subjects seemed to affect all Year 10 students though some also did admit to having behavioural and anger management issues as well. As the materials covered both schoolwork and personal problems, students felt that the subject of emotional health and well-being was important and that the Living Life to the Full resources were appropriate and relevant for all students.

Summary of Teacher Interviews:

The teacher questions weren't as clear cut in their responses as the student replies. Often replies reflected the different approaches each school had taken to organise and deliver the programme.

The preparation of the materials and how they were delivered seemed to be the most contentious factors. As the programme was launched to the school staff as a whole in September 2015 and had to be completed by March 2016, limited time to plan and review was a considerable factor with regard to preparation of the materials and teachers feeling confident and comfortable in delivering them. As the programme developed schools shared good practice, liaised with programme authors on what worked well and were given permission to adapt the materials to suit individual school's circumstances. This was not possible at the beginning due to copyright restrictions.

Restricted time was a consistent issue regarding staff planning and all felt it was important that they were comfortable with delivering the often sensitive issues. A recurring comment however, was that everyone involved agreed that the materials were very good and a consistent view from staff was that they wanted to deliver the work again and embed it into their school's curriculum.

All staff interviewed stated that the programme had impacted well on their day to day teaching, in their understanding and focus on listening more to students with concerns and all agreed that the content was appropriate and well-written.

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

QUESTION 1: WHAT IMPACT HAS THE PROGRAMME HAD ON YOU? HAS IT CHANGED YOUR THINKING OR BEHAVIOURS IN ANY WAY?

The answer to this question was overwhelmingly positive. Not all agreed it changed their behaviour directly, however, all students interviewed agreed that the LLtF programme had changed their thinking, citing an increased ability to help members of their peer group who needed support and to use some of the activities and strategies suggested in the programme to do this.

School B, Student 1: *'To be honest it had a really big impact. I could go and use it on other friends as well. Also it helped me cos I was feeling a bit stressed about work and stuff and I had other stuff going on in my mind but it helped me to feel clearer and sorted my head out a bit. For me it actually really worked and I felt much more relaxed and it was a big help for me.'*

School B, Student 2: *I completely agree. I was feeling down in the first few lessons and it really did help identify what's going on in our brains and how to sort it out and how to sort out what's happening and stop getting into really bad situations. Like he said (Student 1) it really did help with the stress in school and it helped you to try to help other people and yourself as well. You learn skills that you could definitely use in later life.*

Some suggested it made them behave better towards their family members and be generally more understanding of other people. Others cited changed behaviour such as going to bed earlier to getting up and going for a run before school:

School E, Student 2: *'I think it's made me like more calm, so if someone's annoying me I can put up with it longer and I don't straight away lash out. I can put up with it to a certain point and like as long as you keep on practising what you've been taught then you should be able to remember it and stuff.'*

School E, Student 1: *'I think there was a 'trying to cool off' one? I wanted to do more bike riding but I had to have the courage to repair my bike to it and the course actually helped me do that because it reminded me to actually do it so...'*

Other students mentioned using the anger management strategies to stop them getting into trouble in school. Only one student out of the 80 interviewed suggested it couldn't help him as his issues were so severe that nothing his 'ed psych' or anything these other exercises suggested worked. However his openness in discussing his issues in front of his peer group suggested that the programme had changed his behaviour, in that he was given a forum that enabled him to express himself.

School A, Student 5: *'The vicious cycle made me think about what I could do to get me out of that cycle and how I can prevent myself from being like that and I found the page about what you can do to make you happy useful, like eat a banana and when you wrote down what was in your head and what people can say and what you can do to change. I found that helpful because it changed your thinking pattern and it made you stop and think. I don't want to feel upset so you can make yourself feel happy just by what you are thinking.'*

School C, Student 1: *'Yes it's positive because it changed the way I dealt with things. I used to get angry all the time and I'd punch a wall or something and now I try and do the 1, 2, 3 breathe thing and that works a lot better.'*

QUESTION 2: WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE PROGRAMME TO A FRIEND AND WHY?

All agreed that it could help some people if they were having a hard time with a variety of issues – all agreed they had been given ‘skills for life’ that even if they don’t need now they may need in the future.

QUESTION 3: WHAT ASPECT OF THE PROGRAMME HAD THE MOST/LEAST IMPACT ON YOU?

A variety of answers were offered varying in degrees but everyone commented in a positive way.

At this point it was clear that the teachers had selected a very broad range of students from varying academic and behavioural backgrounds and this made the interviews particularly interesting. One female student had been put forward as the teacher didn’t think she had engaged with the programme at all; however it was clearly evident from the interview that she had. She admitted she didn’t want to fill in any of the written material or feedback forms in front of her peer group as it was a sign of someone needing the ‘help’ materials. However, during time in the school’s referral room the student had read the booklets from cover to cover and admitted they were actually very useful and a help to her.

School C, Student 3: *‘I think the most impact was realising what made you angry, what your limits were and how you deal with it. When you realise what makes you angry I think you can deal with it better.’*

School A, Student 2: *‘It’s made me think about how I’m going to change the vicious cycles that I get myself into and I’m going to have a more positive outlook on life.’*

School C, Student 2: *‘Yes because when we were being active and talking about having a fresh mind I was doing runs every morning before school and it’s been helping me at school to have a fresh mind.’*

Going running came out of this programme did it?

School C, Student 2: *‘Yes I wasn’t really active before then.’*

Has it changed your thinking or your behaviour?

School C, Student 1: *‘Yeah definitely, in lessons and stuff. It’s generally the way I act at school and having more confidence and I believe in myself.’*

QUESTION 4: DID YOU FIND ANYTHING THAT TOOK YOU OUT OF YOUR ‘COMFORT ZONE’?

The answers to this question were the most varied as each school had delivered the programme in different ways.

School D initially delivered the programme in a Year 10 Health and Social Care GCSE group of 28 students. Many of the students interviewed felt that the group was too large and they didn’t feel comfortable talking or responding to some of the materials as they didn’t know the other students well in the group. It was also the first school to deliver the programme at the beginning of the school year in September 2015. The school has since ‘rolled out’ the programme to the whole year group but have condensed some of the materials to make them rather more ‘user - friendly’.

School D, Student 2: *“The sheets and some of the questions made me uncomfortable.”*

School D, Student 1: *"Yeah, there were lists that you could tick if you like self-harm but that's not something you want to be doing in front of a class of 30 people."*

School E used Physical Education time to deliver the programme to a cohort of 30 Year 10 students. For one particular student this was a problem, in that he was missing a favourite lesson. However, he did acknowledge that it had 'useful stuff' in it after a few of the sessions. All the students were generally positive about the majority of the course. The coordinator of the course is keen to see it embedded throughout the school curriculum with different aspects delivered to different year groups rather than an eight-week condensed programme.

School E, Student 1: *'Probably thinking about my problems, I guess took me out of my comfort zone. Everyone's got issues but if they (other students) talk about your problem in the lesson it makes you feel a bit uncomfortable.'*

School B delivered the work to a group of 30 Year 10 students during PSHE lessons who all said they were very comfortable with the group as they all knew each other and had worked together previously, they knew the teacher well and they all felt supported and at ease within the group. This school has a longstanding and well established attitude to PSHE and were able to implement a student 'Mindfulness programme' during lunchtimes to an already established group called 'Teen Health'. I also interviewed these students and they were all incredibly supportive and positive about the work they did around health and wellbeing in these lunchtime sessions.

School B, Student 1: *'No, I didn't feel anything was really uncomfortable because before we started Miss told us we were going to do this course and she said if there are any bits that you don't feel comfortable with you can always go out and I was thinking are there going to be bits that I don't feel comfortable but it was relaxed and if it was something really personal then you didn't have to say anything. You just did as much as you felt comfortable with.'*

School B, Student 2: *'I think it was to do with the teacher as well. They made it comfortable and they would understand if there was something that made you feel uncomfortable and they wouldn't do that'*

School A had approached delivery in a totally different way by delivering to the whole of Year 10 by a group of volunteer teachers who weren't specifically trained in PSHE but who had shown an interest in the course and the need for this type of work to be included in the main curriculum. In School A PSHE was taught in full day sessions and it was evident from the student's responses that the groups didn't respect one another enough for individuals to really share and engage with the programme. They thought the material was useful and were very positive about doing the work but some of the girls said that it would have been better without the boys. This makes one assume that being comfortable within the group and respectful of one another in the group is something that needs to be nurtured over a period of time.

School A, Student 1: *'I think if you had a smaller group and they trusted each other then I probably would have shared more and some people would need this more than others.'*

School C chose to work with a small group of eight specially selected students from year nine. These students were selected for a variety of reasons and were taken out of whatever subject

they would have been doing at the time so they were not in a group they usually worked with. However, they seemed to recognise that they all had certain reasons for them being selected and seemed to be happy to be in the group and work together as a team. Some even said they made new friends which had been a valuable experience. They were all positive about taking part in the programme.

School C, Student 1: *'I don't think there was anything that really took me out of my comfort zone. It was more based around what we wanted to do than what we didn't want to do.'*

QUESTION 5: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE LLTTF BOOKLETS?

All students agreed the materials were good – some thought there was too much writing involved at the end of each session – some suggested 'they just put anything down so they could go for break'. However, later in the day or the evening they thought about it again and realised that having a target or a plan was a good idea but it was just too rushed to try and think of something and write it in the box to please the teacher at the time.

After some discussion with the University the first school to deliver the work had revised some of the materials to make them more 'teacher and pupil friendly'.

School A, Student 5: *'I quite liked the booklets because you can look back at them and maybe in a year's time you can look back and see how things have changed and if you've used it. If you are having a bad day you can look and think what can I do to prevent that?'*

School C, Student 6: *'I think if other students saw the booklets it would help I think. There would be a lot less problems with anxiety and stress.'*

School B, Student 5: *'I thought the booklets were good but we didn't get that much time to look at them. Because it's a short course we've got a lot to get in, so some of the time I didn't look at the booklet that much. A couple of the times I did look, I did think it would have been good to have more time to have a look at them.'*

QUESTION 6: DID YOU EVER LOOK AT THE BOOKLETS IN YOUR OWN TIME?

Some students were only given the booklets at the very end of the course so hadn't had time to reflect back and look at them, as evaluation interviews were scheduled for the final lesson. All agreed, however that they would keep them – and maybe look at them again if they ever felt a need.

Some schools made shortened versions of the booklets. There were also glossy booklets and the lesson workbook booklets so this question was sometimes misunderstood regarding which booklets were meant – but generally the feeling was they were both good to have and easy to use. A large proportion of students felt they would be particularly useful to have in referral rooms or in student support rooms where students who have a need for the materials could access them. Generally the students all seemed to cite the practical and physical exercises as being the most memorable and useful.

School E, Student 1: *'Yes, I would look at them if you are having a particularly bad time to remind me of what to do to help.'*

School E, Student 2: *'Especially when we get to exams they will help us get through it.'*

School C, Student 1: *'We can always use the booklets in the future if you needed them. I've got mine now.'*

QUESTION 7: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE OTHER STUDENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL AWARE OF THESE RESOURCES?

All students knew that this was a trial programme and they all agreed that it should be embedded into the normal curriculum and taught every year.

They also said that the booklets should be available to those that need them.

School A, Student 2: *'I think it could be introduced in year 9 because that's the year where people start facing difficulties with their emotions.'*

School D, Student 1: *'I think it's probably good for everyone because then even if you don't say anything in class you're still taking it all in and then you can still think about the stuff (topics).'*

QUESTION 8: HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT LOOKING AT THESE ISSUES IN A CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT?

This was the question that the students had already answered when they were talking about discussing things 'out of their comfort zone' so it wasn't usually necessary to add any more apart from reiterating the group size, knowing the group and students being supportive of one another. Some students stated that single sex gender- groupings would help.

School B, Student 2: *'I felt quite comfortable talking in class. Some of the issues rang home but it was ok as it was in a comfortable environment and you didn't **have to** say anything out loud.'*

School B, Student 1: *'Yeah, the teachers were so calm about it and you didn't feel pressured to talk about your own problems and it did sometimes knock you a little bit but you could think actually no one knows about it so I can just keep it here and see what can help.'*

School C, Student 1: *'I think in our small group the people chosen didn't mess around and I felt confident opening up around them. If it was with some of the boys in year 9 then maybe I wouldn't have.'*

School C, Student 2: *'What we did in the lesson we kept it to ourselves. We didn't share everyone else's problems.'*

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

School A:

'Some of the resources were very good but needed more effective planning for a classroom environment. I would say not really effective in a larger class environment.'

'I think the partnership between the school and the project office was hugely collaborative. We all shared ideas and we've had conversations about what we think isn't working, those resources will be shared'

School B:

'Students after the first session came knocking on the door from other classes asking if they were going to be doing it because they knew it was a trial group and then I had another bunch of students outside my door saying my friends having a difficult time can I have a look at the booklets. I handed out 6 booklets on the vicious cycle on the first day so students were really excited to do this'

'The initial trial group really enjoyed it. Other teachers in the school are starting to see the benefits. Not just from the programme in lessons but in the fact that we've now trained mental health leaders. We have trained students who are 16/17 years of age to go into tutor time to explain to younger students that it is ok to talk about our mental health.'

'...the content was superb, exactly what the students wanted. I enjoyed teaching it and co-delivering it with Finn (Exeter University clinical psychology department)'

School C:

Did the students show much improvement in their behaviour and attitude?

'Yes the feedback was very positive on the whole. There were some that were less positive but I'm pretty sure it's because they are quite self-assured and don't have any emotional issues that they needed help with but they all seemed to enjoy the sessions and discussions. Because it was a smaller group they all seemed able to share ideas so I think they all got something out of it whether it be emotional support or friendships because they were a mix of students and some didn't know each other at all'

School D:

Do other teachers in the school feel these students are more prepared to participate in school life?

'I think the initial awareness session staff were really engaged in that and they were really interested in the programme so I think that when this proves to be something we want to take more widely in the school then I think staff will then start to see more of an impact on them.'

School E:

Were staff concerned about the amount of health and wellbeing to be tackled in school?

'I think based on instinct 60% of staff were a yes to this is very important and the traditional 30% who said this isn't the schools area, I don't want to get involved, I'm not trained in this. Interestingly though we've got Change teams here. I recapped the steps of the 'Living life to the full' programme with them and 2 of the staff members said some of the materials in there are more useful than a building, learning power programme because some of our more resistant students develop more academic resilience - when you dig under the skin you often find it's the emotional issues that are getting in the way. So if I'm going to lead this project next year I need to start mulling over how it will develop and how to train teachers to recognise if a student is struggling with their subject it may well be emotionally and not academically'.

EVALUATOR'S RESPONSES TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Did the Project make a difference to students and improve their emotional wellbeing?

From the interviews that I carried out the majority of students stated that the intervention of the LLTTF programme definitely made them think more about their emotional well-being and in approx. 60% of the students they gave examples of how it had helped them change behaviour patterns.

2. Was the programme effectively implemented at each school?

Each school implemented the programme in a different way but all the schools embraced the programme with 100% commitment. They undertook to carry out the brief in a competent and professional manner and were overwhelmingly positive about the results of the programme.

3. Should schools run the Living Life to the Full programme again in the next academic year?

All teachers agreed that they would be keen to see aspects of the programme delivered next academic year.

At School A the staff felt a fresh look at the whole PSHE programme was now required after hearing the positive comments from the students following the programme.

School B had already had a long standing successful PSHE programme however were keen to embrace aspects of the LLTTF programme and also build on the mindfulness work they had begun with students during the project.

School C had the smallest cohort but staff showed great support for the programme and felt it had an extremely important place in the school curriculum. They are in discussion on how it could be implemented to the larger number of students in the future.

School D had begun with one group of 30 but had rolled out the programme to a whole year group by the end of the academic year. They are going to include it in their PSHE programme next year.

School E wanted to begin with aspects of the programme in year 7 and felt it could be delivered in smaller chunks throughout students school lives. It was felt that heads of year would benefit greatly from being introduced the programme.

Evaluation Report

East Devon Secondary School Partnerships' Character Education Project

April 2016

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University of Exeter

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Summary

This report, commissioned by the East Devon Secondary School Partnership's Character Education Project, presents the findings of an independent evaluation of that project.

The evaluation, bringing together qualitative and quantitative data, shows that the Building Character Programme has most impact where the programme is embedded into existing school procedures, processes and ethos. Timing of the introduction of the programme, as well as time available for the implementation, together with the ways in which the programme has been dovetailed into existing structures, are all significant factors in this embedding.

Support, and enthusiasm, for collaboration between schools is very evident, and was universal across Character Education Leads, STEM Leads, and others. There is strong support from students and staff for the ideas and the objectives of the project. The creative ways in which the ideas have been implemented across the consortium is impressive.

Students have valued the project, and their views about the project are more sophisticated and nuanced than the numeric data alone can reveal. Students were aware of the complexity of the field, and the value of the programme as an initial step in addressing important issues of character development. Their willingness to critically engage with the content and format of the Building Character Award programme Booklet demonstrates an enthusiasm for the concept, and provides an opportunity to further develop the booklet (or an alternative) in partnership with the potential users. The lack of significant difference between those students categorised as disadvantaged (through the Pupil Premium metric) demonstrates that the programme has benefited from the programme on equal terms with other students.

Methods

A mixture of methods was used to gather information about the implementation and efficacy of the programme across the five schools involved.

Interviews

Interviews were carried out with key staff in each school. Character Education Leads and STEM leads (where they were in place) were interviewed in the period between the February half-term break and the Easter holidays. In addition, focus groups of students were interviewed in each school during the same period. Groups focusing on the Building Character Award and on STEM were interviewed separately.

Semi-structured interview schedules were used to achieve a balance between ensuring similar questions were asked at each school, and allowing comparability, and flexibility to allow different patterns of implementation and project priorities to be reflected. These are included as Appendix 1 below.

Questionnaires

A number of questionnaire instruments were used to gather quantitative data.

We compiled a questionnaire by combining a resilience questionnaire designed by Mark Solomon (one of the expert contributors to the programme) and an established Resilience Scale (Wagnild and Young 1993), which has been demonstrated to be effective amongst adolescents (Ahern et al, 2006). Questions from the two sources were placed in a random order, and made available electronically to all students. Each participating student was allocated a 'token', an alphanumeric string which comprised information about the school they attended, and demographic characteristics (including their gender, which school year they were in, and whether they were recorded as being in receipt of Pupil Premium). The survey was completed twice by each student: once at the start of the autumn term and once within a week of the February half term break, thus giving pre and post measures. At each data collection point, a total resilience score was calculated for each participating student. The working hypothesis was that if the programme was effective in developing resilience, the total resilience scores would increase between the first and second data collection points.

Evaluation of the Building Character Booklet, of the Tracker, and of the impact of the Building Character Programme more widely, was supported through the use of a specifically developed questionnaire, administered once, at the end of the evaluation period. The questions from this questionnaire are shown in the Appendix 2 in Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7 respectively. This questionnaire was made available electronically, although for pragmatic reasons, some schools returned responses on paper. All data were combined into a single set of responses.

The impact of, and attitude towards, staff training events were measured through two sets of questionnaires. The first set was administered immediately after a series of staff training events at the start of the evaluation period, in September 2014 (see Appendix 2 Table 8, Table 9, Table 10, and Table 11 for details of the questions). Each was tailored to the focus of the specific event to which it was related. As far as possible, similar questions were used to enable an effective follow up at the end of the evaluation period. Immediately prior to the Easter break, a further questionnaire was administered to all staff across the five schools that had taken part in the earlier events (see Appendix 2, Table 14, for the questions). This questionnaire, specifically designed for the purpose, focused on staff attitudes towards the Building Character Programme, and an evaluation of the impact of the earlier CPD events.

Feedback on specific events that formed part of the Building Character Programme (particularly the presentation ‘Will it Make the Boat Go Faster’ by Ben Hunt-Davis, and ‘Compass for Life, by Floyd Woodrow) was gathered through questionnaires designed by the project office. The data gathered are presented and discussed here.

A further set of quantitative data was collected by three schools (Schools A, C and D) using the Edinburgh Warwick Scale to evaluate the impact of the Living Life to the Full (LLTTF) programme. We have analyzed this data, and present our findings below.

Findings

Qualitative Data

We will report on the qualitative data first, as the insights gained provide valuable context when reading the account of our quantitative analysis.

Interviews with Character Education Leads and with students involved in the Building Character Programme (BCP) and associated Award

This part of the report begins with general statements about the project, then reports staff and student views on the implementation of the BCP and their views on its outcomes.

Overall Project Structure:

“The project has given us time to think about it (character education) and to realize that it’s key to the school.” (CEL)

Collaboration

There was very strong support for the value of the collaboration amongst schools that was established by the project: “amazing – brilliant – really illuminating to see how things work in other schools” (School A); “loved it – really enjoyed it” (School B); collaboration was “phenomenal in fact” (School E). It was seen as “enlightening to see how others work” and helpful to “pick up good ideas”. One teacher (School A) felt that “there were no opportunities to do this normally because of time...it may happen in departments but not at school level”. As a teacher in School C explained, the collaboration took the form of meetings, “constant emails” and the sharing of materials. In School E the teacher extended this list by mentioning the value of collaborative reflection, and of having other schools to benchmark against. A teacher in School B felt it “had been a true collaborative process – people have been quite open” perhaps partly because (as the School E teacher mentioned) the schools were far enough apart not to compete for students.

There was also a widespread view that time available for, and the timing of, the project were both problematic. There was recognition that such projects may need to be of short duration but, especially when they were, there was a call for sensitivity to the shape of the school year and to the lead times needed to embed new initiatives into school practice. In School A the CEL said “It takes time to embed it. We don’t have much time.” The CEL in School B who wanted to link the Award to PSE lessons, pointed out that “PSE is part of a carousel so timing was hard – we couldn’t find a good time for it to be meaningful”. In School D the CEL argued that “in future we would build this in to the tutorial programme with the expectation that they will do

it from the start of the year. ... (In the project) the timing was unhelpful as things were not in place for induction". The CEL in School C had a similar view, arguing that launching the project in September was problematic as "tutoring slots had already been arranged so the Building Character Award seemed like an add-on". In this school, the issue of timing was judged to have affected staff buy-in to the scheme, although students were receptive.

Issues of timing were also evident to students, though for them the issue was often about when, in their school career, the BCA work should be done.

'It's a bit late. Added pressure of exams coming up – it's an added stress. It has built definitely built on what I think is the necessary toolkit for applying to universities and things like that'.

'Lower down would be better - start at Year 10 ... Lower down school you've got more chance to move things around a bit – you could show the resilience thing through sport and draw comparisons to show how you've improved.'

(Two students, School B)

'If I'd done this last year it would have been a good thing. I do feel I've been recognised for it, but I won't get anything out of it as I've already got a university offer without it being on my personal statement.' (School D)

A strong message here was that the principles of the project were important, that they linked to significant school targets (such as preparation of CVs for jobs and UCAS applications) and that they related closely to complex school processes. The future of Character Education was seen through full integration into these targets and processes. It was unfortunate that the timing of the project and its short time scale made it difficult to trial the steps that would be needed to make this integration a reality.

Some additional points were made about the overall project structure.

In School E the CEL argued that the lack of clear targets in the project initially "held me back". In School C the CEL pointed out sensitivities arising from their other role as head of an academic department, which led to colleagues wondering why that department was controlling what was being done across the school.

The project provided time for staff to take on key coordinating roles. This was seen as essential in a context where "staff are overworked and good will is no longer there".

The outside experts who had contributed to staff training as part of the project were seen as a way in which the project had made a significant contribution, with the potential to make a long term impact. The CEL in School B argued "we would never have had X coming in without the project". In addition, "the time to see what's

happening around the system” had given that teacher “confidence that we are reasonably up to speed” and had led them to sign up for an online Character Education course which they praised for its theoretical grounding and its practical “lesson frameworks”. This is a clear example of an issue that emerges through the rest of this report: namely that the project succeeded in stimulating further confidence and competence amongst successful, engaged schools. Any generalization of the project should value this aspect of teacher and system development, as well as supporting schools which are in less strong positions on this issues.

Students also found the outside speakers – especially an elite athlete and a person recovering from serious illness – valuable. An interesting exchange of views about this took place in the School B Focus Group:

‘The talk from the athlete – “what are your goals?” made you think about university application – that was really nice – made you think that it needs to be on your mind – we had talk from a Uni .. it was ...ah...’interesting’... , but with *this* it was a subtle background ‘you need to think about it’, rather than an actual Uni coming in and saying you need to be doing this specific thing’.

Another student supported this argument:

‘(It was) a breath of fresh air that we weren’t told it was a motivational speaker. As soon as someone says that..... I talked to him after and it was great not to be told it linked to school.’

This led another student to reflect more generally...

‘I suppose that’s what successful teaching is, its teaching people things without them realizing it. At our age, if we are *told* to be confident, resilient we do the opposite.’

Details of the athlete’s approach were then described and linked to personal circumstances ...

‘(He had) failed so many times – it’s perseverance – for me this stood out. I’ve got to persevere – if I don’t get into Uni next year it’s not the end of the world. I can try again – find different routes of getting where I want to.’

This loose connection between some of the speakers and the programme was contrasted with the Award booklet

‘The Olympic athlete had a whole skill set and you could identify whether you are weak or strong in an area and take what you want. It wasn’t ‘this is what you need to do to be like me’. The book is like that ‘if you want to be successful you need to do this – why are you not doing this? You’re a terrible person’

Building Character Award

Implementation:

It was intended that schools would develop approaches which matched their situation, and this was clearly the case in practice.

School A gave the Award booklet to volunteer students and asked them to ‘get on with it’, but also developed a ‘tracker’ that was used by the whole school, arguing that the booklet could not be implemented across the school and integrated into school practice in the time available. Each fortnight students completed the tracker checklist of things that they had engaged with (with space to add details if they wished). This triggered conversations with tutors about new things that the students could do. There was a clear sense that “developing character is about the conversations you’ve had with children”. Tutors then chose someone from their group who had “done something fab”. Those individuals were given an award in the school assembly and messages were sent to their parents to explain why. There were some “lovely responses from parents”.

Students in School A spoke in similar fashion about the tracker (‘the checklist’). They noted the different amounts of time needed for the tracker (10 minutes) and the booklet (1.5hrs), and briefly mentioned the tutorial discussion, though not the assemblies or parent feedback. In addition, they valued peer discussion during tutor group time:

‘The checklist makes you aware of what others are doing. If you notice that, and think about it, you might join in with those things. It’s a bit of a sharing experience – you tell others what you do. You compare yourself. On my table – we swap ours and see what everybody does. I’m not sure about the rest of the group.’

Comparing the two methods of implementation, three students argued that

‘For a quick fix, the checklist is best, but if you want more depth use the booklet.’

‘I prefer the booklet. You can express yourself better – there are more questions.’

‘Yes, that’s why I prefer it.’

An interesting idea from this group was to use the tracker at the start of the year to set targets and then again at the end to say how you’ve achieved them. They also thought it would be useful to be able to add other targets part way through the year.

Through the collaborative structure that had been established, a different school, School B, recognized the value of this tracker and would seek to implement it in a digital form in future.

This school was moving on to introduce the booklet in the context of “university and business people coming in to say that character education matters.” In this school, too, the CEL saw the booklet as something which can “catalyse discussion but is not really useful in itself”. Both of these ideas were reflected in the comments made by students in the (very articulate) School B focus group.

There was also clear support for a digital implementation:

‘I’ve been filling out (the booklet) but its not normally the way we are doing things in school – perhaps a blog or a log on the internet so you can visually see what you’ve done. I could interact with that more effectively’.

Students also made clear that the programme as a whole had more value than the booklet itself, and saw value in linking the two – though with an interesting reservation about the value of writing things down. These thoughts emerged as they exchanged ideas about the talk they had had from a recovering cancer patient:

‘that was a brilliant example of resilience – what resilience was like when it was embodied. He hadn’t given up.’

‘It involved everyone – people went out talking about it. It was actually affecting people – it had impact.’

‘The booklet hasn’t had that kind of impact. It’s writing about boring stuff. There seems to be a necessity to have everything we do down on paper otherwise there’s no evidence for it. There *is* no evidence of character unless you are talking to someone. So why not keep it that way and build character without recording it.’

‘The booklets are not a useful teaching resource – they work for some people who benefit from consolidating their ideas – others need support and momentum that the lessons give, and the booklet detracts from that – but I think the whole programme is really effective because you identify weaknesses and work to address them.’

‘It’s like a balance – you can’t change everyone and not everything is going to appeal to everyone, but the mixture between doing practical things and sometimes a talk is useful. It’s a balance between what different people like because you are trying to reach out to everyone.’

School C worked with a “consultation group of eight students”. They chose to focus on the Silver Award as they “wanted a challenge, not just something to record what they had already done”. Despite some contrary views elsewhere, there would seem to be a suggestion in this approach, that completing the Award can develop as well as record character.

The School C focus group valued the way in the project was launched but argued that they needed more guidance on how to complete the booklet and on how to develop character traits that were not yet fully developed. They also pointed out that writing about character was problematic:

‘Some people are quite self-conscious and may not say that they are resilient, but others may see them as resilient. You can’t just write it down, you have to prove it, and I’m not sure how to do that.’

School D was embedding ‘building character’ into the curriculum. The school has a history of work with the Building Learning Power initiative so the four character traits for the project were matched to learning habits that would develop them, and staff then mapped what they do to address these learning habits. The school has also developed an observation tool, and training in its use. After training, students use the tool so that they can recognize work done in a lesson to develop these habits, and provide feedback to teachers. As well as this focus on whole school engagement in character education generally, sixth form students were given the specific Award booklet. About 10 students did the Bronze level quickly, and 6 have subsequently asked for the Silver or Gold Award sections. Tutors monitor the completion of the awards – but “not always tightly”. The CEL argued that “it will take a couple of years to embed it and get staff and students to see the value”.

The students interviewed were all in the sixth form and the questions focused on the award scheme. In that context it is interesting that the work on learning habits was also mentioned as indicating that the project “was not just an add on”. Students also confirmed the ease of completing the Bronze level (one suggesting that it was OK for sixth formers but also suitable for lower down the school including Year 7). Two of the interviewees mentioned moving on from Bronze to Gold. There were, however, mixed views about the award, which are summarized by one contribution:

‘If you’re stressed out doing four A-levels it can be something extra that’s not needed but if you’re having difficulty with the personal statement, or finding it hard to build that bridge with the community, or it’s just something that links to what you want to do, then its really good. I think lots of people have enjoyed it. Even if you’ve already done stuff, filling in the booklet is useful ‘cos people recognize what you have done – they may have done before, but now you have proof of it. You feel appreciated.’

In School E, the award had been introduced by tutors to the whole of Years 10 and 12 after a short introduction to tutors from the CEL. There had been some assemblies to celebrate student successes. The target had been to get 50% of students to achieve and award by the end of the year. About 10 students had already done so and there is a clear expectation that at least 30% will.

Two examples of the impact of the project in this school were that two 6th form students started a computer coding club for younger students, and that a link was established with the charity Mary’s Meals which raises funds to feed children at school in developing countries (<https://www.marysmeals.org>). School E worked with 6th formers to introduce the charity. Ten of them volunteered to form an executive committee. They encouraged existing 6th form mentors to “be the initial pitch to get

younger tutor groups involved”. This was already producing results. The CEL was helping the 6th formers to analyse their approaches to the leadership of this undertaking by reference to the leadership model developed by Floyd Woodrow (<http://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/13190.html>).

In the student focus group interviews, the issue of the charity link did not come up, but one student involved in the coding club was explicit about the fact that he did this as a consequence of the project and “would not have done it otherwise”. However, the general view was that the project had not had much impact, and that 6th formers’ time would be better spent “doing something different – focused on revision”. One student argued

‘I needed to be more inspired to do it. ... I didn’t really want to improve my resilience – I don’t really see the point. I needed them to tell me why it was necessary and how it would help.’

This rather bleak view was reinforced by another who said

‘Most in 6th form are doing these things anyway. If we weren’t I’m not sure we’d do the booklet because of the time.’

Other points of interest

School E used the project Award booklet in its current form although there was a strong wish to do it electronically using the school’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which had the facility to automatically save photographs taken by students so that they were recorded as evidence for the achievement of the award. This did not work as well as expected and next year a much simpler booklet will be used with one page for each character theme and simple questions to structure the reporting and reflection. The CEL will maintain an overview through use of a spreadsheet in the SIMS system.

In School B, a teacher argued that “there was no resistance (on the part of pupils) to the idea of character, but when you are doing Ten Tors, volunteering in lessons and doing the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, the booklet just takes time and doesn’t have much meaning. Kids filled it in as a favour to me”. This idea of doing it ‘as a favour’ to the teacher was mentioned by students in two other school, reflecting rather well, perhaps, on the strength of teacher/student relationships established in schools.

Because of the timing of the project, the Award booklet was developed with less collaboration than would have been ideal. This seemed to lead to issues about the levels, with the CEL in School A noting that “Bronze was ideal for Years 7-8 really, Silver for Years 10-11 and Gold for the sixth form” but another in School D arguing that “Bronze might be OK for Year 10 and 11 but (they) may need support”. Students were asked whether they thought the levels were fair, with reasonable homogeneity within a level and progression from one level to another. A general view was that it was a fair system, though there were reservations. For example, there was agreement

that Gold required more involvement in activity, and the generation of more evidence, than Bronze, though it was not always clear that there would be a qualitative difference between work done at the two levels. One student argued:

‘To get recognized at the higher level you have to write it in at that level – and you can’t use the same stuff twice (so you need to be careful). The system doesn’t level your input – so if someone volunteers every night at an old peoples’ home and puts that in Bronze, that’s what they get, but someone who helps clear chairs at a concert and puts that in Gold, would get that. But broadly it’s a fair system.’

Perhaps further development of the Award levels could benefit from comparison with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme (see student comments below), or from well established schemes such as the Associated Board music examinations.

Although the booklet was recognized as a useful starting point, its further development was deemed necessary as the current version was seen as “clumsy” and some disliked aspects of the wording. School B, which had implemented an e-portfolio system, felt it should be electronic as a “booklet looks very 70s”.

As noted above, students’ comments about the booklet were quite mixed. The more negative comments were usually framed as suggestions for improvement:

Space to write was an issue for some:

‘There was not much room to write so it got a bit messy. It would be better as A4. I tried the electronic version but the boxes kept moving around so it wasn’t any easier.’

‘Some of the wording was challenging – but you look it up don’t you. Printing was an issue originally but that’s OK now. The size was an issue - A5 – some of the questions need more space. This wasn’t a problem with the computer version.’

One took control of this issue of space:

‘The booklet felt like a draft – it didn’t feel as if it had been fully developed. I wrote up the questions separately so as to be able to write what I wanted.’

The fact that entries were ‘signed off’ by a teacher prompted interesting comments:

‘Your skills set is quite a personal thing. For some people it could be difficult for a teacher to have a look at that – and if they refuse to sign it, what does that say?’

‘My tutor would be quite supportive of whatever you wrote but I imagine some teachers would be more judging.’

Other general comments included:

‘If you are guided through the booklet in lessons it’s more helpful. At the bottom of some pages it gives examples of what you could write – that’s useful.’

‘We fill in booklet in tutor time –every fortnight, .. are meant to. It hasn’t been followed up that well.’

‘I was expecting a bit more support but we haven’t been told what we can do to be more curious or all the strands’

‘The launch was really good – they went through the different strands but they never really told us how to fill it out. I found it a bit confusing ... how to go about doing it’. (Others nodded agreement.)

Contextualisation

CELs drew attention to a wide range of school contexts that affected their implementation of the project. These included the nature of tutor time in school; the presence of a strong volunteering culture in one school and the lack of it in another; the extent of links with the local community; the nature of the student and parent community; the school’s public profile. Given that integration into, and development of, current school systems was recognized as an important way forward for Character Education, the range and complexity of these relevant contextual factors suggests that it is only the staff of a particular school, with the support of colleagues engaged in similar work elsewhere, who can make the best decisions about implementation. It is therefore essential that any similar future initiative gives schools the opportunity to understand the principles and engage with the best of practice in this field, but also allows them the flexibility to interpret and adapt those principles and practice to their own situation.

Continuity

Especially where schools had created their own approaches (eg the development of the ‘tracker’) there was a clear commitment to continuing the work beyond the end of the project, although in School C this would be done “with small numbers in each year” suggesting that the current trial had not resolved all the implementation issues in that school.

Schools looked for ways to build the project agenda in to their other work in future, for example, one sought greater buy-in from 6th form tutors and students by stressing, during sixth form induction, the value of the process to the construction of UCAS references and personal statements. Another (School B) argued that “the project has infected me with ideas that I’ll implement through PHSE” and added that integration into PHSE was the way to “make it sustainable without project cash”.

The importance of the teacher/student conversations to the validity of the award was also noted, as this was a way of moderating students’ use of the booklet. In School A, the CEL recognized that “some students would tick things off when others won’t” so without a discussion it can be hard to interpret the completed booklets. In School D it was suggested that some form of moderation would be even more important in a wider implementation of the project: “Current students who’ve completed it, have done it properly (maybe as they are self-selecting). We will need to moderate it as it grows.” These points seem particularly relevant given student comments about the

‘fairness’ of the levels that were noted above. However, these comments do suggest that in addition to moderation of judgments, further development of the level requirements might be necessary to ensure genuine progression.

In School E, planning for next year was in place so that problems of timing during the current project could be reduced. A clear and timely plan for who does what, and when, will enable the CEL to produce resources that will bring about richer engagement with the goals of the project. Through this richness, the intention is to expose students to a range of character traits from which they can select in whatever situation they find themselves.

This CEL was also aware that there were students who struggled to engage independently and needed help to do so. The idea was to help them to “look at a big problem, chunk it down, to be brave enough to have a go, to have the ability to deal with the failure – to have the practice (in that)”. The role of supported practice was seen as highly important. An aspect of planning for next year will be talking to staff and to parents about relevant strategies.

Student ideas for the development of the project in its next iteration included:

‘I would set up a support club to help with the booklet or give ideas of what people could do’.

This issue of greater guidance was frequently mentioned. One group drew insights from the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme which some of them had taken part in:

‘I think it was quite compared (comparable?) to DoE in that there were sectors that you had to complete, but it was less formal – with DoE you have to sign it, and you have supervisors and regular meetings whereas this was more like ‘here’s your folder – fill it in if you think you can’

‘DoE is more structural, you can’t just say that you have done things, you have to show that you have done them, like with the expedition you have checkpoints when you are there.’

‘And because DoE is more recognized there is more information and help available – things you can go to on the web.’

This group’s conclusion was that “DoE does develop traits more than this.”

One student commented on one of the evaluation instruments:

‘Too long - 64 questions – After 10 questions I saw people scrolling through, clicking round on buttons to get it finished. So a shorter and more precise survey would be helpful’

before adding that the programme as a whole would be improved if it provided more guidance and “set a time frame – eg to complete a level within say 6 months”.

Outcomes

It was clear that the Award scheme had helped teachers to know what students were doing and to see how this reflected aspects of their character, and this was valued. There was often less certainty about whether the Award *developed* students' character, though some felt that this would be achieved as the Award became more embedded. One CEL reported that a group of Year 12 students who would not normally engage with others in the wider school community, had volunteered to set up a computer coding group for younger students and argued that "they wouldn't have done this without the award".

In School C, the CEL argued that the (sixth form) students were more aware of the issues, but saw the Award as an add-on. Because this CEL held fortnightly conversations with the students, they were becoming more reflective, were volunteering to do Year 11 mentoring and were taking up more opportunities in school. They did not appear to be looking for opportunities outside school.

In School D the CEL was not sure if there had been an impact on students and noted that if there had been change it would be hard to attribute it specifically to the project. This teacher went on to say that the project has improved students' understanding of why character education is important and has given them the language to be articulate about it. However, "whether it motivates them to *develop* character is not clear".

In School E, the CEL reported that students felt that their involvement in the project will help them to improve their academic grades. This CEL felt that elements of the project were crucial to the "balance between teachers pushing up achievements and students taking responsibility" for their own improvement and was confident that the development of these traits would help students to maintain progress. This CEL also recognized that the project (including the input teachers had received from several outside experts) had helped him/her to develop new understanding of encouraging high level achievement: working with people to help them identify their goals, break them down, access the support needed, maintain progress. They felt that such *staff* development would enable staff to encourage *student* development and would also improve staff morale and retention. They also argued that the process of the project, including the discussion involved in its evaluation, had been significant in itself.

The data collected through the Award gave insights into patterns of behaviour in school. For example, in one school it demonstrated that attendance at clubs dropped off through a school career. This prompted the school to think about ways of supporting club attendance (eg through giving clearer recognition of its value in the early years) and to consider what other schools do (eg "using their sixth form more around the lower school"). This revealed another subtle effect of school context: the school had developed its sixth form as a largely separate entity with its own separate ethos because of competition from a local FE college and the sense that students had that they would be treated as more grown up in the college environment.

Students' views were varied, insightful, occasionally cynical, and often quite subtle. The act of recording things already done was seen as useful *in itself* and (if done at an appropriate time) could be useful in producing CVs and UCAS personal statements. There were different views about whether the Award developed as well as recorded character traits. Students recognized that the process could have unintended consequences for some of them. One student took a cynical stance and saw it as something that promoted the school's image. Nevertheless something which coloured much of the discussion was student support for a programme that they realized was in the early stages of development. This was articulated clearly by two students:

'It's a really ambitious thing to do to tell a load of teenagers that they need to be doing this and it has to be said that some people have switched off, and some have taken it on board.'

'It's an idea at the moment and the idea itself is good. The way its been manifested could be improved. It's been successful with a small minority - if it carried on it would be more successful, more would be involved in it.'

Comments from the CELs on other aspects of the project

Although the CEL interviews dealt mostly with the Building Character Programme and its associated Award booklet, comments were made about other aspects of the project and these are reported here.

Disadvantaged learners

There were three elements to this aspect of the project: Building Learning Power (BLP), mentoring and outdoor education.

In one school, because of their previous involvement with it, BLP was a particularly significant aspect of their project work. It shaped their approach to other aspects of the project (eg by identifying learning habits that could help to develop the character traits emphasised in the project) as well as their work with disadvantaged learners. In another there was clear commitment to "doing more BLP" because we "should be teaching how to learn more explicitly". Here the "dream is to get sixth formers to 'buddy' kids in the lower school to reflect on their learning tactics and hope to change them"

Mentoring was particularly strong in one school, again because of previous work in this area. The school "were trail blazers for that" and had produced a pack of resources for the other schools. Though this could be seen as simply continuing previous activity, the CEL was clear that the school's team of mentors had "tweaked their sessions to take ideas from the project".

One school recognized that its project work with disadvantaged learners would start after Easter. The plan is to go camping on a farm with a group of disadvantaged learners and exploit opportunities for them to teach things to the teacher. Some community sponsorship had been arranged to enable this to be a fully inclusive group. In the following year, the intention is for the group to take part in Ten Tors. The CEL acknowledged that “a clear strategic edge was needed to sustain this”. Beyond this reference to camping and to the Ten Tors Challenge, the outdoor education element was not directly mentioned by the CELs.

Living life to the full (LLTF)

LLTF was part of the Emotional Health and Well-Being (EHWB) strand of the project, and was delivered by another part of the University so to avoid any possible conflict of interests, the main evaluation has been carried out by others. However, the following points were made during interviews with the Character Education Leads and are reported here for completeness.

One CEL recognized that LLTF had been a big priority in their school and was very aware that mental health is “a huge and growing issue in secondary schools”. The 7 staff who trained are very committed to implementing a programme. They valued the ideas in the programme but felt that further work was needed to enable it to be implemented in the secondary school context (eg “because we don’t have PSD sessions we had to scatter it about across different lessons” and “We couldn’t hold a full assembly to introduce it to the kids.”) In Year 10, the teachers want the students “to have a mental health first aid kit”.

The sense of priority and importance was reflected in comments from a second CEL who argued that there was

‘a rising number of students with problems. Referring them won’t help. They just sit on a waiting list. So we need to do something. We now have a mental health ambassador... and expect this work to go forward as there are lots of ideas, lots of staff backing and backing from the SLT and from governors – great!’

In a third school this work had been well received by Years 8 and 9 but it was done as a small pilot involving 10 students who were taken out of lessons every 2 weeks

It was noted that this strand could initially be seen as daunting because of the link with mental health and the sense that training was needed to avoid upsetting vulnerable students. However having completed the LLTF training there was confidence that “we don’t need to worry too much”. In one school “People already involved with PHSE were comfortable doing it”. This school’s CEL argued that “seeing the importance of what schools can do to help bolster kids’ well-being” was key to addressing anxieties of working with mental health. It was important for staff

and students to have a broader “social, political and scientific understanding of the educational journey” so that they begin to understand what we know about how specific processes support well-being.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)

The stated aim of the STEM aspect of the project was ‘to engage more learners in [these] subjects at A Level and H.E.’. On the basis that choosing STEM subjects at A Level generally requires a student to have studied the subject(s) at GCSE level, we have focused on the issue of engagement with STEM across the school, considering take up at GCSE and at A level.

Interviews were conducted with STEM leads in each of the four schools where they were in place. School D, as identified early in the project, found it difficult to nominate a STEM lead due to change over of key staff, including the appointment of a new head of science, the departure of the second in science, and limited wider capacity as a result of some long term sickness. Consequently, the discussions that follow focus only on four of the five project schools (A, B, C, E).

Implementation

It was clear from the interviews that there was enthusiasm for the STEM subjects amongst both staff and students across the four schools, and there was a range of activities relating to STEM, both on a school level (STEM clubs and activities) and more widely through the River Otter Project (discussed separately below).

The variety of school level activities is wide ranging. For example, School A have successfully participated in the Jaguar Landrover 4x4 challenge over the last few years, winning a national round, being runners up in the World Finals, and this year, going forward to the national round at time of writing. At School C, students have taken part in a Robotics workshop and attempted to use donated Photovoltaic cells to supply hot water to the science labs. Here too, a visit to Bristol University STEM Open day was organized, enabling year 12 students to experience ‘taster lectures’ in STEM subjects. At School E, a visit from a STEM ambassador from EDF explored issues of flight, and a Skeleton Bobsleigh competition day was also held.

Elsewhere, (School B), the STEM club has been revitalized, partly through the resourcing available through the project, with sixth formers acting as ‘STEM ambassadors’, developing their leadership skills and engaging the curiosity. Further, they are supporting the development of resilience in the ‘stemlets’ (the lower school students who attend). This club has extended its reach beyond the school, and has ‘taken the club on the road’ visiting two of the school’s feeder primary schools for STEM related transition activities. Here too, the STEM lead has organised a Science Week, and a team have recently won an opportunity to speak with Tim Peake, the British astronaut on the International Space Station. This clearly enthused students,

one (identified by staff as ‘a difficult character’ said the ‘Tim Peake stuff is really great, I can’t wait to talk to an astronaut’ (School B SL).

Generally, these activities are seen as offering something that lessons do not. At School B, the STEM club’s activities focus on doing something practical that they ‘couldn’t do in lessons...messy and fun, and no writing involved’, with ‘dissections and explosions’ being particularly popular (SL School B). It is so popular amongst students that numbers have to be limited to 30 ‘for health and safety reasons’.

However, there was some discussion over who should and could take part. There was a resistance expressed by some students regarding the focus on ‘Gifted and Talented’ students. At School E, for example, events were explicitly targeted towards Gifted and Talented students, and at School C there is an ASPIRE scheme, which targets Gifted and Talent students, opening up opportunities in all sorts of areas. One student described a forthcoming ASPIRE trip to Belgium which would include a visit to the EuroSpace Centre and other STEM based activities. Students at one school suggested that ‘maybe trips should be open to [all students] who take science’ (School B FG); at the same school, the SL explained that one forthcoming activity (Girls Aloud) was focusing not on the Gifted and Talented, but ‘on the girls that are borderline; able, but not thinking about university’ (School B SL).

River Otter Project

The collaborative River Otter project has been key to the STEM strand across the schools. The STEM lead at School A has coordinated the schools’ involvement, and has produced a variety of teaching resources to maximize the opportunities that the project affords, describing the potential impact as ‘very big’ (School A, SL). The identification of, and contact with Clinton Estates’ Education Officer has been a key catalyst in the success of this aspect of the project (School A SL).

School C has taken a lead in nurturing the relationship with Clinton Estates, building a cross curriculum project with them, focusing on year 7 geography. The small amount of money available to the STEM leads has enabled visits to be made to the site, which has enriched the learning for the groups concerned (School C, River Otter Lead). However, there is scope for further improvement in the student’s written work, which the teacher planned to work on. The project has also facilitated the development of collaboration between the schools; further collaboration, and the sharing of materials, is planned for the forthcoming term (School C, River Otter Lead).

Whilst students at School C conceptualized their work on the River Otter Project mainly in terms of Geography, they did make connections with other subjects, particularly science ‘because of all the species involved – like biology’. A number of the group felt that geography related to curiosity about the world, both in terms of the

physical world, but also the cultural diversity. Further, the project has increased the student's interest and engagement with geography; they also recognized the value of a fully funded trip in terms of allowing those who might be prevented from participating on financial grounds to be included (School C, River Otter Project Student Focus Group).

School D has, at the time of writing, been unable to participate in this aspect of the project due to the lack of STEM lead (discussed earlier) combined with a small geography department which 'lacks capacity for the project', although plans are under discussion for utilizing the River Otter Project as a basis for transition activities in the summer term (School D CEL).

As these comments show, these activities have been supported by the structures of the project and are beginning to address issues of disadvantaged learners, leadership skills, resilience and curiosity. There is however scope for the further development of links between the STEM activities and the rest of the project.

Outcomes

Students were enthusiastic about the opportunities available to them through these STEM activities. For example, the students perceived that the Skeleton Bobsleigh event had helped them become more interested in science (School E FG). In fact, a common theme across the student reflections on these events was that they offered markedly different opportunities to 'normal' science lessons. Students reported that the EDF lesson 'showed that science was more fun than we thought, more fun than a normal lesson'. (School E FG).

Further, connections between the Building Character Award and these activities were highlighted. Resilience was identified as a key aspect of many of these activities; 'they didn't give up...we did say that there was an easier alternative if they really struggled, but none of them were prepared to do that' (School E SL). Team work was mentioned; students at one school suggested that practical work in science developed more than scientific skills, team work—especially the importance of choosing who to work with and learning how to work with them—was key to success. (School E FG); the importance of team work was also noted by the team working on the 4x4 challenge at School A. Curiosity was also discussed, implicitly at all schools, but explicitly at School E: 'I like science because it is how things work and why' (School E, FG)

The theme of the connection between 'normal' lessons and the STEM activities was picked up a number of times, specifically the links between the clubs and lessons. Some students talked about being exposed to ways of working that were not part of normal lessons, as well as the ways in which lessons and other activities were mutually supporting:

‘stuff you do in club definitely helps you in class; it takes you further’ (School A FG)

‘The activities are ‘more fun [than a normal science lesson]; you get to do a lot more [practical] stuff’ (School C FG).

‘lots more applied, applying maths or science to a situation; they can’t really do that’ in normal lessons (School A FG)

Elsewhere, students commented that the events and activities ‘didn’t relate much to science lessons, except the theories’ (School E FG),

Other students highlighted the contrast between the two:

‘Science is quite boring; the events are exciting; then it returns to boring’ (School E FG)

‘we went back to doing [science] from a textbook when she had gone, it was a one off thing’ (School E FG)

‘Showed us that they can do big practicals, but they’re not going to do ‘em’ (School E FG)

A similar sentiment was expressed elsewhere; students contrasted the STEM events with routine science lessons, noting that lessons are ‘boring; they are only engaging if you want to engage with them. Practical were very basic and not interesting... more visual practicals might get people more interested’ (School B FG).

The reduction in the practical aspects of the science curriculum was lamented by one teacher ‘the amount of more applied, more practical stuff ... has reduced in the curriculum over the past ten years...with less practical application...there isn’t the time’, suggesting that expanding practicals is what would increase STEM involvement (School A, SL). Here, and elsewhere, teachers expressed a desire to address these issues, by building on the success of the clubs and activities and lessons ‘If we can get some bits into lessons, that’d be lovely’ ‘and we’re trying to think about what we can put into lessons’ (School E SL).

Overall teachers report that students enjoyed the STEM activities, sometimes even more than the teachers expected them to (School E). They suggest that the variety of activity has been possible because of two things; time and money. Teachers report that non-contact time ‘has helped massively’; ‘an extra hour every so often off timetable helps’ (School E SL). Funding has also been key, paying for cover and resources (School E SL). The project has enabled purchase of resources that are reusable, extending the impact of the project; prior to the project such items were funded ‘from the science budget...a small budget has helped a great deal’ (School B SL 2). A small amount of money can make a significant difference; ‘£500 can go a long way’ (School A SL). A number of STEM leads were already engaged with future planning, assessing alternative ways of continuing with the activities, potentially seeking sponsorship agreements to fund these (School B SL).

These two factors, in combination with the recognition of the role of STEM lead, (which give a reason for the activities, ‘rather than convincing people to give us the time ... being a named STEM lead makes it easier (School E SL)), and the support of school leaders. Making further time available was identified as a way to improve provision further: ‘the issue I have had is time to do it properly ... more support would enable it to be done properly’ (School C SL). Similarly, it was suggested that if the role was more widely recognized (School C SL), impact would be greater still.

Collaboration between STEM leads was celebrated across the four schools; the termly meetings, facilitating the sharing of ideas and updates, has been universally seen as a major strength of the project, especially – but not limited to – the River Otter project. Sometimes agencies outside the consortium frustrated the schools’ plans, but no such negative comments were made about intra-consortium collaborations. The desire to continue this STEM collaboration is strong.

Uptake of STEM subjects

Central to this aspect of the project is the take up of STEM subjects by students. It is evident from the interviews that the events and activities described above engender an enthusiasm for STEM subjects, but the extent to which this is translated into uptake of STEM subjects by students is difficult to evaluate at this point. There are three issues that make this so. Firstly, the data on student uptake of STEM subjects is not available at the point that we report; secondly, developing enthusiasm for STEM where it is already strong is hard to achieve/measure; thirdly, factors other than student choice have been identified as affecting the numbers studying STEM subjects. Each of the two later issues featured heavily in the interviews with both teachers and students.

STEM leads reported good level of enthusiasm and take up of their subjects: ‘Our recruitment to STEM A Level is already very heavy...we were a specialist science, Maths and ICT; we have a big offer for a small sixth form’ (School A SL). The STEM lead at School E reported that their issue was how much science they choose, and what they want to do with that when they have got it’; ‘whether “I enjoy science” makes a big deal to take up’ (School E SL).

Whilst some students expressed interest in STEM, they felt that industrial apprenticeships would be more appropriate for their intended careers than A levels (School A FG). STEM events and activities are seen as helpful in positive reinforcement, in combination with quality of teaching in lower school (School B FG); ‘take up is very good; three groups for triple science ... getting those girls who perform well at GSCE Triple into A level is the challenge’ (School B SL). An increased awareness of the value of STEM A level subjects beyond STEM careers was mentioned. Raising the value of A levels as enabling subjects rather than just career direction was noted, one teacher mentioning that they had no idea, until a

STEM conference, that Chemistry A level was seen as a positive choice for those interested in studying Law (School B, SL).

Whilst enthusiasm was strong amongst those who had chosen STEM pathways, some students expressed a tension between the events as opportunities to engage non-scientists, suggesting that if science lessons were more engaging, more people might choose it (School E FG), however, some students saw these events as opportunities to ‘mess around more than usual’ (School E FG). Some students identified what they consider counter-productive narratives, undermining their enthusiasm, that science is difficult. ‘People get put off by teachers telling them that sciences are really hard’ (School B FG).

Despite the generation of enthusiasm for STEM, limitations on the ability of the school to staff more than one group of triple science was a key issue. Over-subscription meant that students who were able, willing and enthusiastic were turned down ‘This year we’ve got 60 kids interested, and it’s going to be quite hard to cut them down...usually we have to cut down five or six’ The consequences on other subjects was mentioned; ‘we’d be taking off other subjects, which means people losing their jobs in other subjects’. (School C SL). Limitations on other subject choices were also relevant, with students having to make strategic choices ‘If you want to do Drama, you can’t do triple science’ (School E SL).

The STEM lead teacher at one school (School E) described the efforts currently being made to establish links between GSCE material and A-level, demonstrating to students in Years 10 and 11 the kind of work that they might do in Y12 and 13, and highlighting their capacity to undertake such work. This was something that students in another school suggested as a useful way to encourage take up at A level (School B FG).

Motivations expressed by students for choosing STEM subjects centered on their career plans, combined with their ability. Some expressed the opinion that after-school and lunch time clubs might encourage others to take STEM subjects, and one or two claimed that attendance at such clubs had confirmed their interest in science. (School C FG), a view also expressed at School A, whose STEM lead suggested that these activities confirm in some, and encourage others: ‘Some already set in that direction [STEM], some have been pulled towards STEM by that process’ (School A SL). In this respect the practical side of STEM associated with these activities (as discussed above) appears influential. Those students that were already positively inclined towards STEM subjects felt, however, that the activities and events being laid on could have a positive impact on ‘non-scientists’. Portraying science as more fun could, students suggested, be achieved if lessons were more fun, although this could lead students to think science was more fun than it really was (School E FG)

Quantitative Data

Whilst much of the evaluation process is revealed in the qualitative data discussed above, insights into the project are also evident in the quantitative data. In this section, the quantitative data will be presented and discussed, and where appropriate, links made to the earlier material. It should be noted that analysis of data by year group has not been reported here; as different schools implemented the programme with different year groups, (meaning that not every year group is present in every school's data) the year group data becomes confounded with school data.

Building Character Award

Data on student attitudes towards the Building Character Booklet (Schools B, C, D, and E) and Tracker (School A), together with student's responses to the programme as a whole, were collected through a questionnaire administered immediately prior to the Easter break. Responses are shown in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3 below (see also Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7 in the Appendix 2).

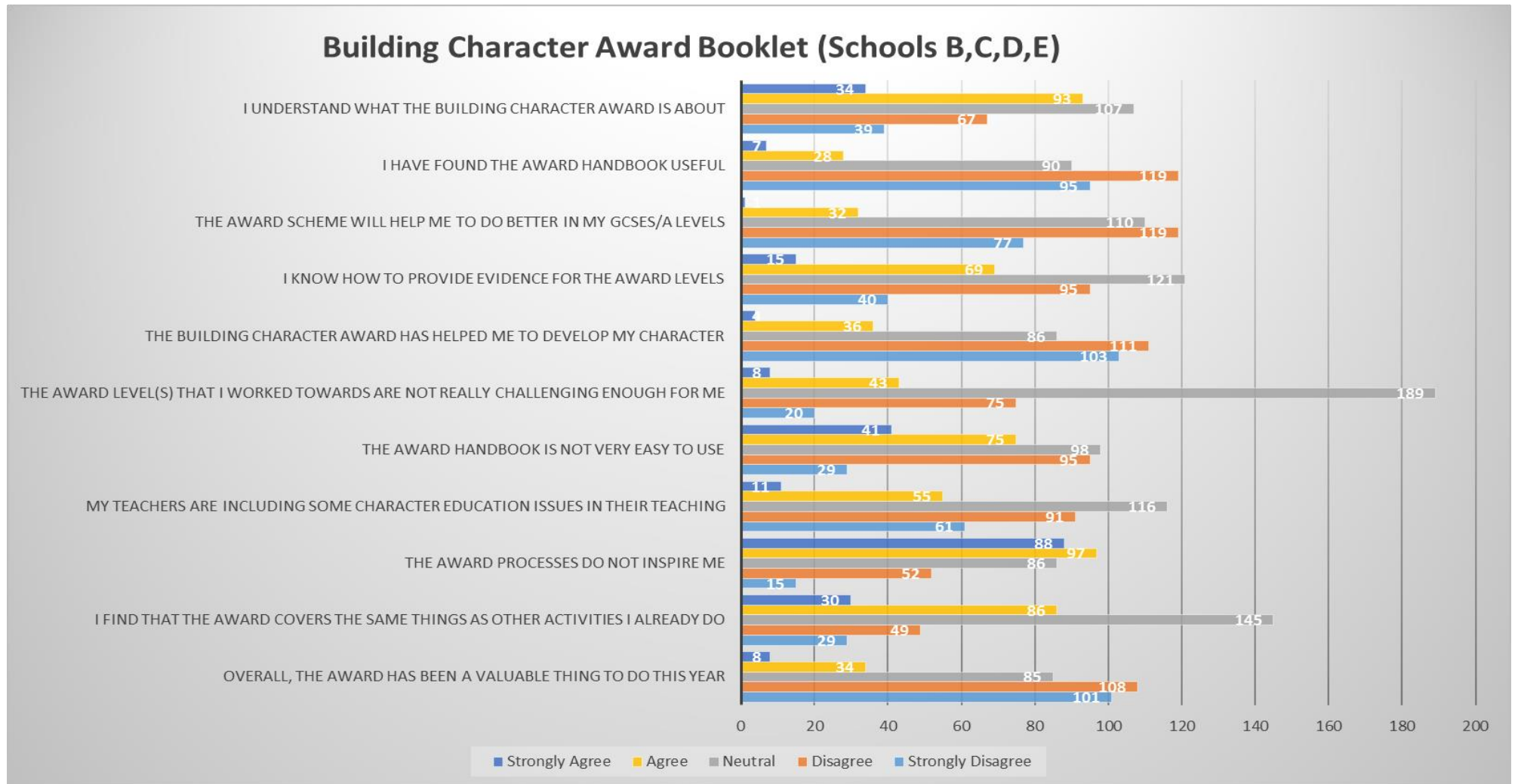


Figure 1 - Building Character Award Booklet (Schools B,C,D,E)

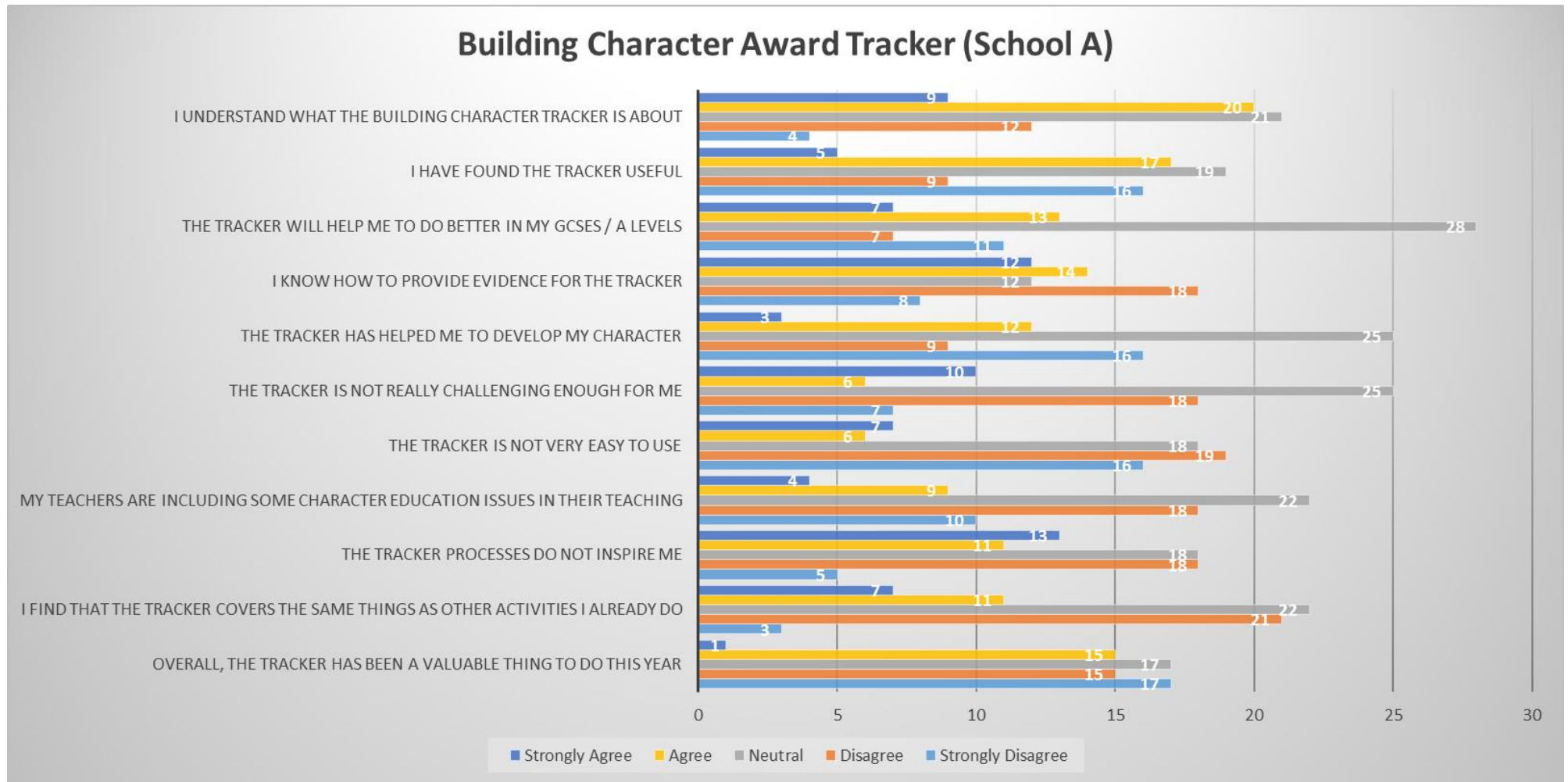


Figure 2 - Building Character Award Tracker (School A)

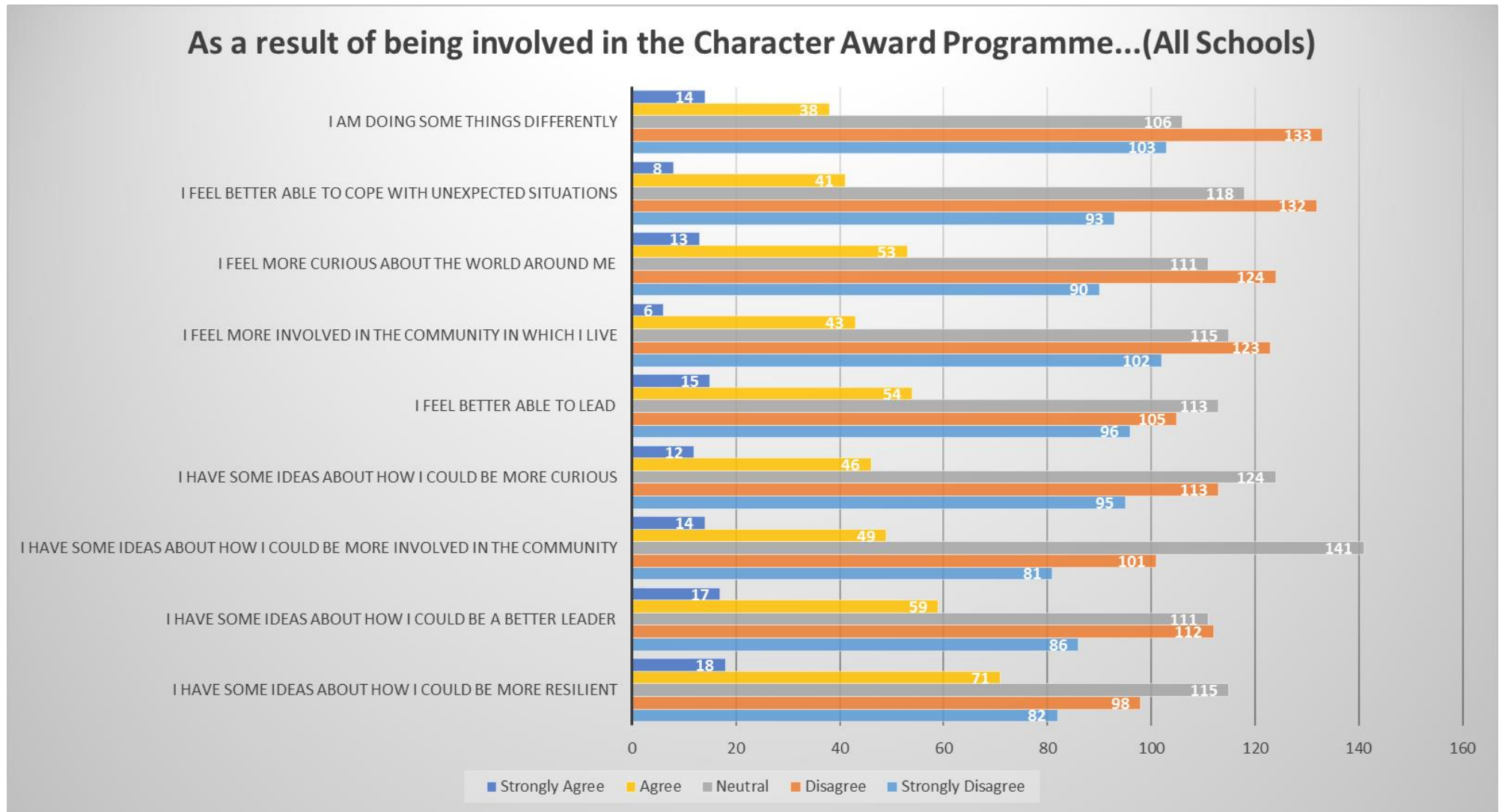


Figure 3 - As a result of being involved in the Character Award Programme...(All Schools)

The pattern of response to questions about the BCA Booklet (Figure 1 above) suggests a neutral or negative attitude. A total score for each respondent's attitude towards the Building Character Booklet was calculated, allowing for negatively worded statements, with higher totals demonstrating a more positive attitude. These data were not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk test $W = 0.99089$, $p\text{-value} = 0.03381$), consequently, non-parametric tests were used. Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests (hereafter $H(\text{degrees of freedom})$) showed that the total score was not significantly affected by school ($H(3) = 4.9669$, $p = 0.1742$), or by gender ($H(1) = 0.69216$, $p\text{-value} = 0.4054$). Thus, the different ways in which schools implemented the use of the booklet does not seem to have affected its acceptability to students. The qualitative responses, reported above, suggest that where students are negatively inclined towards the booklet, they still identify positive outcomes, and are willing to contribute ideas to improve it.

The tracker was devised and tested at School A. Student attitudes towards this were mixed, with similar numbers of people feeling more positive and more negative about the specific aspects of the tracker (Figure 2 above). For this school only, a total score for each respondent's attitude towards the Building Character Tracker was calculated, allowing for negatively worded statements, with higher totals demonstrating a more positive attitude. These data were normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk test $W = 0.98668$, $p = 0.703$). A multivariate ANOVA showed that neither year nor gender, nor the interaction between year and gender, was statistically significant ($F(1) = 0.1044$, $p = 0.7477$; $F(1) = 0.6883$, $p = 0.4099$; $F(1) = 0.1384$, $p = 0.711$ respectively). This suggests that attitudes towards the tracker were not significantly affected by student gender, or year group.

The attitude of students towards the overall Building Character Project (Figure 3 above) suggest that students tended not to agree that the programme had improved their character traits. Across all five schools, a total score for each respondent's attitude towards the Building Character Programme was also calculated, again, with higher totals demonstrating a more positive attitude. Once again, these data were not normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk test $W = 0.97822$, $p < 0.0001$), so non-parametric tests were used. Using Kruskal-Wallis rank sum test showed that the total score was significantly affected by school ($H(4) = 37.388$, $p < 0.001$), but total score was not affected by gender ($H(1) = 0.031496$, $p = 0.8591$). Table 1 (overleaf) shows the mean attitude score for each school.

Table 1 - Mean attitude towards the Building Character Programme

School	Mean respondent's attitude towards the Building Character Programme
A	25.01

B	21.65
C	16.42
D	17.58
E	20.31

School A, where the mean attitude score was most positive, worked hard to integrate the tracker into conversations between students and tutors (as discussed above) and combined the booklet with the tracker system. This does not necessarily suggest that the tracker is better than the booklet, but that both added something to the process. For School A, using both meant students benefited from the advantages of each.

Over reliance on this quantitative data should be avoided, potentially painting an unrepresentative picture of the situation. When read in combination with the qualitative data (reported above) it appears that students have much more nuanced views which tell the story behind the figures. Students had quite sophisticated views about the relationship between the booklet and the development of character; for example, students at School B, whilst acknowledging the limitations of the booklet, saw it as valuable, something which could catalyse discussions about character. Overall, there was a view that this was a worthwhile activity in its early stages of development.

Quantitative Evaluation of Resilience – pre and post questionnaire

A total of 1113 responses to the resilience survey were collected. Before analysis could take place, basic checks of the integrity of the data were undertaken. Entries where the survey had not been completed, where it was not possible to match pre and post entries, and where it was evident from response patterns that students had not read the questions (from cues such as start and end time codes) were removed. Initial exploratory analysis of the cleaned data highlighted five cases that were significant anomalies/outliers from the rest of the data; these were also removed. 383 matched pairs of data were subsequently analyzed.

The scales were tested for internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The Resilience Scale questions gave a raw alpha of 0.88, and the Mark Solomon questions gave a raw alpha of 0.93. The complete set of questions used gave a raw alpha of 0.95. This suggests that the questionnaire has a high internal reliability.

The data for each individual scale, and the total resilience score were tested for normality of distribution using the Shapiro Wilk test (hereafter W). All three were non- normally distributed (Mark Solomon: $W = 0.98$, $p < 0.0001$; Resilience Scale: $W = 0.97$, $p < 0.0001$; Total Resilience: $W = 0.98$, $p < 0.0001$). Correlation between the two sub-scales was assessed using Spearman's correlation coefficient; this showed a large and statistically significant correlation between the two sets of questions (Spearman Rho = 0.83, $p < 0.0001$). This suggests that the two scales (Resilience Scale and Mark Solomon's scale) are measuring the same or similar traits. Since the Resilience scale has already been shown to have validity

(Ahern et al. 2006) the Mark Solomon scale can also be assumed to be a valid measure of resilience for the project sample.

Paired data (pre and post by individual respondent, as identified by token number) was subjected to more detailed analysis. From the total pre-score and total post-score, a 'total change in resilience (TCR)' figure was calculated, showing the increase (or decrease) in total score between the two tests. Both pre and post total scores were non-normally distributed (pre-total: $W = 0.96$, $p < 0.0001$; post-total: $W = 0.99$, $p = 0.001$), as was the TCR ($W = 0.98$, $p < 0.0001$). Parametric analysis methods could not therefore be used on the data.

On the basis that ANOVA was not appropriate, and that data were nested at two levels (individuals within year groups within schools), more sophisticated analytical techniques, including Multilevel Modelling were considered, however exploratory testing showed that there was insufficient variability of data across contexts (schools) to make this approach productive (fixed intercept vs random intercept, change in $-2LL = 2.094$, $p = 0.1478$).

The data were subjected to a number of other relevant analyses, yielding a number of non-significant findings. A Wilcoxon Signed Rank test (Z) showed that when comparing the pre-test total (mean = 216.1, $SD = 29.99$) with post-test total (mean = 218.2, $SD = 29.68$) the difference was not statistically significant for aggregated data ($Z = -1.709$, $p = 0.87$), or at the individual school level (Wilcoxon rank sum test (W); School A $W=8554$, $p = 0.287$; School B $W = 9839$, $p = 0.455$; School C $W = 862$, $p = 0.846$; School D $W = 1243$, $p = 0.149$; School E $W = 379$, $p = 0.464$). The early hypothesis that if the programme was effective in developing resilience, the total resilience scores would increase between the first and second data collection points could not be supported (the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-test totals could not be rejected).

Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests showed that, although the mean change in TCR was different for female (2.067) and male (2.229), this was not statistically significant; ($H(1) = 0.320$, $p = 0.572$). Similarly, the mean change in the difference in TCR was different for non pupil-premium (1.045) and pupil-premium (8.76), the difference was not statistically significant ($H(1) = 2.304$, $p = 0.129$). Change across year groups (yr 9: 5.94, yr 10: -0.44; yr 11: 6.82, yr12: 2.7) was also not statistically significant ($H(3) = 4.091$, $p = 0.252$).

However, Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests showed that the effect of School on TCR was statistically significant; ($H(4) = 11.128$, $p = 0.02516$). This suggests that the difference in mean TCR between schools (shown in

Table 2 below) has not occurred at random.

Table 2 - Mean of total change in resilience (TCR) by school

School	TCR
A	3.47
B	-1.16
C	-1.24
D	10.65
E	4.46

(Negative values show a fall in total resilience between the pre and post measures).

Multiple regression analysis was undertaken to devise a model to describe the total change in resilience score between the two tests. In multiple combinations with other measures, neither Gender nor Pupil Premium were significant predictors. The optimum combination of predictors predicts only 16.8% of the variance in total change in resilience (adjusted $R^2 = 0.1689$). This analysis showed that attendance at school D affects TCR positively, but the effects were very small. In the qualitative section above, it is clear that school D is a school in which the BCP was closely integrated into existing school processes, in that schools' case, integrated into their longstanding commitment to Building Learning Power. The development of resilience is one of the key aspects of that programme, which focuses on learning habits.

Further regression analysis at the school level showed that the optimum combination of factors predicted a maximum of 29% of the variance in total change in resilience (see table below), but even here, only the pre-test total score was a significant predictor.

Table 3 - school by school regression analysis

School	R2 value	Pre-test total	Gender	Pupil Premium
School A	0.055	0.009	NS	NS
School B	0.283	<0.001	NS	NS
School C	0.084	NS	NS	NS
School D	0.294	0.002	NS	NS
School E	0.076	NS	NS	NS

In some schools the greatest increase in total score is associated with a low initial score. As no-one was scoring at the top of the scale at the pre-test (maximum score possible = 300, maximum score recorded = 286), there is no ceiling effect in operation (whereby there is no room to increase). This demonstrates a confidence in the instrument.

Specific Events

Comments about several specific events run in support of the project were included in the qualitative analysis reported above; for two events, further data was collected, and is reported here.

The responses to the event 'Will it make the boat go faster' were generally affirmative. Staff were very positive about the event, which took place at each of the five schools. 39% (n=28) of respondents strongly agreed and a further 46% agreed with the statement 'Overall my

students will benefit from having listened to Ben's talk'. A similar proportion (32% strongly agreed and 50% agreed) that they would benefit personally from the talk. 46% felt it was value for money, with 21% feeling that it was not; 32% were unsure. Staff comments included 'I think it was inspirational'; 'it was a really good talk and at just the right time for exam groups'; 'It was excellent. I just wish more of our students could have heard it'.

Student feedback was very positive in terms of whether the event had been enjoyable, but some found the gap between the talk and school life difficult to bridge. Many students felt that they were better equipped to deal with day to day challenges as a result of listening to the talk; 'if you get a bad ... test result, analyzing where you go wrong and improving it for next time'; 'if I used Ben's approach I could study more and/or improve my fitness'. Whilst a handful of respondents felt that they would not do anything differently as a result of the event, many suggested positive changes that they planned to make, including 'I will work harder and not give up'; '[I will] put more effort into my work, not giving up on goals if they seem too difficult to achieve'; 'don't give up on the first try'; 'I will try to set myself more goals and try hard to be successful in them'.

Feedback from students involved in the event with Floyd Woodrow was also positive. The majority of those who took part felt that the training helped them to be more resilient (47% agree, 40% strongly agree). The event was considered to have supported confidence in leadership (58.5% agree, 39.6% strongly agree; n=53), empowerment as a leader (49.1% agree, 32.1% strongly agree) and communication as a leader (39.6% agree, 50.9% strongly agree). Further, training with other schools was seen positively (37.7% agree, 34% strongly agree). Some respondents felt that the talk went on too long, and they would have preferred to be more active, but many offered no comments for improvement.

Initial Feedback from Staff Training

Responses from the Mark Solomon training event, demonstrated a positive inclination towards the issue of resilience within the wider programme. Respondents (n=87) felt strongly that 'Issues of resilience are important to students' (78.2% and 15% strongly agreed/agreed), and that 'Issues of resilience should be addressed in the school curriculum' ((60% and 28% agree/strongly agree). They felt that they had 'power to affect student's resilience in my classroom' (16% and 38% strongly agreed and agreed), were equipped to do so (21% strongly agree and 48% agree that they 'know some ways in which I could address issues of resilience with my students') and that they were supported in this by 'senior management and school governors' (36% and 41% strongly agreed/agreed). Respondents also felt that their own resilience was important, recognizing 'times when I have worked to improve my own resilience' (31% and 41% strongly agree and agree), and considering that the INSET event would 'help me to develop my resilience' (7% and 52% strongly agree and agree). These staff had a positive view of the potential to develop resilience in their students, disagreeing strongly with the statements that 'character traits such as resilience are pretty much fixed' (25% strongly disagree, 41% disagree) and 'I don't see how developing student's resilience

can work in practice’ (58% strongly disagree, 25% disagree). Tabulated responses are shown in Table 8 in Appendix 2 below.

Responses to the Building Learning Power training event delivered by Graham Powell, at School B, were similarly positive. Respondents felt very strongly that ‘Building character is important to students’ (69% strongly agree, 21% agree), and that ‘Building character should be addressed in the school curriculum’ (86% strongly agree and 10% agree). They felt that very much they had ‘power to affect student’s character in my classroom’ (38% and 62% strongly agreed and agreed), were equipped to do so (62% strongly agree and 31% agree that they ‘know some ways in which I could address character education with my students’) and that they were supported in this by ‘senior management and school governors’ (38% strongly agreed and 28% agreed). Respondents also felt strongly that their own character was important, recognizing ‘times when I have worked to improve my own character’ (55% and 31% strongly agree and agree). These staff had a positive view of the potential to develop character in their students, disagreeing strongly with the statement ‘I don’t see how developing student’s resilience can work in practice’ (38% strongly disagree, 28% disagree). Fuller presentation of the responses are shown in Table 9 in Appendix 2 below.

It is clear that BLP was seen as an important element of Character Education, which has aspects of the development of curiosity and resilience. Teachers who engaged in the CPD event generally thought the event gave them confidence to address issues of character development. Thus, there is some suggestion that BLP is seen as a tool for character development.

As stated elsewhere, the evaluation of the Living Life to the Full strand of the project fell outwith the remit of the University evaluation team. However, the evaluation of two training events relating to Emotional Health and Well-Being more widely, was undertaken. Both the INSET event and the event for lead practitioners (LP) were seen positively.

As with the other CPD events, the issues of EHWP for students was seen as very important, with 80% of each group strongly agreeing with the statement ‘Issues of emotional well-being are important to students’ and 65% INSET and 81% LP strongly agreeing with the statement ‘Issues of emotional well-being should be addressed in the school curriculum’.

This priority on the EHWP strand of the project is also reflected in some of the interviews reported above, with Character Education Leads reporting a strong commitment to addressing the mental health issues highlighted within the LLTTF programme, despite some initial anxieties about doing so. This links strongly to the initial impetus for the project, addressing issues of mental health, ‘not just dealing with mental health when it is there, but helping students develop the skills to not get to] the point of crisis] (School B, interview with Head).

Respondents from both events felt equipped to ‘address issues of emotional well-being’ with their students (26% INSET and 55% LP strongly agree, 33% INSET and 31% LP agree), empowered to do so (36% INSET 46% LP strongly agree, 39% INSET and 31% LP), and

supported by their managers and governors (52% INSET, 31% LP strongly agree, 28% INSET, 19% LP agree). As with the other events, respondents felt that emotional well-being could be affected by their efforts (48% INSET and 58% LP strongly disagreed and 28% INSET and 27% LP disagreed with the statement ‘I don’t see how developing student’s emotional well-being can work in practice’). Fuller presentation of the responses are shown in Table 10 and Table 11 in Appendix 2 below.

In summary, these figures suggest that staff who attended the CPD events are positively inclined towards the aims of the project, feel that they have the ability to play a role in developing character, and feel supported by their management teams.

Longer Term Effects of Staff Training.

Quantitative data, gathered from staff who had attended the above mentioned CPD events, was gathered at the end of the Easter term to assess the longer term effects of the training events. Respondents had attended Mark Solomon’s resilience training (n=43), Graham Powell’s BLP training (n=20), and EHWP (n=46), with some staff potentially having attended more than one event.

At the end of the evaluation period, staff generally remained convinced of the importance of Character development in school (28% strongly agreed and 33% agreed with the statement ‘The work of character development is sufficiently important that it should be a priority in school’). Many felt that senior managers and governors ‘have been supportive of my efforts to develop student’s character’ (14% strongly agree, 32% agree). In terms of the CPD events respondents felt that they had ‘have equipped me to address the goals of the Character Education Project’ (9.7% strongly agree, 32% agree, 18% neutral). Specifically, the CPD events had mostly helped respondents to ‘Be able to address issues of character development in my teaching’ (10% strongly agree, 29% agree, 20% neutral). Full responses are show in Table 14 in Appendix 2 below.

Alongside the quantitative data gathered, respondents were asked what change they would make to improve character education in their school. Key themes that emerged were:

- The provision of more resources and guidance for tutors and those leading the programme’s implementation, with greater guidance on implementation, particularly at a subject specific level
- Changes to the booklet to make it easier/more streamlined to use, devoting more time to the development of the materials and allowing more tutor time to support it’s use
- Embedding the programme more deeply into school life, making links with school ethos and timetabling and having the award open to whole school; ‘to be able to implement measures on a school wide basis to become a normal way of working’.
- Facilitating engagement with parents
- Provision of more funding over a longer term
- Having a more targeted use of resources, focusing more on those who would benefit most.
- having an SLT lead with responsibility for Character education

Disadvantaged Learners

The disadvantaged learners strand of the project has not been evaluated as a discrete and separate strand due to the way in which this strand has been envisaged (running across all other strands of the project) and implemented (focusing on developing existing provision within schools, and developing materials that can be used across the curriculum). The Character Education Project Board discussed the Disadvantaged Learner strand at length in the early stages of the Project Team being established. There were a relatively small number of students categorised as disadvantaged learners using Pupil Premium (in receipt of free school meals in the current academic year, or any of the previous six academic years) as the metric. The Project Board concluded that all schools already had mentoring strategies in place for their Disadvantaged Learners; these strategies were specific to individual school circumstances and meant that the original bid target of securing additional external mentors from the local community in each school was not appropriate. The Project Board did support the development of coaching resources and training for school coaches to extend existing provision for Disadvantaged Learners. Extensive coaching materials and resources have, at the time of writing, been developed and are being piloted in one of the partner schools (School B).

The quantitative data analysis, reported in the section above, shows that there was consistently no statistically significant difference in outcomes between those students identified as Pupil Premium and those that were not. This suggests that students identified as Pupil Premium achieved in line with others. Opportunities exist, through the development of the BCP, for more targeted approaches that may enable disadvantaged pupils to progress at a greater rate than those who are not. The student interviews, reported above, offer some positive suggestions as to how certain aspects of the Building Character Award booklet could be improved in this regard.

One positive example of this strand in practice was the decision, at School B, to support disadvantaged learners in participating in outdoor education events such as the Ten Tors Challenge and/or Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Here, work was sensitively undertaken to identify and overcome financial barriers, allowing disadvantaged learners to participate in equal terms with others. There has been some take up of these opportunities, with further work underway (School B, interview with Head).

Edinburgh Warwick Scale

150 pairs of matching data gathered using the Edinburgh Warwick Scale from across 3 schools (School A, School C and School D) were analyzed. Data for pre and post, and the calculated value of change in score between tests, were all assessed for normality using Shapiro-Wilk test. All three were normally distributed (pre test: $W = 0.98$, $p = 0.058$; post-test: $W = 0.98$, $p = 0.933$; change in score: $W = 0.98$, $p = 0.748$). On the basis of this a paired t-test was used to test the null hypothesis that pre and post test results were not significantly different across the aggregated data. This test showed that, whilst total scores increased

between the pre-test (Mean: 44.44 SD: 8.38) and post-test (Mean: 45.01 SD: 8.93), the difference was not statistically significant ($t(140) = 1.539$, $p = 0.126$). Thus the null hypothesis was accepted.

Contextual data (gender, SEN status and pupil premium) was only available for one school (School D). More detailed analysis of this data showed that for this school the difference in scores between pre (Mean: 41.14; SD 10.47) and post (Mean: 41.89, SD 10.13) was not statistically significant ($t(27) = 0.488$, $p = 0.6294$). Further, multiple regression analysis was undertaken to devise a model to describe the total change in score between the two tests. In multiple combinations with other measures, neither Gender nor Pupil Premium were significant predictors. The optimum combination of predictors predicts 26% of the variance in total change in resilience (adjusted $R^2 = 0.2583$).

$$\text{Total Change in EW} = 19.21 - 0.419 \times \text{pre-score} - 8.5711 \times \text{listed as SEN}$$

Summary

The evaluation that we have undertaken, combining qualitative and quantitative data, shows that the Building Character Programme has most impact where the programme is embedded into existing school procedures, processes and ethos. Timing of the introduction of the programme, as well as time available for the implementation, together with the ways in which the programme has been dovetailed into existing structures, are all significant factors in this embedding.

Different patterns of implementation did not appear to have differential effects on pupils categorized by gender or SEN status. The lack of significant difference between those students categorised as disadvantaged (though the Pupil Premium metric) and others, demonstrates that disadvantaged students have benefited from the programme on equal terms with others. Further work to target these specific groups could be developed if thought appropriate.

Schools have tended to see this year as a pilot for more substantive implementation in future. This status is, in part, a recognition of the complex issues that need to be explored, and in part is a reflection of issues of time and timing which were raised consistently across the sample, making this year's implementation less than ideal.

Students have valued the project, particularly where it has not been made too explicit. Their views about the project are more sophisticated and nuanced than the numeric data alone can reveal. These interviews should be used to inform the interpretation of the, necessarily broad, picture given by the quantitative data. In particular, students were aware of the complexity of the field, and the value of the programme as an initial step in addressing important issues of character development.

The booklet was the best achievable in the time available; the willingness of students and staff to critically engage with the booklet's content and format demonstrates an enthusiasm for the concept, and an opportunity to develop the booklet (or an alternative) in partnership with the potential users.

The data gathered so far suggests that the programme has developed resilience most in those who considered themselves least resilient at the outset. In further iterations, ways of further developing resilience in those with higher levels of initial resilience might be explored.

Finally, the support and enthusiasm for collaboration between schools is clear, and universal. There is strong support from students and staff for the ideas and the objectives of the project. The creative ways in which the ideas have been implemented across the consortium is impressive.

References

- Ahern, N. R., Kiehl, E.M, Sole, M.L., and Byers, J. (2006) 'A Review of Instruments Measuring Resilience', *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 29:2, 103-125, DOI: 10.1080/01460860600677643
- Wagnild, G.M and Young, H.M. (1993) 'Development and Psychometric Evaluation of the Resilience Scale', *Journal of Nursing Management*, 1:2, 165-178.

Appendix 1 – Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

At each school, the following were requested:

- 1) Focus group interview with 6-8 students involved in the Building Character Programme (award booklet)
- 2) Focus group interview with 6-8 students involved in River Otter Project (if applicable to the school) and/or other STEM activities relating to the project
- 3) Individual interview with Character Education Lead
- 4) Individual interview with STEM lead
- 5) Any other interviews that the CEL thinks would be helpful.

Interview questions.

Student Focus Group – Building Character Programme

Tell me how the BCA programme works...

Is it enjoyable? What makes it so?

Are the materials (handbook etc) easy to use?

How is the programme taught – on its own? In lessons?

What characteristics do you see developing in yourself or your friends as a result of being involved in this? (Resilience, Curiosity, Leadership, Social Responsibility)

How does the programme record your progression from Bronze to Silver to Gold?

Is the process fair?

Do you feel better able to cope with challenging situations?

Are you involved in anything in a leadership role? Is that as a result of the programme?

Are you interested in how and why this works?

What new skills have you learnt...and which parts of the programme taught them?

What do you do differently as a result of being involved in the programme?

If you were in charge of implementing the programme, what would you do differently?

In terms of moving to the next stage of your school life/to University, how has the programme helped you/supported you/alterd your views?

Student Focus Group – STEM

(where appropriate) Can you tell me a bit about the River Otter Project?

Can you tell me about events you've been involved in with regard to STEM (explain terms!)

How has it changed your opinion on STEM subjects?

Has involvement in this changed your ideas about what subjects you will study? If so, how/what..

What are your current choices for the next phase of school?

What are the key motivations for choosing those subjects (career choice, parental & teacher suggestion, what you are good at/enjoy etc)

Individual – Character Education Lead

In terms of the BCA programme:

How easy has it been to incorporate the Award into the school system?

How have you gone about doing it? – why?

Do you identify any changes in the students who are involved? – if so, what?

Are the key characteristics of the programme identifiable in individual students?
How have other staff reacted to the programme?
Are you supported in developing/implementing the BCA programme?
What would you do differently next time around?
How has the Community and Social Responsibility aspect worked out?

In terms of the other parts of the project:

What has been the priority for the school in terms of the wide range of activities associated with the project?
What have been the factors governing these choices?
Are there aspects that you have not developed that you might develop at a later point?
How has the school approached the STEM aspects?
How has the school approached the Disadvantaged learners aspects?
How has being involved with the other schools affected your involvement in the project?

Individual – STEM

How has having a STEM lead for the school worked out? What are the pros and cons of having a named contact?
What kind of things have been done to support/expand student engagement?
How would you rate the quality and effectiveness of these kinds of events?
Have you seen STEM engagement improve? – has this resulted in increased numbers taking STEM subjects?

Others (possibly leaders)

What has been the priority for the school in terms of the wide range of activities associated with the project?
What have been the factors governing these choices?
Are there aspects that you have not developed that you might develop at a later point?
How has the collaboration between schools been?

Appendix 2 – Results Tables

Building Character Award; Booklet, Tracker, and Response to being involved in the programme

Table 4- Number of responses from each school

School	Number of responses
School A	66
School B	144
School C	57
School D	12
School E	127

Table 5 - Tally of responses to Student Questionnaire on Building Character Award Booklet (Schools B, C, D, E; n=340)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand what the Building Character Award is about	39	67	107	93	34
I have found the Award Handbook useful	95	119	90	28	7
The Award scheme will help me to do better in my GCSEs/A Levels	77	119	110	32	1
I know how to provide evidence for the Award levels	40	95	121	69	15
The Building Character Award has helped me to develop my character	103	111	86	36	4
The Award level(s) that I worked towards are not really challenging enough for me	20	75	189	43	8
The Award Handbook is not very easy to use	29	95	98	75	41
My teachers are including some character education issues in their teaching	61	91	116	55	11
The Award processes do not inspire me	15	52	86	97	88
I find that the Award covers the same things as other activities I already do	29	49	145	86	30
Overall, the award has been a valuable thing to do this year	101	108	85	34	8

Table 6 - Tally of responses to Student Questionnaire on Building Character Award Tracker (School A, n=66)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand what the Building Character Tracker is about	4	12	21	20	9
I have found the Tracker useful	16	9	19	17	5
The Tracker will help me to do better in my GCSEs / A Levels	11	7	28	13	7
I know how to provide evidence for the Tracker	8	18	12	14	12
The Tracker has helped me to develop my character	16	9	25	12	3
The Tracker is not really challenging enough for me	7	18	25	6	10
The Tracker is not very easy to use	16	19	18	6	7
My teachers are including some character education issues in their teaching	10	18	22	9	4
The Tracker processes do not inspire me	5	18	18	11	13
I find that the Tracker covers the same things as other activities I already do	3	21	22	11	7
Overall, the Tracker has been a valuable thing to do this year	17	15	17	15	1

Table 7 - Tally of responses to Student Questionnaire on the Building Character Programme (all schools; n=406)

<i>As a result of being involved in the Building Character Programme...</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am doing some things differently	103	133	106	38	14
I feel better able to cope with unexpected situations	93	132	118	41	8
I feel more curious about the world around me	90	124	111	53	13
I feel more involved in the community in which I live	102	123	115	43	6
I feel better able to lead	96	105	113	54	15
I have some ideas about how I could be more curious	95	113	124	46	12
I have some ideas about how I could be more involved in the community	81	101	141	49	14
I have some ideas about how I could be a better leader	86	112	111	59	17
I have some ideas about how I could be more resilient	82	98	115	71	18

Staff Training Events – Immediate Feedback

Table 8 – Tally of Responses, Mark Solomon Resilience Training (n=87)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can recognise times when I have worked to improve my own resilience	2	7	15	36	27
The INSET session will help me to develop my resilience	0	8	27	45	6
Issues of resilience are important to students	2	1	3	13	68
Issues of resilience should be addressed in the school curriculum	3	1	7	24	52
I know some ways in which I could address issues of resilience with my students	0	2	17	42	18
I don't see how developing student's resilience can work in practice	50	22	7	2	3
I have the power to affect student's resilience in my classroom	1	5	22	33	14
Others in school such as senior managers and school governors would be supportive of my efforts to improve student's resilience	1	3	10	36	31
Character traits such as resilience are pretty much fixed	22	36	14	6	1

Table 9 - Tally of Responses, Graham Powell Building Learning Power Training (n=29).

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can recognize times when I have worked to improve my own character	0	0	2	9	16
Building character is important to students	0	1	1	6	20
Building character should be addressed in the school curriculum	0	0	1	3	25
I know some ways in which I could address character education with my students	0	0	2	9	18
I don't see how developing student's character can work in practice	16	12	0	1	0
I have the power to affect student's character in my classroom	0	0	0	18	11
Others in school such as senior managers and school governors would be supportive of my efforts to develop student's character	0	1	8	8	11

Table 10 – Tally of Responses, Emotional Health and Well-being Inset Event (n=108).

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can recognise times when I have worked to improve my own emotional well being	3	4	10	43	43
Issues of emotional well-being are important to students	2	1	2	15	86
Issues of emotional well-being should be addressed in the school curriculum	2	2	10	20	70
I know some ways in which I could address issues of emotional well-being with my students	1	7	30	36	28
I don't see how developing student's emotional well-being can work in practice	52	30	13	5	5
I have the power to affect student's emotional well-being in my classroom	1	2	18	42	39
Others in school such as senior managers and/or school governors would be supportive of my efforts to improve student's emotional well-being	3	2	12	30	56

Table 11 – Tally of Responses, Emotional Health and Well-being, Lead Practitioners Event (n=26).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can recognize times when I have worked to improve my own emotional well being	0	1	5	8	10
Issues of emotional well-being are important to students	0	1	0	1	21
Issues of emotional well-being should be addressed in the school curriculum	1	0	1	1	21
I know some ways in which I could address issues of emotional well-being with my students	0	0	1	8	14
I don't see how developing student's emotional well-being can work in practice	15	7	1	0	0
I have the power to affect student's emotional well-being in my classroom	0	0	4	8	12
Others in school such as senior managers and/or school governors would be supportive of my efforts to improve student's emotional well-being	0	1	9	5	8

Staff Training Events – End of Evaluation Period Feedback

Table 12 - Pattern of Responses, Staff Training Events, end of evaluation period (n=64)

	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Number of responses	0	23	12	13	16

Table 13 - Number of respondents attending earlier events (n=64)

CPD Event	Building Learning Power	Resilience	EHWB (INSET)	EHWB (Lead Practitioner)
	20	43	46	14

Table 14 - Tally of Responses, end of evaluation period questionnaire to staff attending CPD events (n=64)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The work of character development is sufficiently important that it should be a priority in school.	2	2	3	31	26
The CPD event(s) I attended have equipped me to address the goals of the Character Education Project	3	6	17	29	9
I feel that others in the school such as senior managers and/or governors have been supportive of my efforts to develop student's character	2	1	18	30	13
Attendance at the training event(s) has helped me:					
Recognise times when I have worked to develop my own character	2	3	12	42	5
Recognise that issues of character development are important to students	2	1	6	35	20
Be able to address issues of character development in my teaching	2	7	19	27	9
Feel that I have the power to affect student's character in my classroom	2	2	20	28	12