

Camtree Digital Library



Enhancing well being and inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs through social action projects in a primary school

Title	Enhancing well being and inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs through social action projects in a primary school
Publisher	nasen
Publication date	2025
Download date	2026-03-05 11:04:48
Item License	https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14069/1098



Enhancing well being and inclusion of pupils with SEMH needs through social action projects in a primary school

What's the BIG Idea for SEND?

Project Focus

- Improved wellbeing, confidence, and communication for learners with SEMH needs
- Increased engagement with learning and community
- Development of key life skills including leadership, teamwork, and resilience
- Strengthened relationships between school, families, and local organisations

Introduction

Clayton Village Primary School, a small setting with 200 pupils and a higher-than-average SEND profile (9% EHCPs compared to the national average of 4.8%), recognised a growing need to support learners with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Inspired by previous success with social action projects, the school partnered with a not-for-profit organisation to deliver a bespoke programme as part of Whole School SEND's and The Sea View Trust's What's the BIG Idea for SEND project.

The initiative aimed to empower pupils through project-based learning, encouraging them to explore challenges in their community and develop entrepreneurial solutions. The school's ethos of inclusion and innovation made it an ideal environment to pilot a more structured and measurable version of the programme, with the goal of sharing learning across the wider education community.

Implementation

The programme was delivered to two Year 5 cohorts (16 pupils total) over 10 weeks, with weekly one-hour sessions. Pupils were selected using a diagnostic questionnaire based on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, alongside teacher assessments and professional discussions. The selection focused on children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, including those who appeared confident externally but were struggling internally.

Implementation (continued)

Programme Phases:

1. Assessment & Preparation

Pre-project questionnaires were completed by pupils and teachers. Parental consent was obtained, and families were informed about the project's aims. This phase helped identify individual needs and set a baseline for impact measurement.

2. Project Delivery

Pupils engaged with charities and community organisations, explored local issues, and developed their own social action projects. These ranged from planting wildlife gardens and creating wellbeing packs for shelter animals, to fundraising for Save the Children and making soup for the homeless. Each group pitched their ideas to a "Dragons Den" panel, including business leaders, council representatives, and school staff, and received funding to bring their projects to life.

3. Celebration & Reflection

The final event, "The Showcase," brought together families, community champions, and staff to celebrate pupil achievements. Learners presented speeches, shared project outcomes, and hosted a celebratory gathering with cake and lemonade. Each pupil received a personalised report detailing their progress, which was shared with families.

Practical Considerations:

- Sessions were delivered during lesson time, but the format is flexible enough for after-school enrichment.
- The programme was externally funded, but schools can adapt it for in-house delivery with training and planning support.
- Staff involvement, particularly learning support assistants (LSAs), was crucial to success and helped embed a social enterprise ethos across the school.

Outcomes and Impact

The project had a profound effect on participating pupils. Teachers, parents, and pupils reported significant improvements in:

- Confidence and self-esteem
- Communication and teamwork
- Resilience and problem-solving
- Moral awareness and empathy

Quantitative data showed 100% improvement across all targeted areas. Pupils became more willing to take risks, collaborate, and speak publicly. One pupil raised £78 independently for charity, while others created tangible change in their communities.

Outcomes and Impact (continued)

Pupil Voice:

"I feel braver talking in front of people which has impacted my social skills."

"The project has helped me develop the ability to talk to new people more."

"I believe in myself."

Teacher Observations:

"Watching this journey has been a huge pleasure; pupils have grown and developed, and the new experiences and opportunities have enabled them to flourish."

Attendance improved during the project, and pupils were consistently engaged and motivated. The sense of ownership and pride in their work was evident throughout.

Key Learning

This case study offers a replicable model for schools seeking to enhance SEND provision through social action.

Key takeaways include:

- Be brave and flexible: Let pupils lead their projects and adapt planning to suit emerging opportunities.
- Embed assessment: Use pre- and post-project tools to measure impact and tailor support.
- Celebrate success: Public recognition and family involvement amplify the impact and foster community engagement.
- Invest in relationships: Strong partnerships with local organisations and volunteers enrich the experience and provide real-world relevance.
- Plan for sustainability: Clayton Village now plans to embed the programme across Upper Key Stage 2, making it a core part of their curriculum.