

Camtree Digital Library



Supporting pupils to regulate emotions, resolve conflict and build confidence during unstructured times

Title	Supporting pupils to regulate emotions, resolve conflict and build confidence during unstructured times
Publisher	nasen
Publication date	2026
Download date	2026-03-05 11:40:04
Item License	https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14069/1215



Supporting pupils to regulate emotions, resolve conflict and build confidence during unstructured times

Developing social skills to improve emotional regulation

School/Background Context

This is the largest primary school in its local authority. It is a three-form entry school with a 40-place nursery, spread across a split site in a leafy suburb of an affluent area.

The school expanded rapidly from one-form entry following the development of nearby housing, which included a proportion of affordable accommodation. Although admissions are partly governed by a religious diocese, many pupils come from outside the catchment area, including some from the most deprived parts of the borough. Currently, 10% of pupils are on the SEND register—below both the local and national averages. Of these, 62% have communication and interaction as their primary area of need, including children on the autism pathway awaiting diagnosis.

Communication barriers impact pupils' ability to resolve conflict and engage in restorative conversations. The school aims to prepare children for adulthood by helping them understand appropriate language, two-way dialogue, and the reasons behind others' behaviours and words.

Due to long waiting times for autism diagnoses—often up to five years—external support is limited without formal identification. To address this, all classrooms are autism-friendly, and staff support children who may find everyday tasks challenging.

The school's 2024/2025 Self-Evaluation Framework prioritises early identification of additional needs and the use of ELKLAN speech and language strategies to help children overcome communication and interaction barriers.

The Challenge

It was noted by myself and other staff that increasing levels of more children were struggling to regulate their emotions partly due to the child being unable to discuss their feelings and talk about what has upset them. This was most apparent in Year 6. The infant children were also impacted by being unable to attend early years settings during their prime age of development due to the pandemic.

Children were unable to return to class after break as they were not regulated and in a calm state because they couldn't resolve the problems from playtimes. Children were frustrated with the situations not being resolved and if they did go back into class they were still distracted and unable to focus.

Observations were made of children out of class especially after playtimes and lunchtimes e.g. if there was a disagreement, children could not resolve and either went to tell a teacher or argued with peers until someone intervened.

The Challenge (continued)

Adult voice shared that some children are unable to cope at playtimes, too much free time and children are children getting angry.

Child Pupil voice children, 'I do not like playtimes, No one likes me and I don't have any friends.'

Currently there are activities set out at lunchtimes by sports staff but winning and losing was a trigger for some children. Extra staff were employed to support children who struggles with free time, restorative champions were trained to aid conflict during playtimes.

My aim was for children to be able to talk about their issues, understand how to deal with social situations such as fallings out which would upskill them in preparation for adulthood.

The plan was:

- For our behaviour mentor to run social skills interventions on both infant and junior sites.
- Learning support assistants to supervise a lunchtime group where the children will participate in cooperative play i.e. Lego or board games.
- A conversation will be had with our private SALT that school buy back with a plan for her to share Black Sheep resources with staff.
- New staff to be trained by myself and then to 'have a go' at using the Black Sheep materials.

What They Did

Through analysis of staff voice, pupil voice, observations, high levels of SLCN and informal discussions it was clear that further support was needed to help pupils develop strategies to support with social interaction.

- • Behaviour mentor run a social skills interventions on both infant and junior sites.
- • Learning support assistants supervise a lunchtime group where the children will participate in cooperative play i.e. Lego or board games.
- • A conversation had with our private SALT that school buy back with a plan for her to share Black Sheep resources with staff.
- • New staff to be trained by myself and then to 'have a go' at using the Black Sheep materials.
- • Staff training was held and a buddy system put in place, staff trained to implement a social skills groups and less confident staff shadowed more confident staff.
- • Training broken down in to smaller steps, working first with the behaviour mentor and shadowing them. They have knowledge of the intervention and have delivered it successfully previously.
- • To motivate staff, LSA meetings were held half termly where I shared the behaviour mentor's knowledge with others.
- • To developing Teaching Techniques, I trained staff using Black sheep materials. Packs were made, which including lesson plans.
- • To embed practice, staff to 'have a go' and to enjoy. This was encouraged before a feedback meeting was had. A learning walk will be planned to observe the implementation of interventions

Outcomes and Anticipated Impact

Through developing the social skills intervention, the project made me focus wider and get the interventions up and running.

Teachers are accountable for children with EHCPs and must ensure that targets are met-will be shared at EHCP reviews.

Non-negotiables were written for teachers with targets taken from EHCPs to ensure that EHCP targets are met.

Next Steps

LSA meeting to follow with Q and As and then request more specific training from SALT and inclusion team if needed.

Aims and aspirations-emotional regulation interventions set up-planning written using Colour Monster.

Additional staff who can concentrate on interventions rather than working with individual children and then they can be timetabled out of class solely for the purpose of the intervention.

I would like social skills groups to run frequently, with a focus on other aspects of SEMH needs such as emotional regulations and more work around feelings linked to further Colour Monster stories.