Research Report DFE-RR049

Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme in secondary schools: national evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SEAL is “a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools” (DCSF, 2007, p.4). National Strategies report that it is currently being implemented in around 90% of primary schools and 70% of secondary schools. The aims of this national evaluation of secondary SEAL were to (a) assess the impact of secondary SEAL on a variety of outcomes for pupils, staff and schools, and (b) examine how schools implemented SEAL, with particular reference to the adoption of a whole-school approach.

Research Design

Our research combined quantitative and qualitative inquiry. The former was utilised mainly to provide data pertaining to the impact of secondary SEAL, and the latter was used primarily to provide insights into the implementation process.

For the quantitative component, 22 SEAL schools and a matched group of 19 comparison schools were recruited to take part in a quasi-experimental study. Pupils in Year 7 at the beginning of the academic year 2007/8 (N = 8, 630) were the target cohort. Key outcome data (e.g. pupils’ social and emotional skills, mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour and behaviour problems) was collected from the target cohort via self-report surveys on an annual basis: at the beginning of 2008 (Time 1 – baseline), at the beginning of 2009 (Time 2 – interim. NB: this wave of quantitative data collection was only used to inform our unpublished interim reporting) and finally at the beginning of 2010 (Time 3 – post-test).

For the qualitative component, nine of the 22 SEAL schools from the quantitative impact strand were recruited to participate in longitudinal qualitative case studies. These case study schools were visited five times (roughly once per term) during the course of our fieldwork. Data collection in the case study schools comprised of observations of lessons and other contexts, interviews and/or focus groups with members of the school community (e.g. pupils, teachers, SEAL leads, head teachers, and LA staff) and analysis of school documents (e.g. SEAL self-evaluation forms, policy documents).

After fieldwork had begun, the then DCSF requested that additional quantitative data be collected pertaining to pupil and staff perceptions of school climate, staff social and emotional skills, and pupil understanding, knowledge and involvement in SEAL. These additional quantitative measures were implemented in our nine longitudinal case study schools following the same timetable as described above for the quantitative impact strand.

Findings

In terms of implementation, our analysis of case study schools' approaches to, and progress in SEAL implementation revealed a very mixed picture. Schools such as CS5, CS6 and CS3 made comparatively good progress in implementation, and were able to provide clear evidence of engagement in the suggested school improvement cycle. However, schools like CS2, CS4 and CS10 made comparatively little progress over the same period of time. Our subjective impressions of these schools and analysis of other relevant data suggest that a whole range of issues were influential in determining these differences – including a somewhat superficial approach to implementation ('box ticking') and a failure to sustain initial activity levels in the latter schools. However, our analysis of impact data for each school revealed that this made little difference to outcomes for pupils, with very little variation evident between schools.

Our nine case study schools were extremely variable and fragmented in the extent to which they adopted a whole-school approach to implementing SEAL. An issue here may be the necessarily limited time frame within which this evaluation study was conducted. Development of a truly whole-school nature inevitably takes time to become fully embedded. This may be particularly true of large, complex institutions such as secondary schools. The 'patchy' approach seen in most schools may simply be a reflection of this truism. However, there are also other issues which may have contributed to the lack of a consistent whole-school approach. Firstly, some schools interpreted the SEAL guidance in such a way that they purposively selected pockets of activity or development to focus upon, at the expense of the 'bigger picture'. This was often in tandem to a perception that SEAL did not offer them something new. Sustaining the effort and energy required to drive SEAL forward at various levels was also a problem for some, especially in the face of competing pressures. Alongside this, a perception that things would begin to change in the short-term among some staff lead to a withdrawal of effort and interest when this did not happen.

Consistent with the findings of previous research (e.g. Greenberg et al, 2005; Durlak and DuPre, 2008), our analysis of qualitative case study school data revealed a range of barriers and facilitators relating to preplanning and foundations, implementation support systems, implementation environment, implementer factors, and programme characteristics. The factors identified clearly interacted in creating the conditions for effective (or ineffective) implementation of SEAL. Amongst these factors, we tentatively point to staff 'will and skill', in addition to time and resource allocation, as being the most crucial in driving implementation forward (or, indeed, holding it back).

Finally, in terms of impact, our analysis of pupil-level outcome data indicated that SEAL (as implemented by schools in our sample) failed to impact significantly upon pupils' social and emotional skills, general mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour or behaviour problems. The school-level variable of 'SEAL status' (e.g. whether a given school were implementing SEAL or not) was close to statistical significance in the analyses of social and

emotional skills and general mental health difficulties (indicating the possibility of a 'SEAL effect'). However, the effect sizes associated with this variable were marginal – for instance, being at a SEAL school was associated with just a 0.298 reduction in SDQ total difficulties score at Time 3.

In relation to school-level outcome data, our analyses indicated that SEAL (as implemented by schools in our sample) failed to have a positive impact, although the results were less straightforward here. Analysis of school climate scores indicated significant reductions in pupils' trust and respect for teachers, liking for school, and feelings of classroom and school supportiveness during SEAL implementation. Additionally, qualitative data around perceptions of impact indicated a feeling that SEAL had not produced the expected changes across schools. However, school climate data also showed a significant increase in pupils' feelings of autonomy and influence, and this was supplemented by anecdotal examples of positive changes in general outcomes (e.g. reductions in exclusion), as well as more specific improvements in behaviour, interpersonal skills and relationships.

Recommendations

Based upon our findings, we recommend the following:

- Future school-based social and emotional learning initiatives should more accurately reflect the research literature about 'what works' in this area – namely, the provision of structure and consistency in programme delivery, and the adherence to SAFE (Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit) principles; careful monitoring of fidelity in such programme delivery would be essential to ensuring more positive outcomes;
- For schools that want to engage fully in the implementation of programmes designed to promote social and emotional learning, we recommend that resources and time are made available to their staff to allow them to do this;
- Greater engagement with parents/carers should be an essential component of any future initiative in this area;
- A greater emphasis needs to be given to the rigorous collection and use of evidence to inform developments in policy and practice in this area; in particular, there should be proper trialling of initiatives like SEAL before they are rolled out on a national level;
- Guidance should be produced to enable schools to make informed choices about the adoption of social and emotional learning programmes beyond SEAL; this guidance should have a clear focus on the evidence base to support particular programmes and the contexts in which they are effective.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme

SEAL is "a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools" (DCSF, 2007, p.4). It is currently being implemented in around 90% of primary schools and 70% of secondary schools.

SEAL is designed to promote the development and application to learning of social and emotional skills that have been classified under the five domains proposed in Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence. These are:

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation (managing feelings)
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

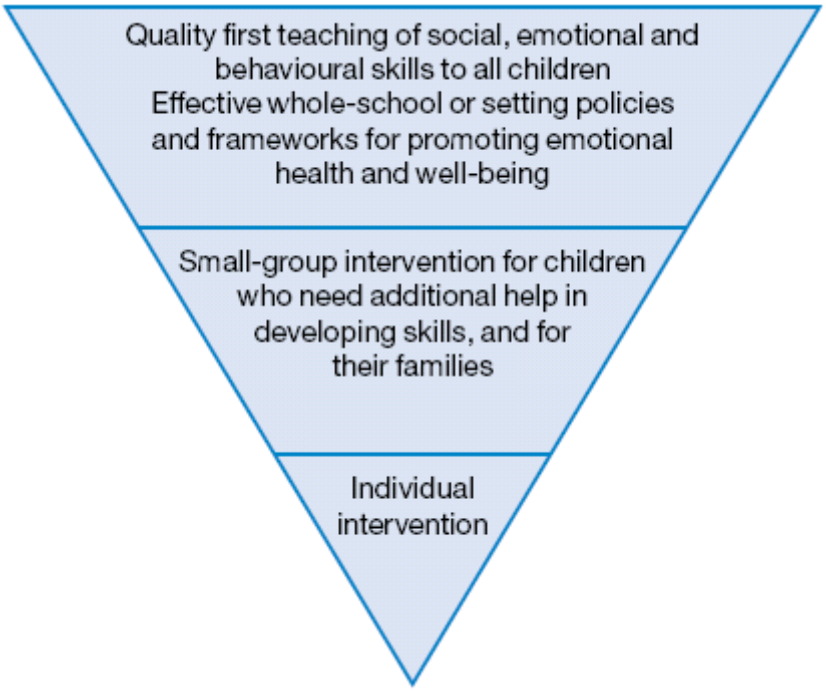
The definitions provided for these skills are displayed below in Table 1:

Table 1. Definitions of the five social and emotional skills promoted through SEAL (from DfES, 2007, p.5-6).

Skill	Definition
Self-awareness	Knowing and valuing myself and understanding how I think and feel. When we can identify and describe our beliefs, values, and feelings, and feel good about ourselves, our strengths and our limitations, we can learn more effectively and engage in positive interactions with others.
Self-regulation (managing feelings)	Managing how we express emotions, coping with and changing difficult and uncomfortable feelings, and increasing and enhancing positive and pleasant feelings. When we have strategies for expressing our feelings in a positive way and for helping us to cope with difficult feelings and feel more positive and comfortable, we can concentrate better, behave more appropriately, make better relationships, and work more cooperatively and productively with those around us.
Motivation	Working towards goals, and being more persistent, resilient and optimistic. When we can set ourselves goals, work out effective strategies for reaching those goals, and respond effectively to setbacks and difficulties, we can approach learning situations in a positive way and maximize our ability to achieve our potential.
Empathy	Understanding others' thoughts and feelings and valuing and supporting others. When we can understand, respect, and value other people's beliefs, values, and feelings, we can be more effective in making relationships, working with, and learning from, people from diverse backgrounds.
Social skills	Building and maintaining relationships and solving problems, including interpersonal ones. When we have strategies for forming and maintaining relationships, and for solving problems and conflicts with other people, we have the skills that can help us achieve all of these learning outcomes, for example by reducing negative feelings and distraction while in learning situations, and using our interactions with others as an important way of improving our learning experience.

SEAL is delivered using the National Strategies'[1] 'waves of intervention' model, as seen in Figure 1:

Figure 1. National Strategies' waves of intervention model (taken from DfES, 2005).



Secondary SEAL has developed since its initial rollout in 2007/8, and is currently described in terms of key principles at Local Authority (LA) and school levels. At the LA level, SEAL is characterised by the following principles:

- Developing a 'SEAL culture' across teams and services through a shared vision, CPD, working processes and common language. Development is driven by and through the school improvement team, in true partnership with key partners, e.g. those leading on inclusion, mental health and well-being.
- Embedding and clearly communicating social and emotional skills development within Children's Services' (CS) priorities and relevant programmes.
- Social and emotional skills development strongly reflected in key strategies that run across the LA, such as Emotional Health and Well-being, Pupil Engagement, Community Safety, Safeguarding and Parenting Strategies.

[1] The National Strategies are professional development programmes for educational professionals (e.g. teachers, managers). They are one of the Government's primary means of improving the quality of learning and teaching in schools. The Strategies are delivered at a national and regional level by Capita Strategic Children's Services.

- Multi-agency packages of support delivered in a range of settings that include addressing social and emotional skills, especially as a way of achieving better outcomes for vulnerable groups of children as well as an entitlement for all.
- Building capacity and sustainability through partnership working and extending links between school-based staff and other CS colleagues for training. Ensuring that targeted work on social and emotional skills development is embedded in wider support systems for children.
- CS has data systems that provide evidence of impact and feed into performance management systems.

At the school level, SEAL is characterised by the following principles:

- SEAL implementation is underpinned by clear planning focused on improving standards, behaviour and attendance.
- Building a school ethos that provides a climate and conditions to promote social and emotional skills.
- All children are provided with planned opportunities to develop and enhance social and emotional skills.
- Adults are provided with opportunities to enhance their own social and emotional skills.
- Staff recognise the significance of social and emotional skills to effective learning and to the well-being of pupils.
- Pupils who would benefit from additional support have access to small group work.
- There is a strong commitment to involving pupils in all aspects of school life.
- There is a strong commitment to working positively with parents and carers.
- The school engages well with other schools, the local community, wider services and local agencies (National Strategies SEAL Priorities, 2009-2011).

SEAL is somewhat unique in relation to the broader literature on approaches to social and emotional learning in that it is envisaged as a loose enabling framework for school improvement (Weare, 2010) rather than a structured 'package' that is applied to schools. Schools are actively encouraged to explore different approaches to implementation that support identified school improvement priorities rather than following a single model, meaning that they can tailor it to their own circumstances and needs. In a sense, this means that SEAL is essentially what individual schools make of it rather than being a single, consistently definable entity. It was conceptualised in this manner to avoid the lack of ownership and sustainability that might be associated with the more 'top-down', prescribed approach that is taken in the USA. From an evaluation point of view, this does create some caveats because it is in conflict with the assumption of homogeneity that dominates quasi-experimental inquiry (that is, the assumption that all 'SEAL schools' are doing the same or similar things).

1.2 The current study

The aims of the current study were to (a) assess the impact of secondary SEAL on a variety of outcomes for pupils, staff and schools, and (b) examine how schools implemented SEAL, with particular reference to the adoption of a whole-school approach. These aims were achieved by addressing the research questions outlined below.

The research questions (RQs) that drove the study were modified over time in order to incorporate additional evaluation work that we were commissioned to conduct after the main study had begun. The final RQs were:

1. What is the impact of the secondary SEAL programme on pupils':
    a. Social and emotional skills?
    b. General mental health difficulties?
    c. Pro-social behaviour?
    d. Behaviour problems?
2. In terms of wider outcomes, what is the impact of secondary SEAL on:
    a. School climate?
    b. Staff social and emotional skills?
    c. Perceptions of relationships, achievement, exclusions and other outcomes?
3. How is secondary SEAL implemented by schools?
    a. What progress is made in the school improvement cycle?
    b. Do different models of and progress in implementation impact differentially upon pupil outcomes?
4. Are schools adopting a whole-school approach to implementing SEAL?
    a. Do the school leadership and management teams support SEAL?
    b. Have schools taken active steps to ensure new policies support SEAL and are they explicitly including SEAL in school improvement plans?
    c. Have schools taken active steps to involve pupils, parents and engaged with the wider community and external agencies in SEAL development and implementation?
    d. Do schools explicitly include SEAL across the curriculum?
    e. Do schools prioritize the social and emotional well-being of their staff?
    f. Have schools audited their policies to ensure they support SEAL and have a clear understanding of the level of social and emotional skills in i) pupils ii) school staff?
    g. Is there an ongoing process of continuing professional development to support staff in SEAL implementation?
5. What are the barriers and facilitators of effective implementation?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter we provide a brief review of the literature on school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions. Our focus is on issues relating to implementation success and the reported impact of SEL programmes. We begin by exploring these in the broader (mainly US-based) literature before examining the evidence that has been gathered specifically in relation to the SEAL programme. This is not intended to be a completely comprehensive review – in the interests of brevity this is not feasible. Instead the reader is pointed towards the work of Durlak and DuPre (2008) on implementation and Durlak et al (in press) on impact.

2.2 Definition of social and emotional learning and examples of SEL programmes

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) define SEL as, "the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills to recognise and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, [and] handle interpersonal situations effectively" (Payton et al, 2008, p.5-6). This definition emphasizes the promotion of competence in key social and emotional domains in both children and adults and is consistent with other widely accepted definitions (e.g. Zins et al, 2004). Importantly, it also fits closely with the principles of the secondary SEAL programme (DCSF, 2007). However, despite this fairly precise definition, the actual application of the term in the literature is somewhat nebulous and amorphous, with programmes described under the SEL umbrella being extremely heterogeneous in their nature, content, audience, settings, and expected outcomes. For example, in terms of content and outcomes, an influential review published by Catalano et al (2004) included approaches seeking to achieve one or more of 15 different objectives (of which only two – the promotion of social competence and emotional competence – relate directly to the definition outlined above). The parameters of SEL are therefore not entirely clear cut, leading some to suggest that the term is "bereft of any conceptual meaning" (Zeidner, Roberts & Matthews, 2002, p.215).

Before providing examples of SEL programmes it is important to distinguish key differential characteristics that have been highlighted in the literature. Reviews of the literature in this area (e.g. Wells, Barlow & Stewart-Brown, 2003) typically make a primary distinction between those programmes that are 'universal' and those that are 'targeted'. The former are developed with the intention of delivery to the entire student body, whereas the latter are designed to provide focused intervention for pupils at risk of, or already experiencing, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In the National Strategies 'waves of intervention' model outlined in the previous chapter, universal strategies are akin to Wave 1, whereas targeted approaches are

akin to Waves 2 and 3. As the focus of this evaluation study is the implementation of secondary SEAL at Wave 1 of the aforementioned framework, this brief review will not consider the literature on targeted interventions.

A key differential characteristic of universal SEL programmes is the extent to which they pervade different aspects of the school. Most of the major reviews in this area (e.g. Durlak et al, in press, Blank et al, 2009; Adi et al, 2007; Catalano et al, 2004; Green et al, 2005) make the distinction between programmes that focus mainly on the delivery of a taught curriculum, those that aim to change aspects of the school environment or ethos, those that involve work with parents and/or the wider community, and those that involve some combination of these factors. The conceptualisation of SEAL as a whole-school approach means that it would be regarded as a programme that involves all factors, since it "essentially means thinking holistically, looking at the whole context including organization, structures, procedures and ethos, not just at individual pupils or at one part of the picture only" (DCSF, 2007, p.22).

2.3 Implementation of SEL programmes

The most comprehensive and up to date review of factors affecting the implementation of SEL programmes was conducted by Durlak and DuPre (2008). The most powerful finding of this review was the clear link between aspects of implementation and study outcomes - in particular, *fidelity* (the extent to which a programme is delivered as intended by the developers), *dosage* (how much of the programme has been delivered) and *quality* (how well different programme components have been conducted). Other influential work in this area has drawn similar conclusions – for instance, Catalano et al (2004) stated that, "fidelity of program implementation has been repeatedly shown to be related to effectiveness" (p.116)

Durlak and DuPre (2008) identified a range of factors affecting the implementation process, including community level factors (e.g. politics, funding), provider characteristics (e.g. perceived need for change, perceived benefits, self-efficacy), programme characteristics (e.g. compatibility, adaptability), organisational capacity (e.g. climate, shared vision, communication, leadership), and support systems (e.g. training, technical assistance). Greenberg et al's (2005) seminal work for the US Department of Health and Human Services raised broadly similar issues, noting the importance of work at the 'pre-planning' stage (for instance, readiness for and capacity to effect change), the quality of materials (for instance, materials that are visually appealing, user friendly, age appropriate, and culturally sensitive), the support available (including the structure, content and timing of training both prior to and during implementation), the quality of this support, and implementer characteristics (for example, skills and attitudes). Additionally, Greenberg et al (2005) highlighted the difficulties and challenges associated with universal interventions moving from efficacy to effectiveness trials (that is, from research carried out on programmes with a high degree of resources under well controlled conditions to implementation in diverse school settings),

concluding that, “although the evidence base of prevention programs is quickly growing, the science regarding *how* programs are implemented under real world conditions is poorly developed” (p.5-6). In particular, the authors noted that not enough was known about how adaptation of different elements of such programmes could influence outcomes. This is particularly pertinent in the context of this evaluation study given the emphasis on flexibility and adaptation in secondary SEAL. Weare (2010) notes that schools implementing SEAL are, “encouraged to take from it what they wish” (p.10), although she also cautions that, “too much tailoring to local needs and circumstances can lead to dilution and confusion” (p.11).

2.4 Impact of SEL programmes

The most up to date and comprehensive analysis of the impact of universal SEL programmes was completed by Durlak et al (in press)[2]. These authors concluded that SEL programmes lead to significant improvements in social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, emotional distress and academic performance. Effect sizes (that is, the amount of change that has occurred in a given measured variable) were largest for social and emotional skills. As part of their analyses these authors examined which SEL programme factors moderated student outcomes. They found that programmes deemed to be adhering to SAFE (Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit) principles (Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010) were more effective than those that were not. Furthermore, the authors found that interventions with reported implementation problems yielded less positive outcomes than those with no reported problems. These findings resonate strongly with what other reviews have found.

In terms of the adoption of a whole-school approach (as per SEAL), key reviews of the literature seem to favour the use of multi-component programmes (e.g. those that combine at least two of the elements outlined above). For instance, Wells et al’s (2003) qualitative synthesis concluded that, “although the available evidence is limited to two studies, the results of this review provide support for whole-school approaches that aim to involve everyone in the school including pupils, staff, families and the community, and to change the environment and culture of the school.” (p.217). In a similar vein, Catalano et al (2004) reported that, although one-third of effective programmes operated in a single setting, the other two-thirds used a combination of the resources of the school, family, and/or community in promoting positive outcomes. Likewise, Adi et al (2007b) reported, “there is evidence… of the effectiveness of multi-component programmes in improving outcomes relevant to bullying, violence and mental health” (p.10)

As with other aspects of SEL though, the picture is not entirely clear-cut. In the aforementioned review by Durlak et al (in press), in which effect sizes associated with different types of programmes were systematically compared using meta-analytical statistical techniques, no advantage was found for multi-

[2] It is important to note that this meta-analysis covers universal SEL programmes across all phases of education – not just the secondary/high school level

component programmes over those that made use of a single component. In their systematic review of approaches to promoting social and emotional well-being in secondary education, Blank et al (2009) did not report any programmes that contained elements involving the curriculum, environment/ethos *and* parents/community, and only a small handful that combined two of these, concluding, "the literature to support whole-school interventions in general is not well developed" (p.76), and that, "it is difficult to comment on the relationship between impact and type of intervention as most of the interventions [are] curriculum based, and therefore there are too few of other types to allow meaningful comparison or recommendation" (p.64). This finding echoes that of Adi et al (2007), who were unable to find any studies reporting on programmes that combined work around the curriculum, school environment/ethos, parents *and* the community, and only a handful of studies (five of the 31 reviewed) that focused on three of these components. Thus, whilst they reported "reasonable quality evidence" (p.12) in relation to multi-component programmes, they reported "good evidence to support the implementation of programmes like PATHS" (p.11) (a curriculum-based programme).

Hence, there is a clear rationale for the adoption of a whole-school approach to SEL that is based in empirical evidence, albeit tempered by recent findings which suggest that a more detailed analysis is required to help us understand exactly what the optimal SEL programme conditions are, and how applicable they are to the English context. We note that the vast majority of the evidence base stems from the USA, with only a smattering of studies from the UK context (e.g. in Blank et al's review, 22 of the 40 included studies derived from the USA, with only three from the UK). The issue of transferability of findings needs to be given clear consideration here – Blank et al (2009) suggest that although most of the interventions described in their review would be applicable in the UK, they would require some adaptation in order to be apposite.

2.5 Implementation and impact of the SEAL programme

To date there have been five evaluation studies of the SEAL programme. This includes three studies relating to primary SEAL – the national evaluation of the primary SEAL curriculum component (Hallam, Rhamie & Shaw, 2006a), the national evaluation of primary SEAL small group work (Humphrey et al, 2008), and a recent examination of the family SEAL strand (Downey & Williams, 2010). In relation to secondary SEAL, prior to this evaluation there were two studies which reported on the Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills (SEBS) pilot[3], carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Smith et al, 2007) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2007) respectively. In this final subsection we distil the key findings of these studies, with a particular focus on implementation issues and reported impact.

[3] SEBS was later changed to SEAL to promote the notion of continuity and synergy with primary SEAL.

The studies that have evaluated the various components of the primary SEAL programme have raised common issues in relation to implementation that reflect those outlined earlier in this chapter. For instance, both Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw (2006a) and Humphrey et al (2008) highlighted the importance of both initial and ongoing support and training for schools at the Local Authority (LA) level, the pre-existing foundations for implementation (e.g. complimentary work already taking place in school), issues around staff attitudes and understanding, and the level of fidelity and adaptation of core materials and procedures as key factors influencing implementation success.

In terms of impact, Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw (2006b) concluded that primary SEAL, "had a major impact on children's well-being, confidence, social and communication skills, relationships, including bullying, playtime behaviour, pro-social behaviour and attitudes towards schools" (Hallam, Rhamie & Shaw, 2006b, p.1), although these findings have to be treated with caution due to the lack of any source of comparison. Furthermore, the evaluation also highlighted some potential iatrogenic effects (that is, unintended negative consequences), including a decline in academic performance for children in Key Stage 1, and negative changes in attitudes towards school and relationships with teachers among children in Key Stage 2 during the pilot. Humphrey et al (2008) presented a similar, mixed picture in relation to the impact of the primary SEAL small group work element, with evidence of the positive impact of some interventions, but not others, and consistently null findings in relation to parental reports. Downey and Williams (2010) reported positive findings for their local evaluation of Family SEAL, with both teachers and parents reporting increases in children's emotional literacy over the course of implementation (although, as with the Hallam study, there was no source of comparison for these gains; furthermore, the sample size for this study was inevitably very small as it was a local, rather than national evaluation).

In relation the secondary SEAL (SEBS) pilot, Smith et al (2007) reported that schools involved had typically embraced the programme and felt that their involvement had been beneficial. However, they also reported variability in approaches to implementation (e.g. whole-school vs. delivery through the curriculum or pastoral system), challenges experienced in relation to workload, attitudes and understanding (including different perceptions about the aim and goals of the pilot) of some staff, and a clear 'slowing down' of activity during the course of implementation. The study also raised some key issues around monitoring and evaluation that are pertinent to this study. For instance, Smith et al (2007) found that schools found it difficult to engage in monitoring and evaluation of outcomes, primarily due to a lack of appropriate materials and problems in attributing any impact specifically to their pilot work. When asked about key factors required to ensure effective whole-school implementation, schools typically highlighted staff training, and staff and pupil awareness and understanding as being the most important. The OFSTED (2007) study, which ran in parallel to the above study, raised similar issues with regard to implementation, and additionally highlighted the importance of school leadership belief in and support for the pilot, describing it as, "the most

important factor determining a sound start and, ultimately, a successful approach" (OFSTED, 2007, p.8).

Since both evaluations of the secondary SEAL pilot were focused primarily on implementation processes, neither was able to report robust (e.g. involving some element of comparison and/or using established outcome measures at baseline and post-test) findings in relation to impact and outcomes. Nonetheless, a follow-up school questionnaire in Smith et al's (2007) study indicated that schools felt the pilot had impacted positively on pupil behaviour and emotional well-being, in addition to teaching and learning. Conversely, OFSTED (2007) reported that, "the programme had not had a significant effect on pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills" (p.15), although like Smith et al (2007) there was a feeling that most schools benefitted from their involvement, with all but one participating school planning to continue the work beyond the life of the pilot.

2.6 Linking the current literature to the research questions of this study

The aim of this final section is to highlight the key issues from the existing research base that relate to the research questions (RQs) that drive this study:

- RQ1 (impact) and RQ2 (wider impact) – there is evidence that SEL programmes *can* impact positively upon the outcomes of interest for this study (Durlak et al, in press). However, this is tempered by a number of factors related to programme composition and implementation.
- RQ3 (implementation) and RQ4 (adoption of a whole-school approach) – the evidence suggests that in order to maximize outcomes, implementation needs to be delivered as intended, in its entirety (as far as is possible) and with a high level of quality (Durlak and DuPre, 2008). There is good evidence for adopting a whole-school approach, but likewise there are equally strong findings for some single component (e.g. curriculum-based) programmes.
- RQ5 (barriers and facilitators) – seminal work in the area suggests that the foundations for implementation, school leadership, staff attitudes and skills, and the availability of resources and support, are crucial factors that can serve to help or hinder progress.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter we provide an outline of our research design. The chapter begins with a general overview of the different components of our evaluation and how they relate to one another. Following this, individual strands are explained in more detail in order to provide the reader with sufficient information to understand how the data analysed in chapters 4 and 5 were generated.

3.2 Research design overview

Our research design combines quantitative and qualitative inquiry. The former was utilised mainly to provide data pertaining to the impact of secondary SEAL, and the latter was used primarily to provide insights into the implementation process. For the quantitative component, 26 SEAL schools and a matched group of 23 comparison schools were recruited to take part in a quasi-experimental study (note: four SEAL schools and four comparison schools subsequently dropped out, leaving a final sample of 22 and 19 respectively). Pupils in Year 7 at the beginning of the academic year 2007/8 were the target cohort. Key outcome data (e.g. pupils' social and emotional skills, mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour and behaviour problems) was collected from the target cohort via self-report surveys on an annual basis: at the beginning of 2008 (Time 1 – baseline), at the beginning of 2009 (Time 2 – interim; note: this wave of quantitative data collection was only used to inform our unpublished interim reporting) and finally at the beginning of 2010 (Time 3 – post-test). Further details of this aspect of the research design can be found in section 3.3. For the qualitative component, 10 of the 26 SEAL schools from the quantitative impact strand were recruited to participate in longitudinal qualitative case studies (note: one case study school dropped out at the beginning of the project, leaving a final sample of nine). These case study schools were visited five times (roughly once per term) during the course of our fieldwork. Data collection in the case study schools comprised of observations of lessons and other contexts, interviews and/or focus groups with members of the school community (e.g. pupils, teachers, SEAL leads, head teachers, and LA staff) and analysis of school documents (e.g. SEAL self-evaluation forms, policy documents). Further details of this aspect of the research design can be found in section 3.4.

After fieldwork had begun, the then DCSF requested that additional quantitative data be collected pertaining to pupil and staff perceptions of school climate, staff social and emotional skills, and pupil understanding, knowledge and involvement in SEAL. These additional quantitative measures were implemented in our nine longitudinal case study schools following the same timetable as described above for the quantitative impact strand. Further details of this aspect of the research design can be found in section 3.5.

3.3 Quantitative impact evaluation

In this section we outline the research design pertaining to the quantitative impact evaluation. Specifically, we provide details relating to the experimental design, sample, instruments and procedure for this aspect of the study.

3.3.1 Design

This aspect of the evaluation is best described as a quasi-experimental study. Under ideal circumstances, a randomised controlled trial would have been utilised, but this was not possible given that schools had already decided to implement SEAL prior to the beginning of the research. As such, we recruited SEAL schools and matched them to comparison schools that were not implementing SEAL. It is important to note that the selection/recruitment of 'SEAL schools' was made on the basis of their having been selected by their respective LAs to be part of the initial roll-out to 300 schools in October 2007 and their declaration that they intended to implement the programme from this point onwards. As there is no single structured implementation model for SEAL, it was impossible to monitor any kind of fidelity among these schools, meaning that there was likely to be a high degree of heterogeneity in implementation activity. Thus, the term 'SEAL schools' is used simply as a short hand to differentiate between schools that had declared an intention to implement SEAL from those who had opted to not ('comparison schools'). The explanatory ('independent') variable was therefore 'SEAL status' (e.g. 'SEAL' vs. 'comparison'), and the response ('dependent') variables were changes in pupils' social and emotional skills, mental health difficulties, behaviour problems and pro-social behaviour.

3.3.2 Sample

School sample

The 22 SEAL and 19 comparison schools were drawn[4] from 25 Local Authorities across England. They can therefore be considered representative in terms of geographical diversity. However, it is also important to consider (a) how similar the sample schools' characteristics are to the general population of secondary schools across England, and (b) how closely matched SEAL and comparison schools are in terms of those characteristics. Table 2 presents data on the size (number of FTE pupils on roll), attendance (% unauthorised absences), attainment (% 5 GCSEs A*-C including Maths and English), proportion of pupils with SEN, and proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals in the SEAL schools, comparison schools, and nationally:

[4] The sample was drawn from the initial c.300 secondary schools that comprised the initial roll-out of secondary SEAL. All schools were contacted by letter to ask if they would participate in either the quantitative impact evaluation, longitudinal case studies, or both. Of those that agreed, the final sample were drawn purposively from LAs across the country in order to ensure geographical representativeness. Following this process, comparison schools which shared similar characteristics (see Table 2) were approached.

Table 2. School characteristics in the study sample and national trends.

	National average (A)	SEAL schools (B)	Comparison schools (C)	B-C difference (ANOVA)
Size	975*	1079	1043	p>.05 n.s.
Attainment	50.7**	41	44.9	p>.05 n.s
Attendance	1.49***	1.24	1.6	p>.05 n.s.
FSM	13.4*	17.3	16.2	p>.05 n.s.
SEN[5]	7.18****	7.1	7.3	p>.05 n.s.

*DCSF (2009), **DCSF (2010), ***DCSF (2010a), ****DCSF (2007b)

The above data demonstrates two key trends. Firstly, in terms of comparisons with national trends, our SEAL and comparison school characteristics appear to be broadly similar to secondary schools across England. Secondly, in terms of the comparability of SEAL and comparison schools, the two groups did not differ significantly on any of the five characteristics presented above – meaning that we can safely conclude that they are adequately matched.

Pupil sample

The target cohort in each school was pupils in Year 7 at the beginning of the academic year 2007/8. This yielded a total initial sample of 8,630 pupils[6] (4,534 in SEAL schools and 4096 in comparison schools). This is 1.5% of the approximately 565,000 Year 7 pupils attending secondary schools in England in 2007/8 (DCSF, 2008). The sample can be considered statistically representative, producing a 1% sampling error at 95% confidence intervals[7].

As with the school sample, it is important to consider (a) how similar the sample pupils' characteristics are to the general population of secondary school pupils, and (b) how closely matched pupils in SEAL and comparison schools are in terms of those characteristics.

Table 3 presents data on pupil sex, ethnicity, SEN and FSM eligibility for pupils in SEAL schools, comparison schools and nationally:

[5] SEN proportions relate to pupils at School Action Plus and with Statements of SEN.
[6] This figure does not match those quoted in later sections of this report because it does not take into account school and pupil attrition, and missing data.
[7] This essentially means that if we ran 100 similar studies drawn from the same population, in 95 of these we would expect mean scores within 1% of those reported for this study.

Table 3. Pupil socio-demographic characteristics in the study sample and national trends.

		National average (A)	Pupils in SEAL schools (B)	Pupils in comparison schools (C)	B-C difference (Chi-squared)
Sex (% Female)		49	52	52	n.s.
Ethnicity (%)	**White**				
	White British	74.7	80	85.4	
	Irish	0.3	0.2	0.1	
	Traveller of Irish heritage	0.1	0.1	0.1	
	Gypsy/ Roma	0.2	0.1	0.1	
	Any other White background	3.9	1.9	2.5	
	Mixed				
	White and Black Caribbean	1.3	0.7	0.4	
	White and Black African	0.5	0.3	0.1	
	White and Asian	0.9	1.1	0.8	
	Any other Mixed background	1.5	1.3	0.5	p<0.001
	Asian				
	Indian	2.5	1.0	1.0	
	Pakistani	3.9	3.8	1.9	
	Bangladeshi	1.6	0.8	0.4	
	Any other Asian background	1.3	0.8	0.4	
	Black				
	Black Caribbean	1.4	0.6	0.2	
	Black African	2.9	2.0	1.2	
	Any other black background	0.6	0.3	0.0	
	Chinese	0.3	0.8	0.3	
	Other	1.4	1.2	1.0	
SEN (%)*	No SEN	81.2	83.7	81.3	
	School Action	11.6	9.9	14	p <0.01
	School Action Plus	5.1	4.4	3.5	
	Statement	2.1	2.0	1.2	
FSM eligibility (% not eligible)		86.9	86.5	88.4	n.s.

Although there are no significant differences in sex and FSM eligibility between pupils in SEAL and comparison schools in our sample, differences did emerge in relation to both ethnicity and SEN. However, these were very marginal in terms of magnitude (e.g. a 5.4% difference in the proportion of White British pupils in relation to ethnicity), and are most likely an artefact of the increased sensitivity of our statistical tests associated with such a large sample. Thus, we can be confident that the composition of pupils in the SEAL and comparison schools is similar enough to allow comparisons on outcome measures to be drawn.

3.3.3 Instruments

Social and emotional skills: the Emotional Literacy Assessment Instrument (ELAI)

Social and emotional skills were measured using the pupil self-report version of the Emotional Literacy Assessment Instrument (ELAI) (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003). The ELAI is based upon Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence framework, and provides an overall index of social and emotional skills. The measure consists of 25 statements (e.g. 'I get upset if I

do badly at something') to which the respondent indicates a level of agreement on a four-point Likert scale. It takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The ELAI is *internally consistent* (Cronbach's Alpha for the self-report version is 0.75) and has been demonstrated to have good *factorial validity* (established using principal components analysis) (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003). Our analysis of data collected in a related study has also established the scale's *discriminative validity* (see Humphrey *et al*, 2008). The self-report version of the ELAI was developed for use with 7-16 year-old children and is therefore appropriate for our study sample. Finally, it is recommended for use in the evaluation of SEAL by both the government (DfES, 2006) and experts in the field (Mosley & Niwano, 2008).

Participants receive an overall ELAI score ranging from 25-100. A higher score indicates greater social and emotional skills. As a broad indication, total scores of less than 69 in the self-report version are considered to be 'below average', and thus a possible cause for concern.

General mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour and behaviour problems: the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

General mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour and behaviour problems were measured using the pupil self-report version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997). The SDQ provides a broad behavioural screening profile of children's emotional symptoms, behaviour problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer problems, and pro-social behaviour. The first four of these domains can be combined in order to generate an index of general mental health difficulties. The measure consists of a series of statements (e.g. 'I worry a lot') to which the respondent indicates a level of agreement on a three-point Likert scale. The SDQ has strong psychometric properties, including *factorial validity* (established using factor analysis), *internal consistency* (Cronbach's Alpha average is 0.73), *test-retest stability* (average co-efficient of 0.62 over 6 months) and *predictive validity* (scores above the 90th percentile on the SDQ strongly predict independently diagnosed psychiatric disorders) (Goodman, 2001). The self-report version of the SDQ was developed for use with 11-17 year-olds and is therefore appropriate for our study sample.

Participants receive a total difficulties score ranging from 0-40, and individual pro-social behaviour and behaviour problems scores that range from 0-10. For total difficulties, a score of 20 or above is considered to be abnormal and indicative of possible mental health disorder(s). Likewise, scores of five or above and four or below in the behaviour problems and pro-social behaviour subscales are also considered to be a cause for concern.

3.3.4 Procedure

Participating schools were sent copies of the above questionnaires to be completed by pupils in the target cohort at three points in time: at the beginning of 2008 (Time 1 – baseline), at the beginning of 2009 (Time 2 – interim. NB: this wave of quantitative data collection was only used to inform

our unpublished interim reporting and is therefore not included in our main analyses, which are concerned with change from Time 1 to Time 3) and finally at the beginning of 2010 (Time 3 – post-test). Schools were given approximately four weeks at each time point to complete the questionnaires. They were typically completed in year group assemblies or during form time. The questionnaires were then collected by courier, input by a third party company, and finally securely delivered to our research team for data screening and analysis. Each questionnaire had pupils' names together with unique reference numbers in order to allow matching of responses by individual pupils over time. However, individual pupil responses were treated anonymously and in confidence by the research team. They were not shared with schools, who instead received aggregated (e.g. averages for the year group) questionnaire feedback on an annual basis.

3.4 Longitudinal qualitative case studies

In this section we outline the research design pertaining to the longitudinal qualitative case studies. Specifically, we provide information relating to the design, sample, and data generation methods within the case studies themselves.

3.4.1 Design

This aspect of the evaluation utilised longitudinal qualitative case studies, with individual schools as units of analysis. This method is typical of the field and allows a rich and detailed picture to be built of the topics of interest (e.g. implementation processes and issues), whilst also allowing flexibility and thorough triangulation of data obtained through different methods (e.g. interviews, observations) and from different respondents (e.g. SEAL leads, teachers, pupils).

3.4.2 Sample

Of the 26 SEAL schools involved in the quantitative impact evaluation, ten were also selected to participate in the case study strand. The schools were chosen on the basis of them having agreed to participate, and also to provide a good spread in terms of geographical location (although our research team were much more restricted in this aspect than in the quantitative evaluation, and were only able to collect data from schools in the north-west and south-east of England). Shortly after this process was completed, one school dropped out of the study, leaving nine case study schools spread across seven Local Authorities. A basic summary of the characteristics of these nine schools can be found in Table 4 below. To protect the anonymity of these individual schools, exact figures have been replaced with an indication of the extent to which they deviate from the national averages for secondary schools in England (reported in Table 2 above). In Table 4 below, '=' indicates average, '-' indicates below average, and '+' indicates above average:

Table 4. Characteristics of the nine longitudinal case study schools.

School	LA	Urbanicity	Size	SEN[8]	Attainment	Attendance	FSM
CS2	A	Urban	=	=	-	-	+
CS3	B	Suburban	-	+	-	-	+
CS4	C	Semi-rural	=	+	-	-	=
CS5	D	Suburban	=	+	-	=	+
CS6	D	Urban	+	+	-	+	+
CS7	B	Suburban	+	-	+	-	-
CS8	E	Suburban	=	+	-	+	+
CS9	F	Semi-rural	+	+	=	=	-
CS10	G	Semi-rural	=	+	-	+	=

To flesh out these basic characteristics, we also provide a brief 'pen portrait' of each school, including relevant contextual information and foundations for SEAL (e.g. existing complimentary work):

CS2

CS2 is split across two sites, with Years 7 and 8 being educated in a 'lower school' and Years 9, 10 and 11 attending 'upper school'. The atmosphere inside could be described as strict and tense. Teachers could be heard chastising pupils throughout the school. Very little direct praising of pupils was observed during our visits. The ethos of CS2 was one of discipline and control, although behaviour problems were not raised as an issue by staff at any point during our fieldwork.

CS3

Although CS3 is located in a deprived area; this is not reflected within the school. There was an atmosphere of dedicated study; the school was very quiet during lesson and break times, perhaps partly due to its small size. Pastoral care is a major priority in CS3, and this is evidenced by a core of pastoral staff who were obviously acutely aware of the needs of their pupils, as a whole and individually. Responsibility for SEAL implementation in CS3 was shared between the school SENCO and school counsellor, who had recently completed a qualification in Emotional Literacy at the beginning of our fieldwork.

CS4

CS4 was a bright and busy school. The atmosphere within was one of energy and excitement. There was lots of running around and boisterous behaviour among pupils; although this occasionally got out of hand and led to staff intervention, the relationships between pupils and staff appeared to be very good. CS4 had a well-established system for pupil support and referrals in relation to social, emotional and behavioural needs.

[8] SEN proportions relate to pupils at School Action Plus and with Statements on SEN.

CS5

CS5 was involved in the SEBS (SEAL) pilot and as such were already 'up and running' in relation to implementation when our fieldwork began. The school underwent substantial refurbishment works during our fieldwork, with the old buildings being gradually replaced by sleek, modern facilities. CS5 has a very good reputation locally, especially given its location in an area of high deprivation.

CS6

The head teacher of CS6 had been a member of staff at the school since it opened decades earlier and had consistently promoted the personal development and well-being of all pupils throughout this time. This was reflected in a personalized-learning approach for pupils who have English as an additional language and a barrier-free zone for pupils with physical disabilities. In recognition of its inclusive and caring approach, the school was selected by the LA to be a 'hub school' to develop SEAL and model good practice to support the implementation of SEAL in other schools within the authority. CS6 were also involved in the UK Resilience Project (Challen et al, 2009) during our fieldwork.

CS7

CS7 is a grammar school for girls in a leafy suburb of a large city. It is split across three sites. The overall atmosphere of the school was calm, secure, caring and happy. The environment was clean, bright and spacious. Pupils were very polite, well-behaved and self-assured. There was a feeling of affluence throughout the school and in the local area.

CS8

CS8 is based on a single site but gave the impression of being 'split', with a stark contrast between the dark and untidy main building and a newer, brighter and more spacious block. Pupils in the school seemed to be confident and, although not excessively noisy, ran along corridors, pushing others out of the way. On a number of visits relatively large numbers of pupils were observed standing in corridors, having been apparently sent out of lessons. We got the impression that pastoral care was not a particularly high priority at CS8.

CS9

CS9 has a very large pupil roll and this was reflected in the large number of buildings on site. The school was clean, tidy and well maintained. Displays of pupil work were evident throughout CS9. There were also lots of displays relating to anti-bullying work, including flow-charts for pupils to follow if they witnessed bullying or were being bullied. The school had a mentor room, which was open to pupils in need of someone to talk to at lunchtimes. The school operated a buddy system for Year 7 pupils to help with transition and

had recently introduced a system of Year 13 mentors for lower school pupils as our fieldwork began. A round of redundancies during SEAL implementation impacted negatively upon staff morale.

CS10

CS10 had been through a period of instability and had recently appointed a new head teacher as our fieldwork began. Falling pupil numbers and decreased revenue had resulted in staff concern over potential redundancies. The school itself was well maintained, but felt quite dark and 'dingy'; indeed, the building was due to be replaced as part of a redevelopment project. CS10 operated a 'remove room' system for pupils who had been excluded from class, in addition to a peer mentoring system.

3.4.3 Data generation methods and procedures

Each participating school agreed to be visited approximately once per term during the fieldwork phase of the evaluation, making for a total of five visits. In between these, our research team performed 'ad-hoc' data collection as appropriate (for instance, telephone interviews with LA staff). As is traditional in case study research, data was collected using a range of methods and from a range of respondents, including observations of lessons, other contexts (e.g. lunch periods) and SEAL training sessions, school tours, interviews with school SEAL leads, LA SEAL leads (e.g. Behaviour and Attendance consultants), subject teachers, teaching assistants, form tutors, non-teaching staff, (e.g. lunchtime supervisors), head and deputy head teachers, focus group discussions with pupils and SEAL working parties, and document retrieval and analysis (e.g. SEAL self evaluation form (SEF), school behaviour policy)[9]. Below we provide a brief description of the main data generation methods:

Observations

Observations of lessons, training sessions, and other contexts (e.g. lunch breaks, school tours) enabled our research team to gather direct evidence pertaining to the ethos and climate of each school, in addition to the extent to which different aspects of SEAL were being implemented (for instance, whether SEAL-related objectives were being included in lessons). The observations were unstructured[10] and were recorded in the form of summary field notes. Observations are a fundamental part of research methods in education and psychology, but remain a somewhat underused resource in the SEL field. In the context of this study, observations were crucial as they allowed us to triangulate claims made by respondents in interviews with

[9] Parents and other members of the wider community were not involved in the case studies as schools were unwilling or unable to put our researchers in contact with the relevant parties; this almost certainly reflects the lack of parental and community involvement reported by our schools during implementation (see next chapter).

[10] Our observations were guided by our research questions, meaning that they were always focused around SEAL-related activities.

regard to implementation activity against actual evidence 'from the chalk face' in each school.

Interviews and focus groups

Interviews were used to gain a broad range of perspectives into the implementation process. Given the whole-school approach emphasized in the SEAL guidance, we aimed to gather information from respondents at every level within and beyond each school, including senior management, SEAL leads, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents, and LA staff. Most of this data generation took the form of individual, semi-structured interviews. However, in the case of pupils, we opted to conduct focus groups because this would allow for a broader and more representative range of opinions. Focus groups also had the advantage of putting pupils at ease, since they were in the company of their peers (as opposed to the potentially anxiety-provoking situation of a 1:1 interview with an unknown adult).

Document retrieval and analysis

Our final method of data generation involved requests for school and classroom documentation that would allow us to gain insights into the SEAL implementation process. At the school level, this included behaviour policies, SEAL SEF forms and the like; at the classroom level, it included lesson plans and materials. We were particularly interested in the extent to which such documentation was changed or adapted over the course of the implementation process, and so regular requests were made for any updated documents.

Table 5 below provides a summary of the data collected from each case study school:

The aim through the data generation period of the longitudinal case studies was to increase the validity and credibility of our findings through thorough triangulation in terms of method (e.g. additional measures, observations, interviews, document analysis), respondent (e.g. pupils, teachers, SEAL leads) and time (e.g. multiple interviews conducted with the same individuals throughout the implementation period) (Yin, 2008). The rich dataset this process produced also allowed for in-depth analysis within and across cases, further strengthening the robustness of this aspect of the evaluation (Stake, 2005).

Table 5. Summary of data collected from each case study school.

		CS2	CS3	CS4	CS5	CS6	CS7	CS8	CS9	CS10
Additional Measures (see 3.5 below)	Time 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Time 2		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Time 3		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Observations	Classroom	2	2	4	5	7	5	4	5	10
	Outside of classroom (e.g. lunch)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2
	Training sessions						✓		✓	✓
	School tour	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interviews	Pupil focus group	2	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Teaching assistants		✓	✓	2	✓	✓	✓	3	✓
	Subject teachers	2	2	✓	3	7	6	5	3	7
	Form tutors		✓	✓	✓	✓	2	2	✓	✓
	Non-teaching staff (e.g. lunchtime supervisors)			10		2	2	2	2	2
	Head-teacher / Deputy Head	✓	✓	2				✓	✓	✓
	SEAL lead	3	5	3	5	4	4	4	2	3
	LA SEAL lead (or B&A Consultant)	2	✓	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Working Party	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Children's Services staff									
	Parents									
	Voluntary/community services									
Document retrieval and analysis			3	2	2	7	3	4	2	8

NB: a '✓' indicates that the data collection method was used once (e.g. one school tour was completed in CS2); numbers indicate multiple uses of the method (e.g. four pupil focus groups in CS3)

3.5 Additional measures in case study schools

In this section we outline the design, sample, instruments and procedures associated with the additional measures implemented in case study schools. As already mentioned, this aspect of the overall design represents a response to an additional commission made approximately six months into the evaluation.

3.5.1 Design

The additional measures study utilised a longitudinal single group repeated measures design. This meant that, unlike the main quantitative impact evaluation, there was no source for comparison of data in schools not implementing SEAL (see below). The decision not to include comparison schools in the design was made on the basis of the additional burden that the additional measures presented, which would most likely have led to a lack of compliance and increased attrition in the main evaluation.

3.5.2 Sample

Pupil measures

Our sample for this aspect of the evaluation were pupils in Year 7 at the beginning of the academic year 2007/8 in our nine SEAL case study schools. This yielded a total initial sample of 1548.

Staff measures

For the staff-rated measures outlined below, our sample were all teaching staff in our nine SEAL case study schools. Although we were never provided with a definitive number of staff teaching in the schools, we estimated an average of 64 in each based upon their pupil numbers and national statistics on the school workforce in England (DCSF, 2008a), yielding a potential initial sample of 576.

3.5.3 Instruments

Pupil measures

Pupils completed the School as a Caring Community Profile (SCCP) (Battistich et al, 1995). This 55 item questionnaire surveys pupils' *trust and respect for teachers, liking for school, perceptions of classroom and school supportiveness* and *feelings of autonomy and influence*. Pupils respond to a series of statements about their school and indicate their agreement on a four-point Likert scale. An example item is, "I like my school". The SCCP has good internal consistency and face validity, in addition to having been used in related research (e.g. Battistich et al, 1995).

In addition to the SCCP, pupils in the additional measures sample also completed a bespoke questionnaire that probed their awareness and knowledge of SEAL, involvement in implementation, and opportunities to engage in SEAL-related activities across different curriculum subjects and during form-time.

Staff measures

Staff in the additional measures sample were asked to complete two surveys. The Reactions to Teaching Situations (RTS) questionnaire (Perry *et al*, 2004),

describes ten hypothetical teaching situations (e.g. 'A pupil, who has a reputation of being difficult to handle, has a temper tantrum on a school trip where you are in charge') and asks teachers to rate the likelihood that they would adopt each of five different responses provided. Four of the responses relate to the four branches of Salovey and Mayer's (1990) model of emotional intelligence (*identifying, using, understanding* and *managing emotions*), with the final response considered representative of an individual with low levels of emotional intelligence. The scale is concise, has good psychometric properties, has been used in related research (e.g. Penrose *et al*, 2007), and is the only published measure of emotional intelligence related specifically to teaching.

The staff were also asked to complete a version of the School as a Caring Community Profile (SCCP) (Battistich et al, 1995). This contains 44 items, assessing *positive relations among pupils*, *staff collegiality*, *supportiveness and accessibility of school leadership*, *parental support and involvement*, *positive pupil-teacher relations*, *stimulating learning environment*, *staff participation in decision making*, *shared goals and values*, and *openness to exploration*. Staff respond to statements about their school and rate their agreement on a four-point Likert scale. An example item is, "Pupils are very friendly with one another". As already mentioned, the SCCP has good internal consistency and face validity, in addition to having been used in related research (e.g. Battistich et al, 1995).

In addition to the RTS and SCCP, staff were also asked a series of bespoke questions designed to assess the degree of whole-school SEAL implementation.

3.5.4 Procedure

Data collection procedures were identical to those in the main quantitative impact evaluation (outlined in section 3.3.4). The only difference was in the timing of data collection. Each wave of data collection (Time 1, 2 and 3) was staggered so that it took place approximately 1-2 months after the equivalent wave in the main study. This was done in order to reduce the amount of data that case study schools were being asked to produce at any one time (and also reflected the fact that this aspect of the study was not commissioned until February 2008).

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECONDARY SEAL PROGRAMME

4.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter we present our analyses of data pertaining to the implementation of SEAL in our nine case study schools. As such, the content relates mainly to RQs 3, 4 and 5. The data analysed is almost exclusively qualitative in nature – with the exception of elements of the section on the adoption of a whole-school approach to the implementation of SEAL, which draw upon quantitative data collected as part of our additional quantitative measures in the case study schools, and the section on implementation of SEAL, which makes use of school-level quantitative impact data.

The chapter is divided into three major sections. The first of these deals with how SEAL is implemented in secondary schools and whether different models of implementation affect the level of impact upon pupils. The second section examines the extent to which secondary schools have adopted a whole-school approach to the implementation of SEAL. The final section presents barriers and facilitators to effective implementation of SEAL in secondary schools. Although these are presented as three distinct sections in the interests of clarity, the issues raised do inter-relate considerably (for example, certain barriers to implementation may have affected how schools chose to implement SEAL, and this of course impacts upon whether their model of implementation can be considered to be 'whole-school' in nature).

Throughout the text, references to data sources are presented in short hand in the interests of brevity. The following key outlines the acronyms used:

Data sources:

- FN = field notes
- DA = document analysis

Respondents (for interviews/focus groups):

- SL = SEAL Lead
- HT = Head Teacher
- AHT = Assistant Head Teacher
- TA = Teaching Assistant
- FT = form tutor
- LTS = Lunch Time Supervisor
- LM = Learning Mentor
- LA SL/BA = Local Authority SEAL Lead/Behaviour and Attendance consultant

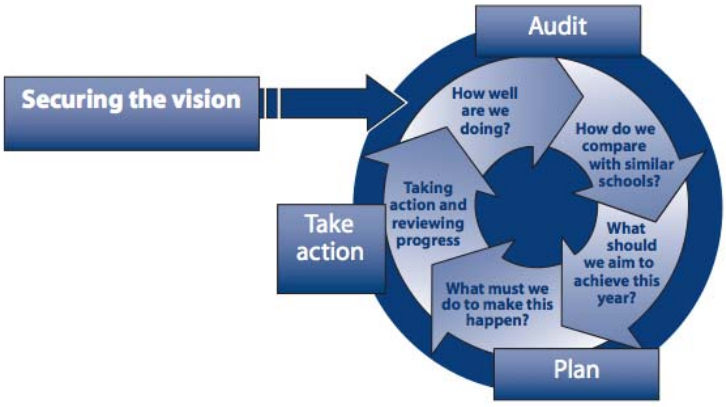
For all data references:

- V = Visit

4.2 Implementation of secondary SEAL

In this section we report on how our nine case study schools went about their implementation of secondary SEAL. Additionally, we also consider whether different models of implementation are related to the level of impact upon pupils in those schools. Inevitably, there is some degree of overlap between this and the next major subsection (section 4.3 – adoption of a whole-school approach to implementing secondary SEAL) and as such the reader is asked to consider both in relation to RQ3. The data used in this analysis is primarily qualitative in nature, although in certain subsections we also make use of aggregated quantitative impact data derived from our pupil ELAI and SDQ surveys (see next chapter).

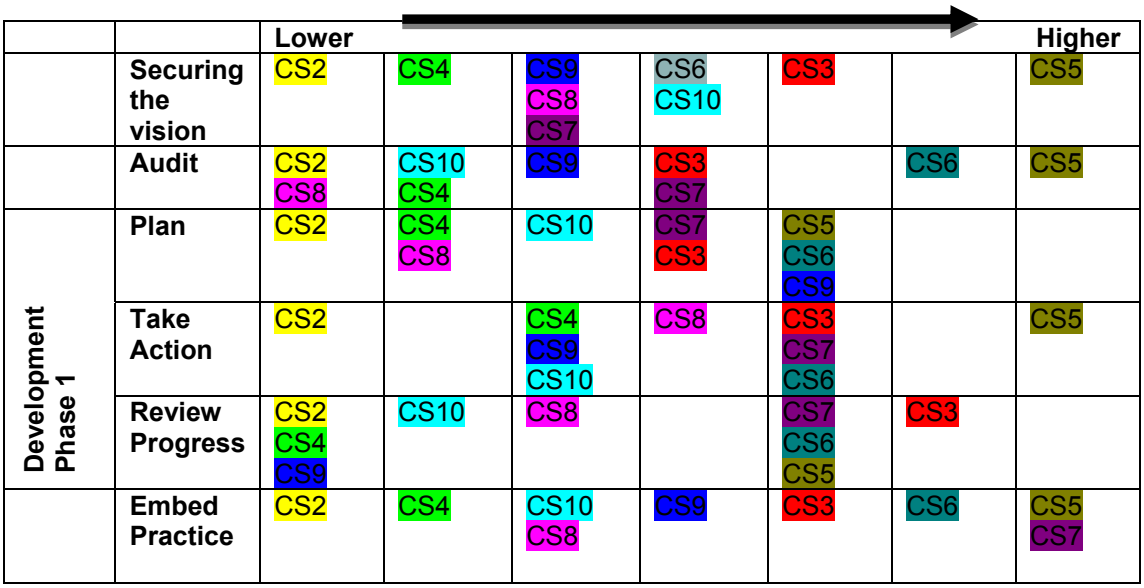
Figure 2. The school improvement cycle (taken from DCSF, 2007).



Analytical strategy

We assessed each school's progress against the school improvement cycle outlined in the secondary SEAL guidance (DCSF, 2007). This is outlined in Figure 2 above. The key elements of each stage of this process were used to frame our analysis. As such, our analytical technique can be described as *content analysis* (Mayring, 2004). Our approach involved exploring the data collected and extracting excerpts whose content contained information relevant to one or more of these broad categories. Based upon this process, a summative analysis of the progress of each school in each aspect of implementation was constructed 'blind' by the first author (Neil Humphrey), independently of the second and third authors (Ann Lendrum and Michael Wigelsworth). This summative analysis was then validated by the second and third authors. This process was undertaken in order to ensure that conclusions drawn were less influenced by subjective impressions and experiences within each school. The summative analysis is presented in Figure 3. In terms of models of implementation, it is possible to identify certain clusters of schools at both the higher (CS5, CS6, CS3) and lower (CS2, CS4) ends of the implementation progress spectrum, with other individual schools presenting a more inconsistent picture (e.g. CS8, CS10). This clustering approach allows us to consider the extent to which implementation approaches influence the impact of SEAL upon pupil outcomes (see section 4.2.5).

Figure 3. Case study schools' progress in SEAL implementation – a summative analysis.



It should be noted that the above model is intended to be relative rather than absolute. That is, each school's placement on the various aspects of the school improvement cycle is intended to give an indication of their progress relative to the other schools in the sample rather than as an indication of achieving a set milestone. So, for example, CS5's position in the 'take action' category is intended to indicate that we felt that they had taken more action than the other eight case study schools, and not that they had taken all of the action that could be taken in implementing SEAL (or, indeed, that they had somehow 'finished' this aspect of school improvement).

4.2.1 Securing the vision

Other relevant sections:

- *4.3.1 Leadership, management and managing change*

This initial phase of the implementation process involves developing a shared understanding and vision of (i) why social and emotional skills are important for all members of the school community, and (ii) how these can be developed across the school (DCSF, 2007). We explored this by asking respondents in our case study schools about their expectations in relation to secondary SEAL. This allowed us to assess the convergences and divergences in terms of expected implementation outcomes. As SEAL was designed to be flexible and adaptable to individual schools' needs, we expected a high degree of variability *between* schools (since each might have different reasons for beginning implementation and varying expectations in terms of preferred outcomes). It was anticipated, however, that there should be some convergence of views *within* schools if a shared vision and understanding of SEAL was being effectively promoted.

Before discussing the extent to which a shared vision for SEAL was effectively secured in the case study schools, it is worth spending some time considering

how schools went about facilitating this vision. Although in many schools the vision for SEAL emerged 'implicitly', in some cases explicit efforts were made to ensure that all staff contributed to this vision. CS10 provides an interesting example here. During an early staff INSET day, the SEAL working group decided that the best way to facilitate a shared vision of SEAL was for staff to collectively decide what they wanted to achieve through implementation. This was done by small groups developing a picture of a 'model student'. Most staff contributed to the idea and agreed on the same desired outcomes. Discussion then turned to the importance of staff, and a suggestion was made that the same exercise be repeated for a model member of staff (CS10, FN, V1).

Analysis of expectations for SEAL revealed three key themes – changes at the pupil-level, changes at the staff level, and changes at the school level. At the pupil-level, expectations included changes in clear, tangible variables such as improved attendance, fewer exclusions, and improved attainment. Additionally, changes relating to social and emotional skills were outlined, both explicitly (e.g. "I want the pupils to be motivated to do the best for themselves" (CS7, SL, V1)) and implicitly (e.g. "That's one of my hopes – that in three years time we are seeing a little bit more consideration to others" (CS4, HT, V1)). Finally, references were made to other psycho-social outcomes such as improved confidence and self-esteem, better behaviour, more emotional resilience, more positive attitudes and attachment to school, and so on.

At the staff level, expectations included improved social and emotional skills, changes in approaches to teaching, better management of pupil behaviour, increased communication and relationships with other members of staff, and increased job satisfaction, enjoyment, morale and attendance. Finally, at the school level, many staff spoke about enhancing the existing ethos of the school (e.g. "I think the vision is to build upon what we have at the moment" (CS4, SL, V1)), the development of a more positive climate and working environment, more positive relationships throughout the school, and increased sense of well-being (e.g. "Happy staff and happy children… because the right atmosphere pervades the school" (CS4, SL, V1)).

Two key patterns were noticeable as we analysed this data. Firstly, the sheer range of expectations was extremely wide, certainly going beyond the nine outcomes explicitly referenced in the secondary SEAL guidance (DCSF, 2007, p.8-9). Secondly, there was almost as much variability *within* schools as there was *between* schools. As such, it can be concluded that in most cases there was a limited shared understanding and vision for SEAL. Closer examination of contrasting cases may help to demonstrate why this is the case. In CS5, who had perhaps the strongest shared vision for SEAL (in terms of congruence), the school had a long history of development in this area, having been involved in the SEBS pilot as well as a number of other related initiatives. The SEAL lead in CS5 was also part of the school's management team. SEAL was seen as the next natural step for a school already working towards a set of common goals. Different members of the school community expressed remarkably similar expectations as a result:

"Learning to work together" (CS5, Teacher, V2)

"[SEAL] helps you work together" (CS5, Pupil, V2)

"It makes people listen and take other people's feelings into consideration" (CS5, TA, V2)

By contrast, in CS9 there was evidence of a more fragmented vision for SEAL. This school is larger than most and communication between different departments and staff morale had been acknowledged as issues affecting general progress. Most expectations cited in this school were focused at the pupil-level, but perhaps importantly, there were no shared expectations between the head teacher and SEAL lead (or, indeed, the head teacher and LA behaviour and attendance consultant).

This variation in understanding of and vision for SEAL within and between schools is a key finding that has important implications for notions of what a 'SEAL school' constitutes (see Chapter 1), and in particular how this relates to implementation activity and subsequent impact (or lack thereof). Put simply, there is *prima facie* evidence that some schools did not begin implementation with a clear understanding of what they were hoping to achieve through SEAL. The natural next steps – which include auditing their practice, taking action, and so on, are inevitably hindered. If this kind of difficulty was present across schools beyond our case study sample (e.g. in the quantitative impact sample), then a lack of change on measured variables might well be predicted.

4.2.2 Auditing existing practice

Other relevant sections:

- *4.3.9 Assessing, recording and reporting feedback*

The SEAL school improvement cycle encourages schools to audit their existing practice at the beginning of implementation and then to routinely monitor and evaluate progress. Indeed, a bespoke guidance document (DCSF, 2007a) was produced to help schools with this process. In this section we consider the extent to which schools actively engaged in establishing a baseline in terms of existing practice and school climate, and staff/pupil social and emotional skills. We also explore how schools compared their practice with other schools.

As discussed in more detail in section 4.3.9, this element of implementation was naturally tempered by the fact that our case study schools were involved in a national evaluation that provided bespoke data that was directly relevant to much of the above. As such, they may have been less inclined to engage in local auditing and evaluation, and the reader is asked to bear this in mind when considering the findings of this section. In terms of auditing existing practice, most schools completed SEAL self evaluation forms (SEF), although in a minority (e.g. CS2) this was seen as a formality rather than an exercise that could inform implementation. In these cases, the accuracy of conclusions

drawn were therefore questionable (for instance, the SEAL SEF for CS2 painted a very different picture to that which our research team experienced).

Some schools (e.g. CS5) were able to demonstrate clear evidence of having actively considered what processes and practices were in place across the school prior to implementation. Others (e.g. CS7, CS9) provided some evidence that audits had taken place, but in limited fields of activity (such as specific subject departments – e.g. the geography department in CS7 had audited their existing provision when asked to identify how SEAL could be integrated into their curriculum – CS7, Teacher, V2)). Where there was limited or no clear evidence of existing practice audits having taken place (e.g. CS2), this often reflected a general approach to implementation: "We ran at it very quickly" (CS8, SL, V1).

There was generally a higher degree of activity in relation to auditing pupil social and emotional skills. This was perhaps a reflection of the relative ease of collecting such data from classes and year groups using established questionnaires (although the scoring and interpretation of these is a separate matter). In addition to the pupil measures completed as part of the national evaluation, some schools also implemented other surveys, including the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey (PASS – W3 Insights, 2010) (e.g. CS8, CS9), and other, bespoke methods of assessment (e.g. pupils in CS3 periodically completed a 'feelings checklist' which was analysed for patterns; CS6 were also involved in the UK Resilience project and were able to tie in mental health data from the national evaluation of that programme as part of their SEAL pupil audit). In some cases, such audits were put to clear use: "Our involvement with University of Manchester SEAL evaluation project revealed a deficiency in empathy, motivation and social skills. These are the main focus of green cards issued weekly as a whole-school SEAL focus" (CS10, DA, V5).

At the staff level, there was consistently less evidence of any kind of baseline audit. Even the measures implemented as part of the national evaluation described in this report yielded an extremely low response rate (see section 5.3). Indeed, only CS5 provided evidence of having engaged in any kind of formal staff audit, although a cross-section of staff in CS9 were consulted about their attitudes to SEAL (CS9, HT, V1). This major gap may be explained in a number of ways. Firstly, it may reflect other issues relating to staff involvement, buy-in and attitudes towards SEAL (see section 4.4). Secondly, it may reflect the lack of availability of suitable measures of staff social and emotional skills (for instance, none of the measures provided in the *Tools for monitoring, profiling and evaluation* guidance document (DCSF, 2007a) relate to staff social and emotional skills). Finally, it may simply be a pragmatic issue of time, in that schools felt uneasy about pressuring staff to participate in audits of their own social and emotional skills in addition to other tasks relating to implementation.

4.2.3 Plan, take action, and review progress

Other relevant sections

- *4.3.2 Policy development*
- *4.3.3 Curriculum planning and resourcing*
- *4.3.5 Giving pupils a voice*
- *4.3.7 Staff CPD, health and welfare*
- *4.3.8 Partnerships with parents, carers and the wider community*
- *4.3.10 School culture and environment*

Schools' progress in the development of secondary SEAL implementation can perhaps be best assessed by contrasting cases from across our sample. In terms of *planning*, CS2, CS6 and CS9 provide insights into what kind of plans were put into place for SEAL implementation and the time period they covered. CS2 provide our 'baseline' as there was very little evidence presented of any kind of written implementation plan and/or timetable in the first year of our fieldwork visits. This was followed up in later visits, at which the plan had still yet to be produced (e.g. "No evidence of action plan at working party meeting" (CS2, FN, V3)). It is worth noting at this point that CS2 produced a very fragmented vision for SEAL, and did little in the way of a baseline audit; both of these factors would obviously have contributed significantly to formal implementation plans. The 'knock-on' effect of this was that it was difficult for the SEAL lead to effectively monitor what was happening with regard to implementation and what effect it was having. As such, essential components began to erode – for instance, by our third visit SEAL lessons had been abandoned and there was no ongoing SEAL CPD for staff. This problem is neatly summarized by the SEAL lead in CS10: "I think if you're not definite about how long it's going to take and what you want, it can very easily just drift" (CS10, FT, V1).

By contrast, CS6 produced an action plan for SEAL implementation which prioritized different activities that were to be undertaken: "1. Embedding SEAL within the pastoral system; 2. SEAL awareness for all staff; 3. SEAL across the curriculum; 4. SEAL awareness for pupils; 5. Introduce SEAL to parents and governors; and 6. SEAL training for non-teaching staff" (CS6, DA, V1). Progress in undertaking the actions outlined in this plan was monitored by the SEAL working group through collection of bespoke data (for instance, verbal feedback was sought from form tutors on pupils' responses to the introduction of SEAL). Likewise, CS9 developed an action plan that outlined their intended activities (e.g. "Developing the EI of staff" (CS9, DA, V2)) and ways in which they intended to monitor implementation (e.g. through lesson observations (CS9, SL, V2) and the use of the PASS survey – (CS9, HT, V1)).

In terms of *taking action*, CS3 provide a useful example of a school in which a broad range of activities was undertaken. At the policy level, SEAL-related objectives were included in both the support department's development plan (e.g. "Extend SEAL ethos and embed to whole-school practice; Promote understanding of SEAL within the community" (CS3, DA, V3)) and the overall school development plan (e.g. "Promote positive mental health and well-being as part of healthy schools; Launch whole-school approach to delivery of

SEAL" (CS3, DA, V3)) by our third visit. In terms of staff CPD, opportunities for staff to observe SEAL lessons and have their own classes assessed against SEAL objectives were offered, in addition to initial and follow-up SEAL INSET days. SEAL objectives became part of lesson planning in trial subjects, alongside implicit use of key themes (such as empathy) and explicit modelling of behaviour by key members of staff. Other examples of actions taken in this regard included the use of emotional vocabulary cards in an arts class and routine 'feelings checks' for pupils involved in withdrawal sessions in the school's inclusion centre.

Finally, in terms of *reviewing progress*, the approach taken by CS6 gives a clear indication of the value of schools reflecting on their achievements and setbacks at key points in time during implementation. This school – as outlined above – had a clear set of plans to work from and from which to review their progress. From the outset they had opted to use pupil responses/feedback as a key medium, but had also made use of other techniques. For instance, the SEAL SEF[11] was repeated on an annual basis, with a basic colour coding system (green – done, amber – in process, red – to do) to highlight where progress had been made or area to target for future development. The SEAL lead had also made sure that the various SEAL teaching and learning resources were actively reviewed, rather than just passively delivered: "We've also been reflecting on how some of the exercises that we used were implemented and how well they went and if they worked out or not" (CS6, FT, V2). Such activities enabled staff in CS6 to consider what action was needed in future in order for implementation to proceed as planned (or, indeed, if plans needed to be adapted).

4.2.4 Embedding practice

Other relevant sections:

- *4.3.2 Policy development*
- *4.3.3 Curriculum planning and resourcing*
- *4.3.7 Teaching and learning*

As SEAL becomes embedded across schools, the school improvement cycle guidance suggests that there will be evidence of a continued process of review and development (including the inclusion of SEAL within the general review cycle within the school), continuous staff development, embedding throughout the curriculum, evidence of discrete SEAL lessons and assemblies, and further policy amendment. At this stage, SEAL may effectively 'disappear' (in the sense of it being considered an entity or programme in of itself) as it becomes infused in the natural life of the school.

CS5 provide the most potent example of the embedding of practice in relation to SEAL. By the end of our fieldwork, SEAL had become subsumed within 'PLEATS' (Personalised Learning, Emotional and Thinking Skills), an approach which incorporated social and emotional skills development with work around personalized learning. This approach was embedded throughout

[11] NB: Although the SEAL SEF is no longer in use, it was during our fieldwork.

the school, PLEATS objectives included in all lesson plans, and pupils in Key Stage 3 following two PLEATS targets per term. Our lesson observations confirmed that these objectives were being addressed explicitly. Additionally, PLEATS materials were displayed in key areas across the school, and the approach was part of the agenda for meetings of the school's teaching and learning group. Although there was no evidence of future staff training in relation to SEAL, this was most likely the case because the term had ceased to be used by our final visits.

Despite the fact that most other schools had not reached this level of embedding practice, there was some evidence that they were beginning to do this towards the end of our fieldwork: "It's more integrated. So we've had two years of [SEAL] being a discrete one [and] we actually feel we're in a position now to have it incorporated" (CS8, SL, V5). Exceptions to this trend included CS2 and CS4, where there was limited or no evidence of timescales to review SEAL developments, and no evidence that SEAL was included in the general school review cycles. Although CS4 did demonstrate some evidence of SEAL being embedded in classroom practice (for example – the provision of SEAL lessons for Years 7 and 8 on a fortnightly basis (CS4, DA, V4), neither school developed their policy documentation to include SEAL-related objectives and neither provided ongoing CPD for staff.

4.2.5 Models of implementation and their impact upon pupil outcomes

As outlined earlier in this chapter, we were able to examine the impact of secondary SEAL in individual case study schools by exploring the quantitative data provided by their pupils that contributed to the overall impact analysis outlined in the next chapter. In doing so, we are able to determine whether the approaches taken to (and progress in) implementation (see Figure 3 above) are related to differential levels of impact on pupils' social and emotional skills, mental health difficulties, behaviour problems, and pro-social behaviour.

Figures 4 to 7 present pupil data at Time 3 aggregated to the individual school level (that is, an average score for each school). In these 'residuals charts' SEAL schools are denoted by inverted black triangles and comparison schools are denoted by upright black triangles. Each individual case study school is also clearly marked as white triangles and labelled (NB: as CS2 did not return pupil questionnaires at Time 3, they are not highlighted). The 'whiskers' above and below each school represent 95% confidence intervals – these are estimates of the range within which the sample mean resides. The horizontal line in each chart is the 'zero residual' (or grand centred mean), which is the expected average of all of the schools. A 'SEAL effect' would be evident if we saw a clustering of inverted triangles above (or in the case of SDQ total difficulties and SDQ behaviour problems, below) the zero residual. In fact, what is actually seen is a more or less random distribution of SEAL and comparison schools above, on and below the zero residual. Indeed, there are only six cases (two schools for the ELAI; one school for the SDQ total difficulties; two schools for the SDQ pro-social; and one school for the SDQ behaviour problems) across the whole series of residuals charts where

school scores are outside the expected range (that is, where upper or lower confidence intervals do not overlap the zero residual line). This is indicative of a lack of variation at school level, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this report. In terms of models of implementation and their relation to impact on pupil outcomes, there appears to be no clear pattern. This suggests that different approaches to and progress in implementing SEAL have not yielded differential outcomes.

Figure 4. Residual Time 3 ELAI scores ranked by school (α = 0.05).

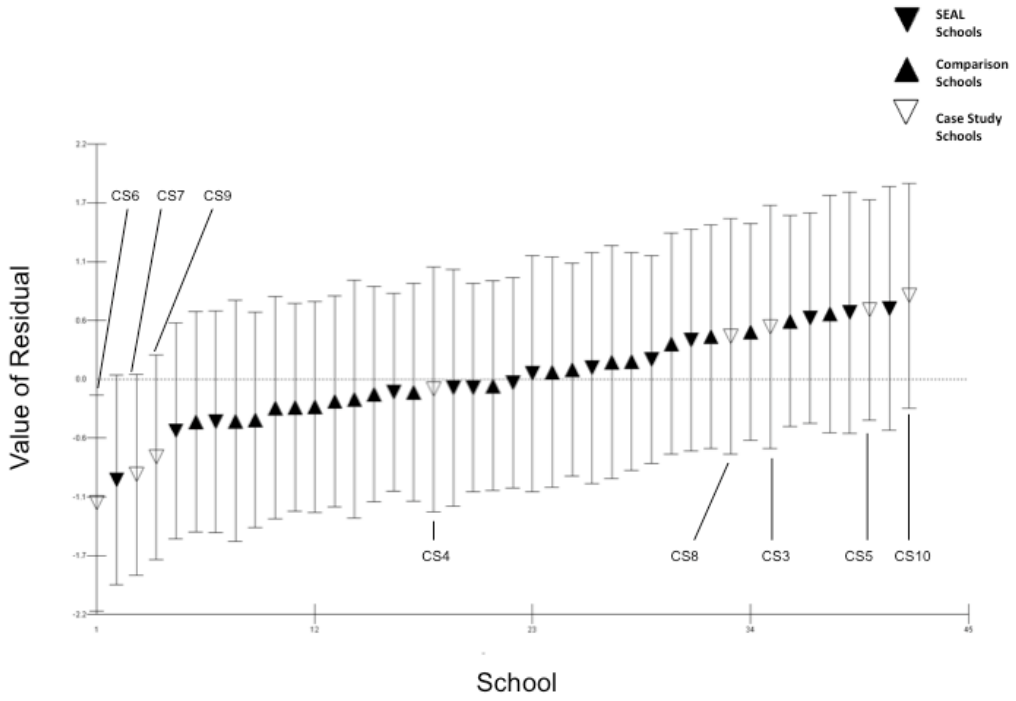


Figure 5. Residual Time 3 SDQ total difficulties scores ranked by school (α = 0.05).

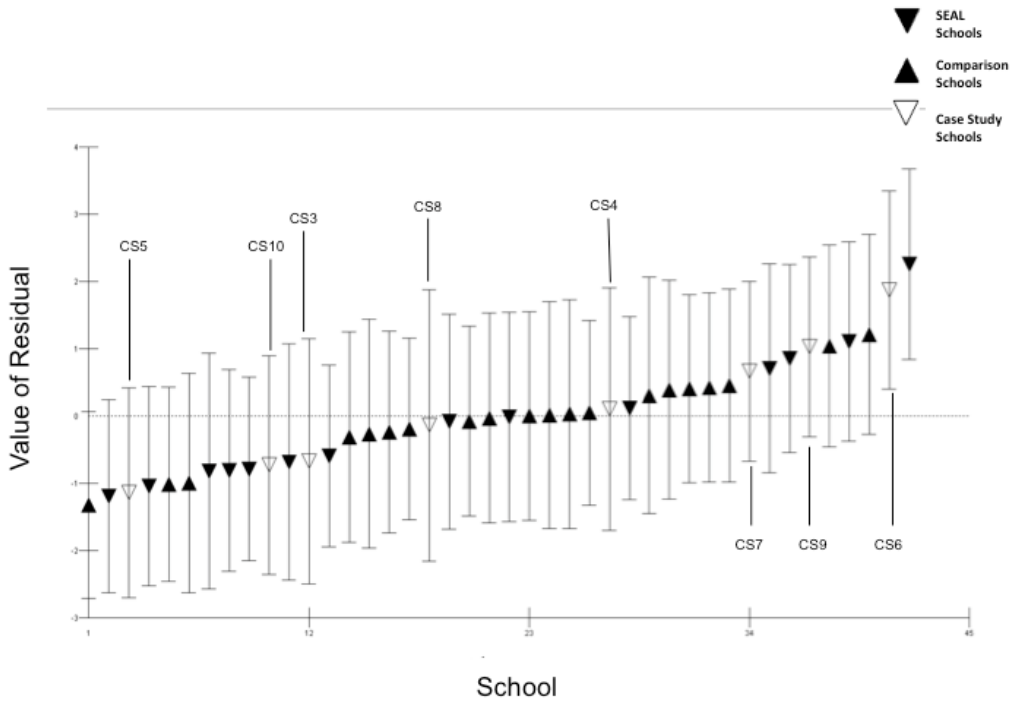


Figure 6. Residual Time 3 SDQ pro-social behaviour scores ranked by school (α = 0.05).

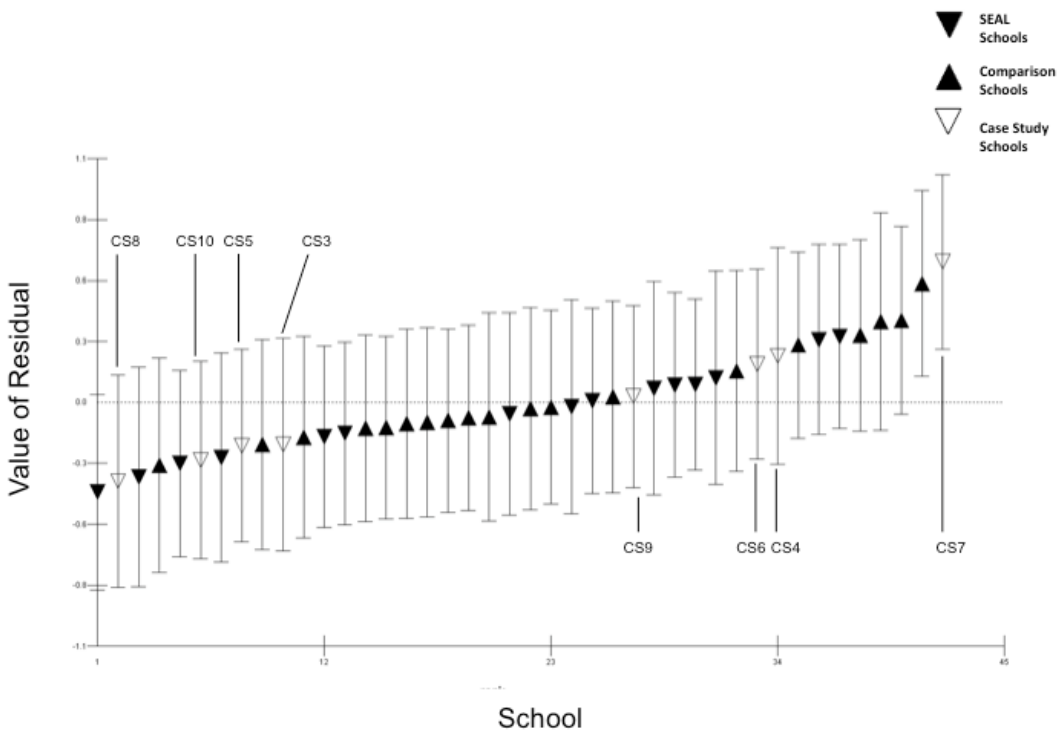
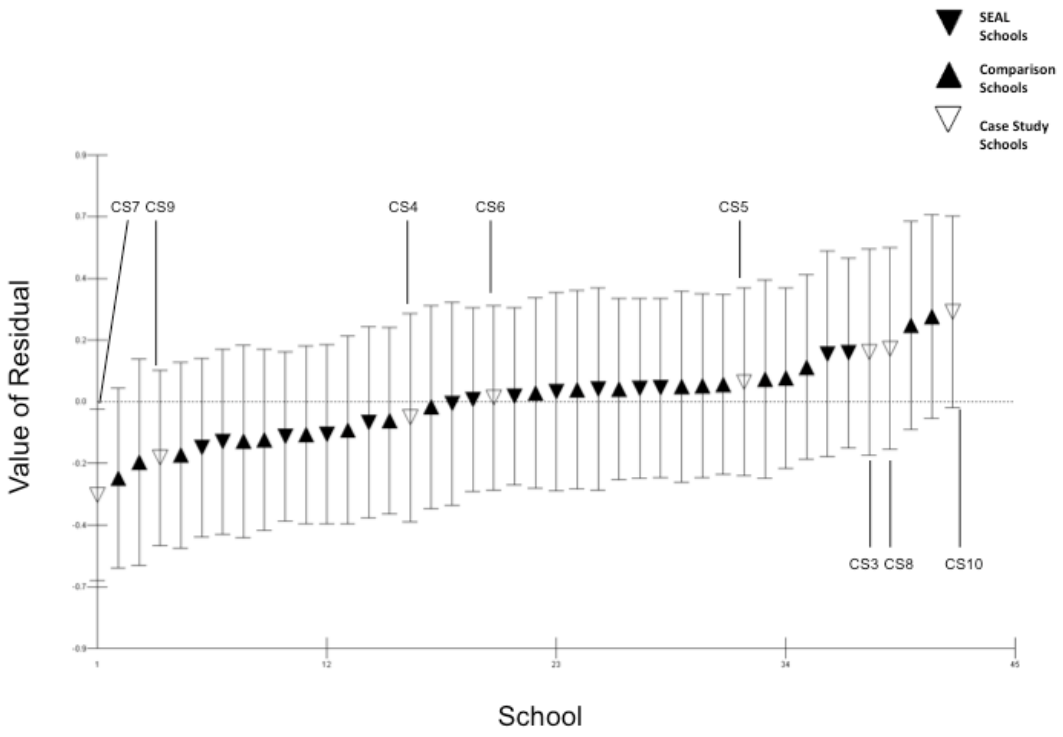


Figure 7. Residual Time 3 SDQ behaviour problems scores ranked by school (α = 0.05).



4.2.6 SEAL implementation analysis summary

Our analysis of case study schools' approaches to and progress in SEAL implementation revealed a very mixed picture. Schools such as CS5, CS6 and CS3 made comparatively good progress in implementation, and were able to provide clear evidence of engagement in the suggested school improvement cycle. However, schools like CS2, CS4 and CS10 made comparatively little progress over the same period of time. Our subjective impressions of these schools and analysis of other relevant data (see major subsections 4.3 and 4.4) suggest that a whole range of issues were influential in determining these differences – including a somewhat superficial approach to implementation ('box ticking') and a failure to sustain initial activity levels in the latter schools. However, our analysis of impact data (see previous section) revealed that these differences made little difference to outcomes for pupils, with very little variation evident between schools.

4.3 Adoption of a whole-school approach to implementing secondary SEAL

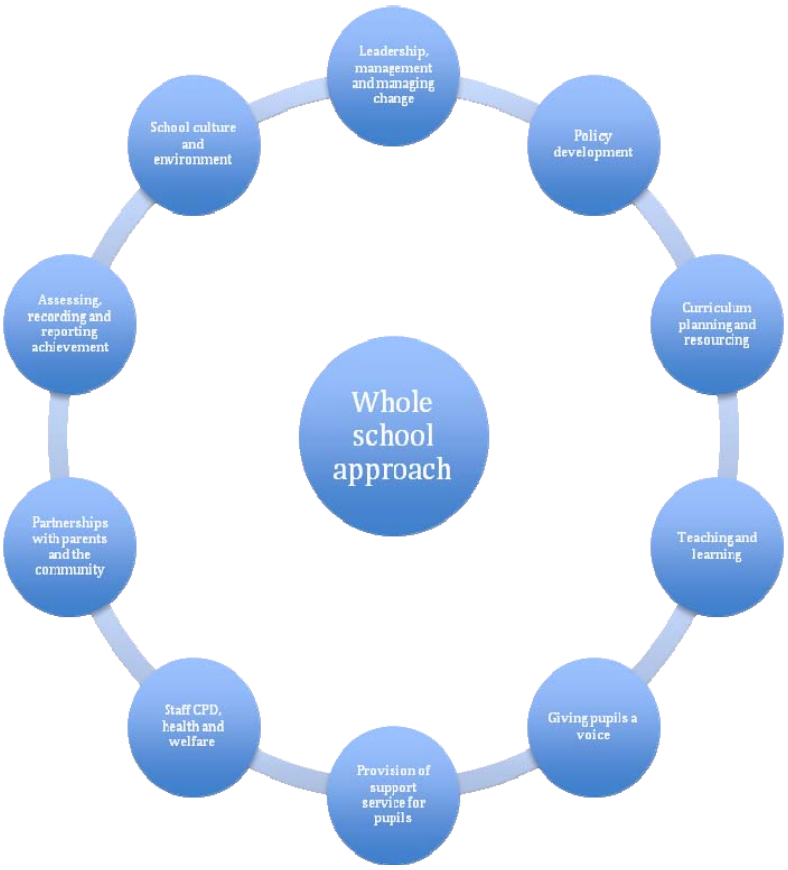
The aim of this section is to provide evidence of the extent to which a whole-school approach to implementing secondary SEAL was adopted in our nine longitudinal case study schools. Inevitably, there is some degree of overlap with the previous section (4.2 Implementation of secondary SEAL). The data used in this analysis is primarily qualitative in nature, although in certain subsections we also make use of quantitative data derived from our additional measures collected in the schools.

Analytical strategy

All data were collated in NVivo 7/8, qualitative analysis software. We have organised our data around the 10 elements of the National Healthy Schools Programme whole-school development framework (DOH/DCSF, 2007) since SEAL is intended to be a whole-school initiative and this framework will be familiar to schools. As this is an existing framework, it is possible to characterise our analytical strategy as *content analysis* (Mayring, 2004). Our approach to analysis involved exploring the data collected and extracting excerpts whose content related to one or more of the 10 categories. Unlike other content analyses conducted as part of this research project (see, for example, section 4.4 below), we did not attempt to revise the categories during the analysis. This was in light of the fact that the 10 elements of the NHSP framework are a fixed and agreed set of standards for what constitutes a whole-school approach – modification was therefore not necessary.

The elements of a whole-school approach are outlined in Figure 8. Below we present evidence for each in turn, and highlight convergences and divergences between schools.

Figure 8. Elements of a whole-school approach (taken from DOH/DCSF, 2007).



4.3.1 Leadership, management and managing change

> *"Leadership and management have a key role to play in driving SEAL forward" (DCSF, 2007, p.25)*

The importance of this element of whole-school development of SEAL is underscored by its appearance as a crucial factor affecting successful implementation in the section on barriers and facilitators that follows this analysis (see section 4.4.3). That SEAL needed to be seen as a school priority embraced by the head teacher and/or school management team was a given in the eyes of most schools: "It needs to be absolutely from the top otherwise its just not going to work" (CS10, Teacher, V1). In particular, the head teacher's role in securing the vision for SEAL within the school was fundamental:

"The people at the top need to know what they want from it really, what they're expecting… because otherwise its just going to be me standing up in front there. With the best will in the world, no-one's going to take a lot of notice" (CS10, Teacher, V1)

"None of this is going to work if the head teacher doesn't secure a vision and actually get it out there to all the staff… and make it as important to all the staff and all the children that this is a SEAL school. If the head isn't saying it

and making sure that everybody goes with it, it's…not going to happen" (CS2, SL, V3)

As seen in the previous section on implementation (see section 4.2), schools were typically rather inconsistent in their vision for SEAL, with a broad range of expectations expressed by key members of staff. In particular, there were often clear divergences between the head teachers' and SEAL leads' understanding of SEAL and how it would be implemented. This may reflect a combination of the way in which SEAL implementation was being led and the wide range of outcomes specified in the guidance materials (DCSF, 2007). Subsequently, implementation potentially suffered as the change management process proved to be more difficult than anticipated: "Its not being carried forward probably as well as it should have been" (CS2, SL, V3).

In the main school leaders were very supportive of SEAL principles but often 'took a step back' following initial launch-related activities and delegated change management duties directly to SEAL leads. This raises an important issue about the consistency of leadership support for SEAL that is discussed in more detail in section 4.4.3. The LA SEAL co-coordinator in CS7 neatly summarizes the problem faced by many schools: "That was the difficulty – getting the senior leaders. They were all for the idea, but then delegating and the difficulty was getting them to see that they had a key role in this" (CS7, LA SL/BA, V2). Where school leaders did maintain their involvement in implementation, the benefits were clearly recognized: "The difficulty when you are the head is that you've got somebody who is doing the work and… you trust that they're getting on with it and… you do meddle form time to time… but it gave me an understanding of what it was really about, so I found it quite useful really. I came back quite enthused" (CS8, HT, V1). A good example of this 'hands-on' approach can be seen in the involvement of the head teacher in CS9:

"Head teacher takes a hands-on approach – takes assembly every day with different year group (over 2-week period). This includes introduction of SEAL theme, which is changed every 3 weeks… SEAL lead told head teacher that teachers had agreed to include objectives in schemes of work although he wasn't sure if they were actually being met in lessons. Head teacher decided that they (suggesting himself and SEAL lead) should observe the lessons… looking for SEAL objectives (CS9, FN, V3)

4.3.2 Policy development

> *"Existing policies are reviewed in consultation with the whole-school community" (DCSF, 2007, p.32)*

This was the area in which the evidence was consistently rather 'patchy' across the nine case study schools. Expected activity (derived from the SEAL guidance) would include the inclusion of SEAL aims and objectives in the School Development/Improvement Plan, and/or provision of a stand alone SEAL policy (or integration into all other policies), underpinned by a process of policy development that supports SEAL principles. However, analysis of

documentation provided by schools suggested that this was often not undertaken: "No mention of SEAL in any policy documentation" (CS2, FN, V2). Rather, schools reported *intending* to review policy at unspecified future dates (e.g. CS6), or simply provided no evidence that any policy development had taken place, even during later visits (e.g. CS2, CS4). In one school, there was evidence that the SEAL lead did not know what activity had taken place in this area. When asked if SEAL was included in the school development plan, he replied: "I'm not sure, it should be, it should be. The school development plan is written after the departmental development plan… that's done around this time, so I'm not sure… it might just be… yeah" (CS9, SL, V3). Interestingly, at our next visit to this school (V4) the SEAL lead confirmed that policy documents had been updated, perhaps prompted by our original questions. Indeed, it was typically the case that any developments or amendments to policy documentation took place towards the end of our fieldwork (e.g. two full years after the beginning of implementation).

By contrast, other schools provided clear evidence of the integration of SEAL aims, objectives and principles into policy documentation. In CS3, for instance, reference to SEAL was made in both the support department's development plan and the school development plan provided at V3. Likewise, in CS8, SEAL was amongst the priorities outlined in the revised development plan, also provided at V3. Finally, in CS7, SEAL reportedly pervaded all areas of policy and school documentation: "Whenever any new policies are coming up or policies are being rewritten, SEAL is being written into them. Its written into job descriptions now… and I think that really if its going to become the ethos, its got to come into those areas as well" (CS7, SL, V4).

This variability in policy development is striking and may reflect the level of school leadership input during implementation. As highlighted in the next section, having the support of the school management team appears to be a crucial lever in generating action: "Obviously I'm further down [the management chain] and it's a bit hard to move something when you're there" (CS3, SL, V3). Another possibility is that schools feel reluctant to continually update policy documents to take into account what they perceive to be the next in a continuous cycle of new initiatives: "SL is concerned about so many new initiatives coming in" (CS6, FN, V1). Related to this point, some schools also felt that their existing policies were in line with SEAL principles, meaning that explicit revision was not necessary: "Is this something new when we've been doing this for years?" (CS10, Acting SL, V2).

4.3.3 Curriculum planning and resourcing

> *"Subject teachers… [should] identify how their subject may contribute to developing social and emotional skills and incorporate SEAL learning objectives into their planning and teaching" (DCSF, 2007, p.41)*

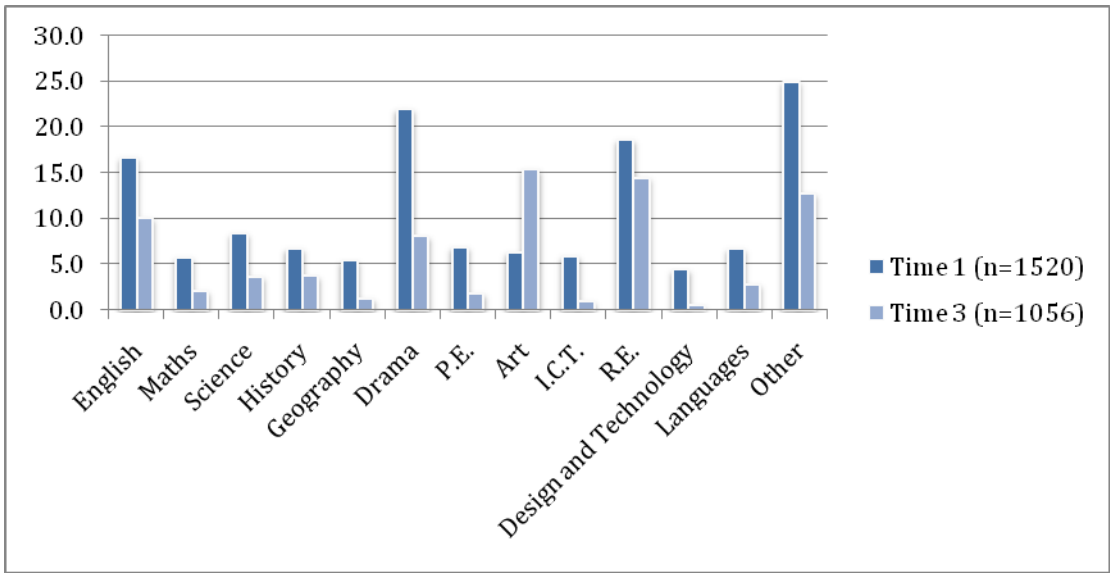
The secondary SEAL guidance provides schools with a range of ideas relating to how it may be promoted through the taught curriculum. In our case study visits we saw a very gradual integration of some of these ideas into the

practice of our nine schools. Examples of this include the adaptation of schemes of work to include SEAL, the addition of SEAL-related learning objectives in lessons, and implicit integration of SEAL throughout subjects (e.g. through particular themes). However, this varied greatly from school to school in terms of the range of curriculum subjects where integration was evident, the type of activity, and the range of year groups where this practice was explicitly evidenced. A further, more general concern was around the extent to which planned activity had actually been implemented in lessons: "What I could produce and show you would be… the whole of the Year seven schemes of work, areas of study for all the subjects and how they've fitted in and jigged things around to meet the themes that we're teaching in SEAL. The reality of that – I am honestly not sure if it is happening in reality" (CS8, SL, V3).

In relation to the range of curriculum subjects where integration was evident, SEAL was most consistently utilized in English, Drama and other subjects where the content and/or natural inclinations of subject teachers were more attuned to social and emotional learning. Conversely, more rationalist subjects, such as Maths and Science, typically yielded less evidence of integration (an issue that is discussed in relation to teacher attitudes in section 4.4.3). Where integration was evident, it was typically only seen in lessons in a particular year group (e.g. the cohort who started Year 7 at the beginning of our evaluation). Indeed, only CS5, CS7 and CS3 demonstrated consistent evidence of SEAL integration through a range of curriculum subjects across several year groups by our final visits.

It should be noted that we were inevitably only able to observe a limited number of lessons during our case study fieldwork. A more representative source of evidence is perhaps our set of additional quantitative measures. A useful proxy indicator of the extent to which SEAL was successfully integrated across the curriculum is the question, "In which classes do you get the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships?". The responses of pupils at Times 1 and 3 are shown in Figure 9. Several key patterns are evident. Firstly, with the exception of Art, there is a clear decline in the proportion of pupils reporting that they get the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships in the various curriculum subjects from Time 1 to Time 3. This perhaps reflects a general trend – discussed in other sections of this chapter – of a waning of SEAL-related activity after the initial excitement and energy associated with its launch. A second trend evident in Figure 9 is that our observations noted above - that SEAL appears to have been most readily integrated into subjects like English and Drama – are borne out by pupil reports. Finally, in terms of an overall trend, even subjects with the highest proportional responses (e.g. Drama) show that only around one in five pupils reported getting the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships.

Figure 9. Pupil responses to the additional measures question, "In which classes do you get the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships?" at Times 1 and 3.



The clear trends in both our quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to the integration of SEAL across the curriculum begs the question of why activity in this area was so erratic. One possible explanation – discussed in more detail in section 4.4.3, is that teachers feel that they do not have the necessary time to adapt or reconstruct their lessons to accommodate SEAL objectives: "I don't feel that we can have a SEAL objective for a lesson… there's just no way. You'd end up having about ten objectives on the board. It's got to be manageable" (CS8, Teacher, V5).

Despite the evidence of the integration of SEAL across the curriculum being patchy, there were nonetheless some clear examples of teachers skilfully weaving key objectives into the natural subject content of their lessons. Consider the following examples from CS6:

History lesson: Year seven. Learning objectives included: "To empathize with the villagers of Eyam; and "To understand my emotional reaction to situations". Lesson objectives on display included: "Use our empathy skills to understand how people react in different ways". Teacher objectives included: "To encourage pupils to use their empathy skills to gain a more in-depth understanding of the events in Eyam" (CS6, FN, V5)

There was a display on the back wall headed "British Empire in Africa" and subtitled 'Slavery and Empathy'. This consisted of printed descriptions of the feelings of slaves as they were being transported from Africa – 'I was very hot', 'I was scared' et cetera. The teacher later explained that Year nine pupils had been asked to keep a diary as though they were a slave being transported. They were instructed to highlight two key phrases from the diaries describing how they were feeling about the experience, which were typed and printed and then used to construct the display (CS6, FN, V5)

4.3.4 Teaching and learning

> *"Explicit learning and teaching have a vital role to play in the overall process of developing social and emotional skills" (DCSF, 2007, p.41)*

In addition to the integration of SEAL across the curriculum, the provision of discrete learning opportunities for pupils to learn social and emotional skills helps to reinforce the 'taught' element of the programme. As with other areas though, the extent to which this was implemented across our schools was much more varied and complex than we anticipated. Discrete opportunities for learning social and emotional skills were presented as regular or occasional 'SEAL lessons', regular or occasional specific learning opportunities within other lessons (e.g. PSHE), ad-hoc use of SEAL materials, SEAL assemblies, and SEAL-themed days or weeks. In a similar manner to the curriculum integration outlined above, the provision of these learning opportunities across year groups varied greatly. So, for example, CS6 supplemented regular SEAL learning opportunities with other lessons with occasional specific SEAL lessons, in addition to ad-hoc use of SEAL materials and SEAL assemblies – but only in a couple of year groups. By contrast, CS9 provided regular SEAL learning opportunities and held SEAL-themed assemblies, but this was done across several year groups.

The decision-making process relating to the provision of specific SEAL lessons provides an interesting case study of how differences in perception and understanding of the underpinning philosophy of SEAL influence how it is implemented. CS8 initially opted to implement SEAL as a discrete, timetabled lesson:

"So the students have had a SEAL lesson a week since September" (CS8, SL, V1)

"We have SEAL as a separate lesson… it can't be done as tacked onto something else. It can't be part of PSHE – it has to be a separate thing, definitely" (CS8, Teacher, V2)

This decision was not supported by the LA Behaviour and Attendance Consultant, who said: "They have made provision for one hour a week in their timetable to do SEAL which… if you're looking at the philosophy and any implementation and model for SEAL, that's exactly what you don't really want. You don't want it as a bolt-on. You don't want children learning about an aspect of self-awareness and self-control and then going down the corridor and meeting an adult who doesn't know that and doesn't realize what they're modelling or what they're trying to do. It just creates conflict" (CS8, LA SL/BA, V2)

In other schools, the decision was taken *not* to implement SEAL as a specific lesson:

"What we definitely don't want is to be a lesson… of SEAL because the… youngsters and the staff universally value least those subjects as they get older… We needed to have SEAL as something different than *'Here's an hour of SEAL'* – that would have just killed it to be honest" (CS9, HT, V1)

"We felt the more able pupils, as we have here, had the ability to absorb SEAL through the curriculum and through… whole-school displays which highlight it for them. Most of our pupils don't need things delivered on a platter for them" (CS7, SL, V3)

However, this view was not shared by all staff:

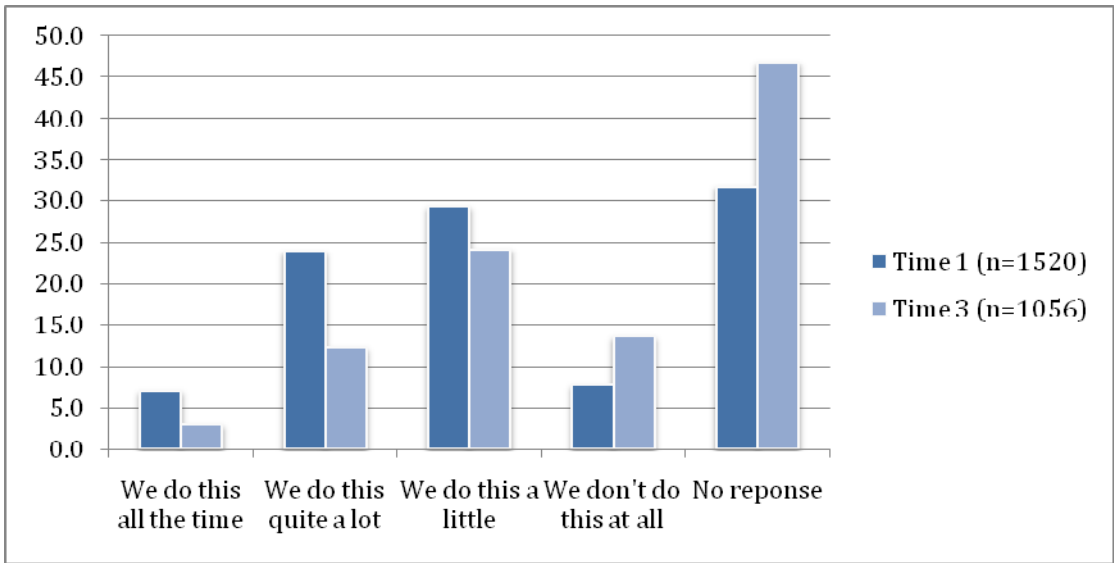
"The younger ones, with Year seven and eight… I'm not sure they'd pick up on everything if its cross-curricular. I think actually at the young age they need to be told.. more taught, 'This is what you're doing'" (CS7, Teacher, V2)

This apparent conflict of ideals led to changes in implementation over time in some schools. In CS10, for instance, specific SEAL lessons had been piloted for one Year 7 form from the outset, but by the time of our final visit this had been abandoned: "I don't like the idea of a SEAL lesson because that compartmentalises it and ultimately ruins it" (CS10, SL, V5).

Ultimately, despite there being conflict evident in relation to the notion of specific SEAL lessons, schools responded positively to the guidance and materials relating to the teaching and learning element of SEAL implementation. This is perhaps because it is amongst the most 'concrete' and 'tangible' aspect of the SEAL programme: "Sometimes I will look and think '*I can pretty much take that straight from there*'" (CS8, Teacher, V3).

One alternative strand of evidence in relation to SEAL learning opportunities is the additional measures question, "Do you get the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships in PSHE and tutor time?". Case study school pupils' responses to this question at Times 1 and 3 are displayed in Figure 10. Two trends are evident here. Firstly, only around 30% of pupils reported being given the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships all the time or a lot in PHSE and tutor time at Time 1. Secondly, proportionally less pupils reported being given the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships all the time, quite a lot, or a little from Time 1 to Time 3. The proportion of pupils reporting that they weren't able to do this at all rises from Time 1 to Time 3. As with other sections of our analysis, this seems to indicate that initial SEAL-related activity during the first year of implementation had begun to peter out somewhat by the end of our fieldwork with schools.

Figure 10. Pupil responses to the additional measures question, "Do you get the opportunity to talk about feelings and relationships in PHSE and tutor time?" at Times 1 and 3.



4.3.5 Giving pupils a voice

> *"When a school aims to develop social and emotional skills it is necessary [to involve] pupils fully in the decision to implement SEAL… [and] when reviewing policy and practice" (DCSF, 2007, p.27)*

Both staff and pupils across the nine case study schools (and in particular, CS10) provided clear evidence of pupil voice during our fieldwork visits, and acknowledged the important role it plays: "Making the students part of the process - so giving a student voice I think, very much that. It's about how we involve students as leaders of learning, rather than having a model that's…you know, they're receivers of our wisdom. They are a crucial part of the whole process, so if you get them on board, I think we're more than half way towards achieving our goals" (CS10, Teacher, V1). However, as with other areas it was not always clear how much of a voice pupils were given in relation to SEAL, as opposed to general matters relating to school development per se. In some cases, concrete examples were provided that related specifically to the SEAL initiative:

"The theme for this term is motivation, one of the five strands, and the Year 10 school council… we have a very active school council, it has a very active pupil voice, has already started to re-evaluate our reward scheme because they feel they're not motivated by it and this morning in fact, they produced an assembly where they presented a totally different, very new and vibrant reward system which they're now going to present to the school and all the staff. And this simply was started by the concept of motivation" (CS7, SL, V1)

"One citizenship lesson our teacher asked us what type of things we'd like" (CS7, Pupil, V5)

"We're also going to ask students to do detective walks, you know where they have a sheet with them during the day and not necessarily to spy on staff but make a journal for maybe a day or maybe a week of what SEAL's discussed during their lessons but they'll need training for that" (CS9, SL, V5)

"Pupil feedback forms used through Y7-9 on SEAL theme" (CS7, FN, V4)

"Student Voice groups have been consulted on the Attendance Policy and Behaviour Policy, providing views which have influenced decisions on numerous areas, e.g. lunchtime activities and anti-bullying systems" (CS10, DA, V5)

Other evidence provided relating to pupil voice did not make reference to or directly 'correlate' with SEAL aims and principles. For example, most students in our focus groups talked about school councils as a means of giving pupils a voice, although the content of this discussion typically focused on things like what sports could be played at school, ways to make school more environmentally friendly, the school's uniform policy and so on. That said, it could be argued that it is the use of pupil voice, and not specifically the use of pupil voice in relation to SEAL *per se*, that is the fulcrum. If pupils feel that they have a voice in the school, and that their concerns are listened to and acted upon, they will (theoretically) develop a greater attachment to school – which of course is well in line with SEAL aims and principles.

Our additional quantitative measures in case study schools provided further, more representative evidence in relation to the involvement of pupils in SEAL implementation and the extent to which this changed over time. Pupils' basic awareness of SEAL was assessed by asking, "Do you know what SEAL is?" (this was followed up with an open-ended prompt to check understanding), and also, "Do you know that your school is involved in the SEAL programme?". As can be seen in Figure 11, pupils' knowledge of SEAL remained stable over time. Those claiming to be really sure (around 22%) and not sure (around 25%) did not fluctuate from Time 1 to Time 3. Although the proportion of pupils reporting that they had no idea about SEAL decreased during this period, an upward shift in the number recording no response was also observed. Likewise, as can be seen in Figure 12, pupil's knowledge of their schools' involvement in the SEAL programme remained relatively stable – with around 41% of pupils answering in the affirmative. Although the proportion of pupils claiming not to know that their school was involved decreased from Time 1 to Time 3, those providing no response increased in tandem.

Figure 11. Pupil responses to the additional measures question, "Do you know what SEAL is?" at Times 1 and 3.

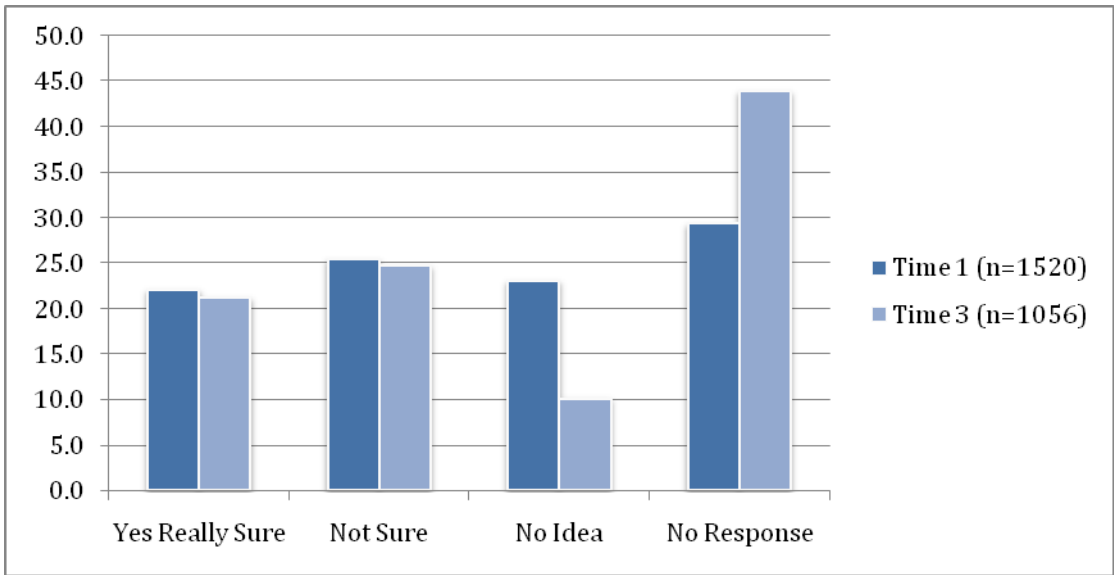
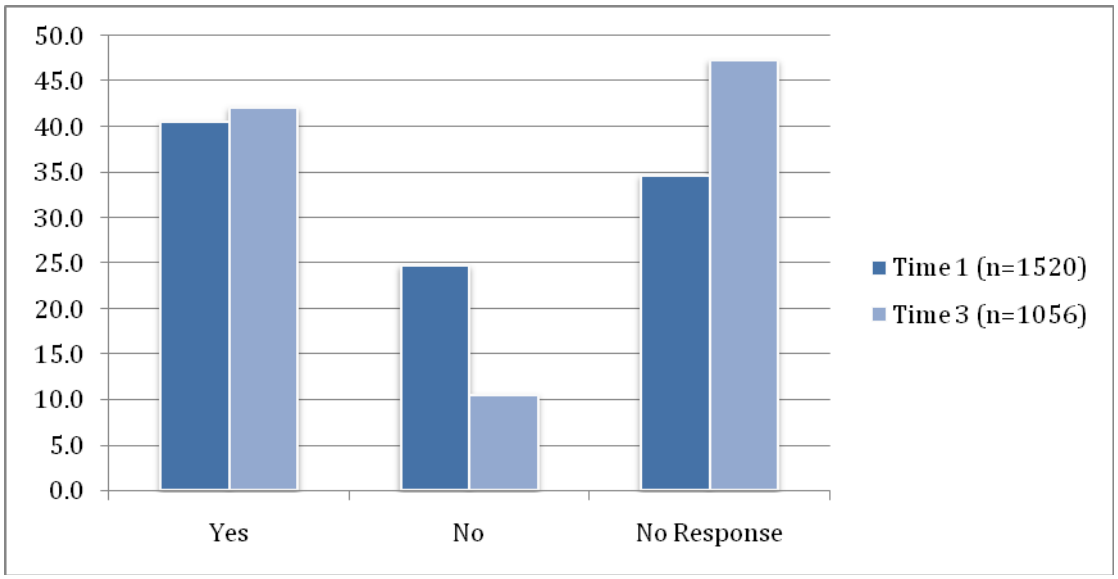
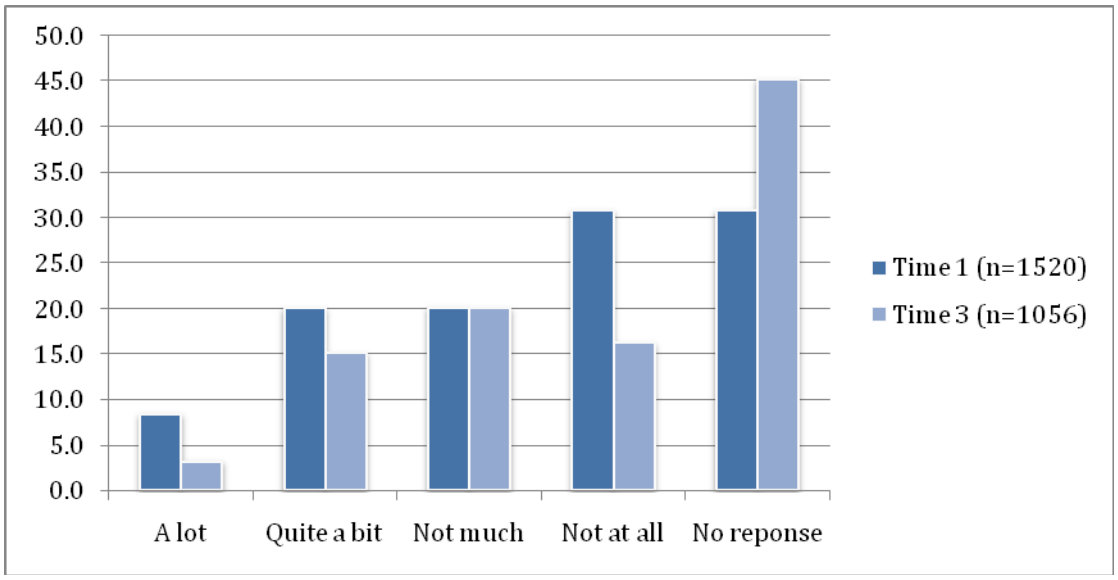


Figure 12. Pupil responses to the question, "Do you know that your school is involved in the SEAL programme?" at Times 1 and 3.



Perhaps the most crucial additional measures question asked in terms of pupil voice was, "How much have you and other pupils been involved in SEAL?". As can be seen in Figure 13, the proportion of pupils answering either 'A lot' or 'Quite a bit' drops from 28.5% at Time 1 to 18.4% at Time 3, suggesting that pupils were perhaps initially consulted about SEAL but that their involvement was not sustained over time.

Figure 13. Pupil responses to the question, "How much have you and other pupils been involved in SEAL?" at Times 1 and 3.



4.3.6 Provision of support services for pupils

> *"Interventions for pupils who find it hard to learn social and emotional skills or who have particular needs are likely to be one element of a school's approach to SEAL" (DCSF, 2007, p.49)*

The National Strategies' 'waves of intervention' model for SEAL (see Chapter 1) makes clear the importance of providing targeted support for pupils in addition to the more general school-level developments relating to SEAL. Secondary SEAL presents as an interesting case in this regard, since no specific materials have been developed for the provision of targeted support (although the 'Further Reading' booklet *Using SEAL to provide targeted support* suggests some generic strategies) (e.g. for primary SEAL, a set of materials designed for use in small group sessions with pupils felt to be in need of extra support were developed and evaluated – Humphrey et al, 2008; indeed, some of these materials were actually used in sessions observed in CS9 and CS6). As such, the provision of support services for pupils in secondary SEAL schools was arguably the most flexible and least 'top down' element of SEAL implementation. Of course, the potential danger inherent in this approach is that the lack of clear guidance in this area makes for a 'gap' in provision.

The evidence gathered in relation to the provision of support services for pupils suggested that mentoring approaches were the most common utilised method adopted in the case study schools. CS9 provides a useful example, with evidence triangulated across school staff and pupils:

"We have learning mentors, we have emotional mentors, we have…people in place for peer mentoring," (CS9, Teacher, V2)

“Well they sort of explain it to us and then… they say if we have anything that’s like worrying us we can go and see a certain person” (CS9, Pupil, V2)

“There’s like a mentor room where if you’re lonely you can go there and Year eights will look after you” (CS9, Pupil, V2)

Other schools (e.g. CS8, CS6, CS10) also used mentoring approaches, although this varied in terms of formality (e.g. in some lunchtime supervisors acted in a mentoring capacity even if they did not carry an ‘official title’): “If they’re walking on their own then we just go up to them to see they’re alright” (CS6, LTS, V4) and whether adults, peers, or both fulfilled mentoring roles. As with certain other aspects of implementation though, it was difficult to tease out in some cases whether the approaches being described had evolved as part of the school’s implementation of SEAL or were already in place: “Although SEAL has not taken up a lot of time, something very similar to SEAL is something we’ve already been doing” (CS9, LM, V2). However, the kind of mentoring described was typically in line with SEAL aims and objectives:

“It makes you like reassured that you know that you can talk to someone if you have a problem” (CS9, Pupil, V2)

“They’re dealing with emotional issues of students, but also behavioural issues as well” (CS8, SL, V3)

“I’ve got a mentor who I can go to and then she…do you know the room that we were just up to, I’ve also got that room to go if I’ve got any problems” (CS8, Pupil, V2)

In terms of the mentoring approaches themselves, most of the work described was on a ‘drop in’ basis – that is, pupils feeling in need of support in relation to emotional or behavioural issues had an assigned mentor (or group of mentors) that they could contact, usually by going to a specified room or requesting an appointment (indeed, CS3 tied SEAL support to existing counselling provision that operated in a similar fashion). Whilst this clearly reflects a greater emphasis on pupil autonomy in secondary education (that is, pupils refer themselves rather than being referred for support), it raises important issues regarding potentially vulnerable pupils who are not comfortable with seeking help who may not get the support they need in this kind of system. Those experiencing difficulties relating to behaviour may very likely be picked up through other methods (e.g. through teacher report and referral), but those experiencing more ‘internalizing’ difficulties that are not as salient from a classroom management perspective may ‘slip through the net’.

4.3.7 Staff CPD, health and welfare

> *"Professional development is a crucial part of SEAL" (DCSF, 2007, p.35)*

The area of staff development provides a powerful example of how the initial enthusiasm and energy generated around the launch of SEAL in our case study schools seemed to wane over time. Staff in all nine schools engaged in some kind of initial CPD relating to SEAL. In most schools, this training was fairly comprehensive in terms of the range of individuals involved, with both teaching and non-teaching staff present: "I've already trained up our cleaners. This term I will be training up our administrative staff and our catering staff" (CS7, SL, V1). This initial training tended to be INSET sessions delivered by/with LA consultants (in the case of teaching staff) and/or 'in-house' sessions delivered by the school's SEAL lead (typically the case for non-teaching staff, or follow-up sessions with teaching staff). Some sessions were delivered to whole groups of staff, whereas others were attended by small groups (e.g. the SEAL working party) and then cascaded to relevant members of staff within school.

The initial training provided typically took the form of an introduction to the SEAL initiative, in some cases supplemented by sessions on broader theoretical underpinnings (e.g. sessions on emotional intelligence/literacy) and more practical, 'delivery-focused' work. For example, in CS6, the LA SEAL co-ordinator supported the working group in the development of SEAL assemblies and lessons, and provided two 'drop-in' training sessions. In CS8 and CS10, the SEAL leads built upon initial training by providing a session for staff on mapping SEAL outcomes to the secondary curriculum: "We had a day for staff dedicated to looking at the new curriculum. And what we used our time for was mapping… SEAL learning outcomes against the new Year seven curriculum. I think what that exercise actually did was make people actually focus on what SEAL really is" (CS8, SL, V3). However, this kind of more focused, in-depth follow-up training was not given a high priority in many schools, particularly beyond the first year of SEAL implementation. Where this was the case, respondents' comments seem to reflect a somewhat 'functional' approach to whole-school implementation of SEAL, whereby staff training is a 'box to be ticked', which once done does not need to be revisited:

"They have needed training and certainly we delivered an INSET day, and that INSET day was very important. Now I don't think our staff need any more formal training" (CS7, SL, V4)

"I don't think it needs more training. I just think it needs more time spent encouraging staff" (CS9, SL, V4)

In terms of staff health and well-being, there was little evidence of ongoing activity relating to SEAL, although (as with other areas, such as policy development – see above) this was often mentioned in rather vague terms as being part of future plans:

"The things that I think we need to develop and improve more are CPD and staff well-being and that is something we do by accident rather than by… intent really and that is actually one of our success criteria on next year's school development plan [laughs]… I don't even know how I'm going to do it yet but its something we know we need to look at" (CS8, SL, V5)

"We need SEAL for staff. I mean that is probably an area that we haven't really developed. You know… our own social and emotional needs... [Interviewer asks: 'So is that on the agenda at all?']… Um, not explicitly, no" (CS10, SL, V5)

The only real exception to this trend was CS6, where the SEAL lead was also responsible for staff development and well-being, and as such ensured that this was integrated with ongoing SEAL implementation – including a counselling and stress management session.

4.3.8 Partnerships with parents, carers and the community

> *"Parents and carers have a particularly valuable role to play in SEAL" (DCSF, 2007, p.29)*

There was very limited evidence of schools directly involving parents/carers and/or the local community in their SEAL implementation. Although many stated that they had informed parents about SEAL, either by letter, on the school website, or at parents or open evenings, this tended to be the limit of their activity in this regard:

"Very few parents… know that we are a SEAL school or know that we actually do this and that is something that I have been thinking about. We need to let parents know that this is what we're doing and exactly what it is" (CS2, SL, V3)

"We haven't explicitly involved the parents yet to my knowledge" (CS10, SL, V3)

"I would say that involving parents is not something that we actually do" (CS6, SL, V5)

"That's a way we could go…definitely. The one thing I do want to do soon is obviously raise awareness with parents, so we're going to put a letter together to send out to explain that we do SEAL in school and let them…have a little brief description and then say, *'Would you like to know more? Would you like to attend a workshop?'*" (CS3, SL, V3)

"There hasn't been any involvement with parents as yet" (CS5, SL, V3)

"They [parents] don't know about SEAL at all" (CS6, HT, V1)

As a result of the rather superficial approach taken, perceptions of impact were generally rather limited: "You talk to my parents forum and they all say,

'Oh yes we know all about SEAL'. We talk to the PTA and they say, *'Oh yes we know all about SEAL'* and all the parents read the bulletin about SEAL because it's always in the bulletin, but apart from that, has it made a difference to them? I would… well I'd be surprised if it had actually" (CS7, SL, V5).

This general omission of active involvement among parents was in spite of a clear understanding of the role they can play within SEAL and their influence in its relative success or failure in changing pupil outcomes. In some schools, parents were actively cited as a negative influence upon children's behaviour. This does, in part, explain their reluctance to involve parents, but also creates a conundrum whereby difficulties experienced in relation to children's home/family life are not addressed:

"There are some parents there that are actively against what we're doing" (CS2, SL, V3)

"I wonder how much some of them are missing out on it at home" (CS10, Teacher, V2)

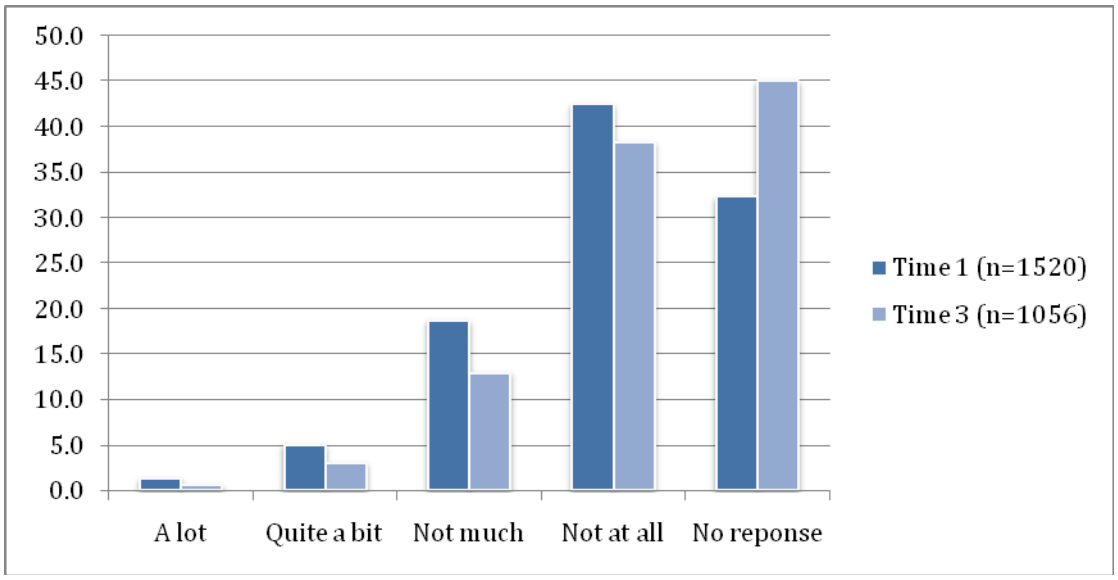
"A lot of children will have not had that background at home and this is where it becomes very difficult, when you talk about terms like empathy and self-awareness and thinking about other people, it's quite difficult" (CS10, Acting SL, V2)

"Biggest barrier cited – influence of the parents and their models of behaviour outside of school" (CS2, FN, V1)

Additional reasons for this failure to actively involve and engage parents varied from school to school. In some it was because attempts to engage parents would not have been well received ("I think some of our parents wouldn't be that understanding - they would think it would be a direct attack on their parenting skills" (CS9, SL, V4); "We had to be careful because we didn't want to seen to be patronizing the parents" (CS9, SL, V4), or because of competing pressures ("I'd like at some point to do some parent workshops, but the only reason I'm not at the moment is because I'm right near the end of my diploma so I'm snowed under" (CS3, SL, V1)). Other schools saw parental involvement as necessary, but had decided to focus first upon pupils and staff, opting to 'go beyond the school' at an unspecified future date: "We haven't explicitly involved the parents yet to my knowledge… that's certainly somewhere where we should go next perhaps" (CS10, SL, V3).

An additional source of evidence relating to the involvement of parents can be found in pupils' responses to the question, "How much have your parents been involved in getting SEAL going in your school?". Figure 14 provides an overview of these responses, and demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of pupils felt that their parents had not been involved much or at all in SEAL, even at Time 3:

Figure 14. Pupil responses to the question, "How much have your parents been involved in getting SEAL going in your school?"



Aside from parents, schools did demonstrate clear links with the communities within which they resided. Examples were given of work with the police, community link workers, family support workers, young citizens groups and involvement in various charity and other events. However, this was rarely attributed to SEAL implementation. Rather, such work was described as being part of each schools' existing community links, and only brought up during interviews because it was felt to be in line with SEAL principles:

"We can link it to SEAL, but it wasn't initiated by SEAL at all" (CS7, SL, V3)

"We have parenting groups and that has been going on for a long time and so the things that happen there are things that would be in line with SEAL" (CS6, SL, V5)

Above all, staff in the schools recognized the length of time needed for an initiative like SEAL to extend to parents and the wider community: "Getting parents on board with us and working with us as a school and trying to get out there in the community as well… is something that's going to take a long time to… develop" (CS8, LM, V3). Thus, as with other areas highlighted in this and other sections of this report, relative inactivity during our fieldwork does not preclude activity in the future.

4.3.9 Assessing, recording and reporting feedback

> *"It is helpful if a school's starting point is informed by sound data analysis… it is best to use a range of sources in an attempt to obtain the complete picture" (DCSF, 2007, p.33)*

This element of whole-school development presented a challenge for schools in the context of the national evaluation of secondary SEAL. Schools' activity in relation to assessing, recording and reporting feedback was naturally

tempered by the fact that they were involved in an external evaluation project which provided them with feedback on progress in different areas from year to year. Indeed, when asked how a case study school were going to assess their progress, an LA Behaviour and Attendance consultant replied: "Through Manchester University!" (CS10, LA SL/BA, V1). However, aside from this initial caveat, schools were aware of the need to engage in local evaluation (Humphrey, 2009).

In terms of quantitative assessment, several schools began their implementation with ambitious plans to demonstrate the impact of SEAL on a variety of proximal (e.g. social and emotional skills) and distal (e.g. attendance, attainment) outcomes: "I am hoping next year that we will be looking a lot more carefully at actual data, particularly attendance data, but also behaviour logs, exclusions data, et cetera" (CS10, LA SL/BA, V1). In CS10, for example, the idea of having 'pilot' and 'control' form groups was mooted (CS10, Acting SL, V2), although it was unclear whether this had actually materialised when followed up during a later visit (CS10, Acting SL, V4). However, these plans were typically not followed through. A crucial issue recognised by all schools (and, indeed, highlighted in the primary SEAL small group work evaluation – Humphrey *et al*, 2008) was the difficulty in quantifying progress in social and emotional domains, whether at pupil, staff or school level:

"It isn't an easy thing to measure but I think most of our schools that are involved in it feel that it's worthwhile" (CS7, LA SL/BA, V2)

"I don't know how I show these results. That's the problem, how do you show these results?" (CS8, SL, V3)

Related to this, there were also difficulties in disentangling the impact of SEAL from other activities happening simultaneously within the school: "How do you measure where SEAL has made the difference or where some other aspect of support or teaching and learning has made the difference?" (CS 10, LA SL/BA, V1). As a result of these issues, overall monitoring of impact was often left to 'intuition' rather than the collection of data:

"All I know is that it would come back buzzing so that's the important thing" (CS10, SL, V3)

"It's more a feeling that things are changing" (CS7, LA SL/BA, V2)

Although schools typically did not engage fully in attempts to evaluate the overall impact of SEAL within the school, there were still efforts made to monitor progress in key areas. For example, CS10, CS6, CS7, CS8 and CS9 all planned to include SEAL-related elements (e.g. staff modelling of social and emotional skills) in their routine lesson observation proformas, although clear evidence of this actually happening was not always available – e.g. in CS10 it was described as an 'intention' or 'plan', even in later visits. This may be because staff would not respond well to having their practice evaluated in this regard: "I'd said I would I would be quite happy to do to go in to some

lessons and have a look and so on but he thinks that would put people off actually doing it" (CS9, LA SL/BA, V4). Likewise, most schools made use of their SEAL SEF as a tool for monitoring progress on an annual basis by highlighting or colour-coding areas where the working party felt that things had gone well, areas for future development and so on. This was felt by many to be a useful methodology: "[The] SEAL SEF… we have moved quite a lot…I've redone it… we have moved quite a lot… I feel optimistic now. We have moved some way" (CS8, SL, V5).

4.3.10 School culture and environment

> *"The ongoing challenge for schools will be to… create and maintain a supportive environment, culture and ethos" (DCSF, 2007, p.24)*

School culture and environment is perhaps the most fitting final aspect of our analysis on whole-school SEAL development since it is intrinsically linked to all of the other aspects that have preceded it. In one sense, it is also the most difficult strand for which to provide clear, tangible evidence, since judgements about the culture and environment of a school quite often come from the feelings one experiences during and following school visits. These can often be difficult to put into words, or ascribe to particular incidents or exchanges. Nonetheless, our visits to the nine case study schools did provide a wealth of information that helped us to get a sense of their culture and environment.

At the outset of our fieldwork, it was clear that each school felt that they had the necessary culture to allow SEAL to develop as intended. There was a sense of caring and concern amongst most staff towards their pupils:

"We've always had a great pastoral rapport with the kids… our strength is that our staff care passionately about the children" (CS3, TA, V2)

On the tour, the SL knew the names of many students and said hello; in turn, many pupils said hello to her. During registration, the teacher allowed a pupil to 'swap roles' and direct the class, which seemed to be a running joke in the class" (CS4, FN, V1)

"Pupils were not hesitant in addressing staff and discussing various issues during break. The SL affectionately refers to all pupils as 'chicken'. Staff are encouraged to eat on tables with the pupils, and will receive free lunch doing so. There is apparently a strong uptake of this option" (CS5, FN, V1)

CS2 was a clear exception to this trend:

"I observed a pupil being disciplined by a TA in the corridor. The nature of this discipline was the TA screaming loudly in the face of the pupil… During my school tour, each class we visited was followed with the teacher of the class selecting a pupil who had performed some misdemeanour or other for public chastisement by the deputy head (who was conducting the tour)" (CS2, FN, V1)

The incompatibility of this kind of approach to discipline and the ethos required for effective SEAL implementation was recognised by the SEAL lead in a subsequent visit: "I actually said, 'No, no, no we can't be doing that'" (CS2, SL, V2).

Relationships between staff were also generally positive, and seemed to reflect a sense of community: "I think as a staff we already work brilliantly as a team and…we get on very well with each other, so I don't know if we were already at that level or whether because of SEAL we're getting even better" (CS7, Teacher, V2). However, staff in some schools expressed concern about pupils' relationships with one another:

"I would certainly hope that in the future students have more respect for each other" (CS8, Teacher, V1)

"They need to speak to each other with more respect" (CS10, AHT, V2)

"The great difficulty… it's not particularly their behaviour towards their teacher, it's their behaviour towards each other" (CS10, Teacher, V2)

In terms of the physical environment of the school, the 'presence' of SEAL was felt through wall charts and displays across all schools, even during early visits. As with the teaching and learning element of SEAL (see section 4.3.4), it could be argued that this kind of activity is engaged in more consistently than others because it represents something that is tangible and concrete. However, the meaningfulness of such work varied from school to school. In some, it was clearly a 'box ticking' exercise with little consideration of purpose (e.g. in CS3 one key SEAL display was hidden away in a rarely frequented corner). In others, it was part of an ongoing commitment to raise the profile of SEAL within the school and provide a constant reminder of the values, themes and ideals of the programme itself (e.g. CS7 invested part of the financial resources provided by their LA to purchase glass fronted display units which were used to display SEAL-related work; these displays were positioned centrally and updated regularly).

4.3.11 Summary of whole-school development analysis

In summary, it is reasonable to surmise that our nine case study schools were extremely variable and fragmented in the extent to which they adopted a whole-school approach to implementing SEAL. An issue here may be the necessarily limited time frame within which this evaluation study was conducted. Development of a truly whole-school nature inevitably takes a great deal of time to become fully embedded. This may be particularly true of large, complex institutions such as secondary schools. The 'patchy' approach seen in most schools may simply be a reflection of this truism. However, there are also other issues which may have contributed to the lack of a consistent whole-school approach. Firstly, some schools interpreted the SEAL guidance in such a way that they purposively selected pockets of activity or development to focus upon, at the expense of the 'bigger picture': "We're already picking out that we want to work on" (CS2, AHT, V1). This

was often in tandem to a perception that SEAL did not offer them something new: "I'm not convinced it's something different to what we've always been doing" (CS7, SL, V2). Sustaining the effort and energy required to drive SEAL forward at various levels was also a problem for some, especially in the face of competing pressures: "Last year we did a big massive huge amount of SEAL work and it's about me finding a way of topping that up but without taking up that time. Cause you can't commit that time just to SEAL" (CS8, SL, V4). Alongside this, some staff held the perception that things would begin to change in the short-term and this led to a withdrawal of effort and interest when this did not happen. "If we don't see an immediate impact people are going to say 'oh well, it didn't work…. we tried it once, that didn't work, that's it and it's going to the scrap heap'". (CS10, Acting SL, V2).

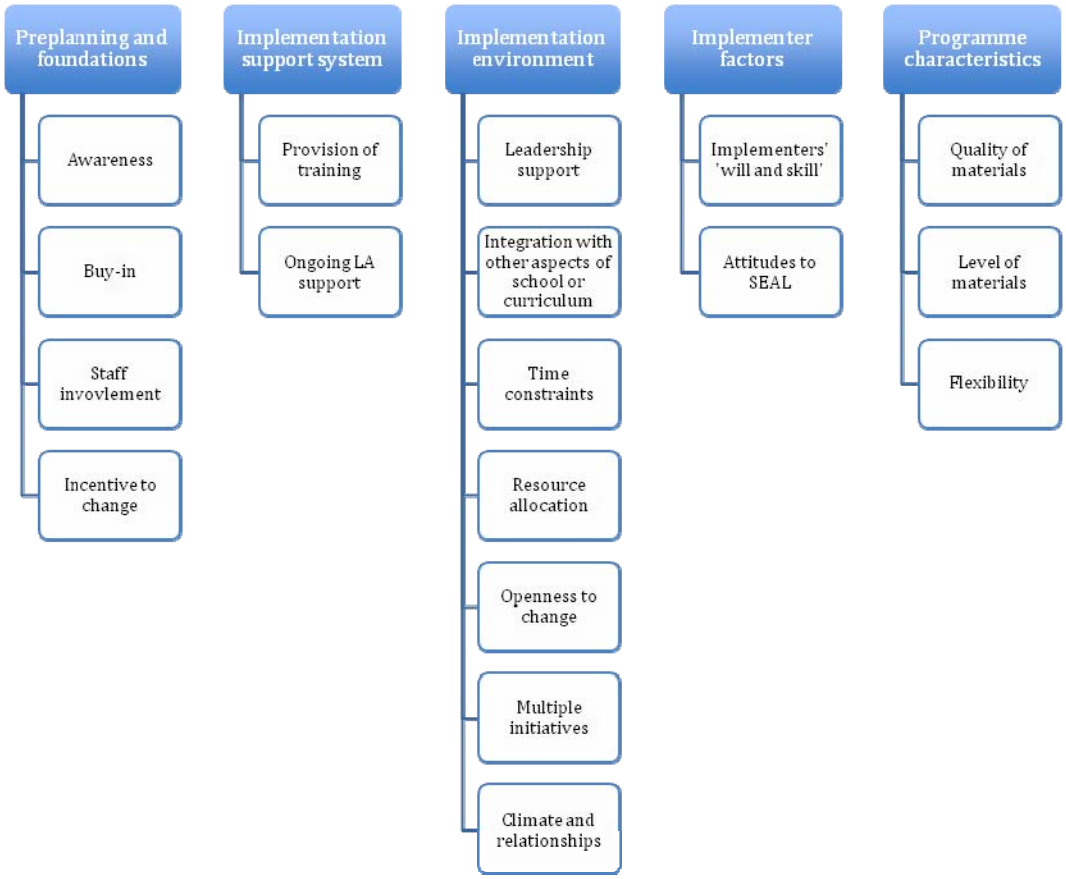
4.4 Barriers and facilitators of effective implementation

In this final section we present our findings relating to barriers and facilitators of effective implementation. The overarching framework for the analysis is adapted from the work of Greenberg *et al* (2005) and Durlak and DuPre (2008). Their models of critical factors affecting implementation are widely regarded as amongst the most comprehensive and empirically validated in the field of social and emotional learning.

Analytical strategy

All data were collated in NVivo 7/8, qualitative analysis software. As the data gathered was analysed using an existing framework, it is possible to characterise our analytical strategy as *content analysis* (Mayring, 2004). As is generally accepted practice in qualitative content analysis, our analytical procedure was characterized by the following steps. First, general categories evolved from our framework (Greenberg *et al*, 2005; Durlak and DuPre, 2008). Following a 'pilot' analysis involving around one-quarter of the data, the categories were revised. Revision was implemented if, for instance, a particular category failed to adequately account for a significant proportion of the data. Furthermore, where it was felt that there was substantial overlap between two or more categories, these were merged. The final analytical framework for barriers and facilitators of effective implementation is presented below (see Figure 15):

Figure 15. Barriers and facilitators of effective implementation of secondary SEAL.



In the following subsections we report on each of the above factors and discuss convergences and divergences between case study schools. Although these are presented as distinct 'themes' in the interests of clarity, they clearly inter-relate with one another. For instance, a lack of staff *buy-in* during pre-planning relates strongly to later *attitudes to SEAL*. Likewise, the *leadership* in a given school is highly likely to influence aspects of the implementation environment, such as the *school climate*.

4.4.1 Preplanning and foundations

It is widely accepted that the preplanning and foundations present in a given school provide a fundamental starting point for effective implementation of a programme like secondary SEAL. Indeed, this issue was found to be a crucial factor in the evaluation of the primary SEAL programme small group work element (Humphrey *et al*, 2008). A lack of *awareness* among staff provides an initial stumbling block, and provides a useful example of one the challenges for SEAL in secondary schools, which have a much larger staff base: "We've had a couple of interviews on it, I am a little bit… still wondering what it is" (CS10, FT, V3). Even among staff who are aware of the initiative, the amount of *buy-in* to SEAL was found to be a key factor in their willingness to engage with implementation:

"You get the… *'isn't it just another one of these ideas from the government that will fade out? We'll do it for a couple of years and then it'll be.. we've forgot that. We've got another idea now'*… there is a little cynicism from people [who are] a bit weary of initiative after initiative" (CS10, Acting SL, V2)

"The weakness with regards to SEAL is that it is optional for schools, so people have to opt into it, and then it depends who is driving it and how its driven" (CS5, SL, V3)

Where initial buy-in is weak, the amount of *staff involvement* in initial implementation also seems to suffer. In such circumstances, SEAL working groups often operate as somewhat isolated units, which makes effecting whole-school change a difficult (if not impossible) process: "The biggest thing for me in terms of any kind of negativity is trying to encourage other staff to take it on board" (CS9, SL, V4). As time goes on, persuading resistant members of staff to get involved in implementing SEAL becomes a major challenge, especially given the other pressures (e.g. workload) that each face:

"And the last meeting that we had where four people turned up – that's the first time that's happened and I think its because of the workload that the school has given the staff (CS9, SL, V3)

"I suppose as more staff become involved… maybe there will be some effect. I think at the moment its quite difficult because there are those of us who have been involved and we've talked quite a lot about SEAL, but… I think a lot of other staff at the moment are a bit bemused by it" (CS7, SL, V2)

Aside from causing initial difficulties in 'getting the ball rolling', a lack of buy-in and staff involvement during preplanning also proves to be a barrier during the entire implementation process, as it has a 'trickle down' effect on crucial factors such as attitudes to SEAL (see section 4.3.4). There was a feeling in one school that a lack of involvement among staff was related – at least in part – to a preference for long established routines and a *lack of incentive to change*: "[Some teachers have] probably taught the same scheme of work for ten years, fifteen years, twenty years and don't really want to change because they think there is no need for them to change because they've always been successful – so why change something that's good?" (CS9, SL, V3).

By contrast, where SEAL leads and/or working groups have been able to secure high levels of staff involvement from the outset (or, at the very least accrue 'converts' during the early stages), the implementation process appears to be greatly facilitated. From the comments outlined below, this appears to be the case because higher staff involvement enables a greater sense of ownership of the initiative:

"The more people you can get involved, the better…so if you're getting a few people together and facilitating them and feeling ownership of an idea or initiative and then getting them to work with their peers on it too, [then] they too feel a sense of ownership, some kind of power and control… its much more likely to succeed" (CS6, SL, V3)

"So I would say the awareness of SEAL in this school is one hundred per cent and enthusiasm for SEAL, I would say we're getting near seventy five per cent" (CS7, SL, V3)

"We built a consensus within a smaller group and now… that group is much larger and we have friends who weren't part of the group but were 'very SEAL', so therefore its proven easier to spread it than might have been the case" (CS10, SL, V3)

4.4.2 Implementation support system

Local Authority staff play a vital role in helping schools to implement programmes such as SEAL. In the evaluation of primary SEAL small group work, LA support was offered in the form of training, modelling, and provision of additional resources (Humphrey *et al*, 2008). Aside from the transmission of skills, knowledge, et cetera, *ongoing LA support* serves to provide inspiration to schools, sends a clear message that their participation in the programme is valued, and can offer a central point of contact for networking and sharing practice with other schools. It also introduces a certain amount of accountability, since LA staff are able to monitor developments over time:

"[LA B&A consultant] keeps me focused… she keeps me on track… and she does push things forward as well" (CS4, SL, V4)

"I've been very much helped by [LA SEAL co-ordinator] at [LA] and she's been in school twice to talk to me specifically about SEAL… because I wasn't totally sure, so she clarified many issues for me" (CS10, Acting SL, V2)

"It gives you an extra emphasis when you compare yourself to another school… when the schools feedback to each other and say, 'Well we've been doing this, what have you been doing?'… when we went to that pilot meeting, we realised we hadn't worked hard enough on this and that kind of peer assessment is really important" (CS9, SL, V2)

However, it is clear that the support needs to be substantial, consistent and offered on an ongoing basis if it is to facilitate effective implementation. Despite the positive response of the SEAL lead in CS9 regarding the opportunities presented at LA level, the head teacher felt that the support offered was somewhat superficial: "We could do with more time to help implement SEAL… it isn't going to be her [LA SEAL co-ordinator] because she only works part-time. So we're going to end up with a difficulty there where… someone comes in who doesn't know the school that well" (CS9, HT, V1). In other schools, the perception was that support at LA level had reduced significantly as time went on, often because of restructuring or changes in priorities. For example, when asked about the level of support available during the penultimate case-study visit, the SEAL lead at CS8 said: "Things changed within the LA, the way that they organised it, so, no, I'll be honest really" (CS8, SL, V4).

Of the elements of LA support that were made available, *provision of training* about SEAL and related issues was deemed to the most useful. For many staff in our case study schools, SEAL was considered to be 'new territory' at the beginning of implementation and so basic continuing professional development around the nature of the programme, its aims, rationale, content, and delivery are essential prerequisites for improving staff confidence (see 4.4.4) and creating an atmosphere of excitement: "So far… we have had initial training from [SEAL consultant] and that kind of got us excited about SEAL" (CS9, SL, V3). However, as with LA support in general, the training needs to be offered on a consistent and continuing basis: "I think its because we haven't given up on the training. The training is consistent and it's always about SEAL" (CS9, SL, V3).

4.4.3 Implementation environment

Aspects of the environment within which implementation of secondary SEAL takes place have proven to be amongst the most broadly cited (in terms of the range of categories – see Figure 15 above) and data-rich (in terms of data under each category) sources of evidence in relation to barriers and facilitators of effective implementation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the amount of perceived investment in and enthusiasm about SEAL at the *leadership* level was seen as particularly crucial. Where this is high, SEAL is given "credence" and a "stamp of approval" (CS10, SL, V3) that means it is taken more seriously by other members of staff. It also increases the probability of key staff being given the time and space to drive forward implementation:

"Support from the head.. [he's] enthusiastic about it. Yeah, he sees the value in it" (CS9, SL, V3)

"There needs to be strong support from somebody on the senior management team. I'm not on the senior management team here, but I've got strong support from them and from the head teacher and without that you couldn't possibly do it because I've been given time and all kinds of things" (CS6, SL, V1)

"Obviously I'm further down [the management chain] and it's a bit hard to move something when you're there" (CS3, SL, V3)

In situations where leadership support for SEAL is absent or limited, implementation can suffer. A behaviour and attendance consultant from the LA of CS2 neatly summarised the reasons for this: "None of this is going to work if the head teacher doesn't secure a vision and actually get it out… and make it as important to all the staff and all the children that this is a 'SEAL school'. If the head isn't saying it and making sure that everybody goes with it, its not going to happen" (CS2, LA SL/BA, V3). As with the LA support outlined above, the need for continuation and consistency is self-evident. Unfortunately, in some schools, leadership support waned over time, often as a result of competing pressures or the school's involvement in other initiatives: "I don't think she's as enthusiastic as she was about it [SEAL]… I think it's to do with pressures of time" (CS8, SL, V4).

With or without leadership support, the way in which SEAL is presented to staff clearly impacts upon how easily they feel it can be *integrated into other aspects of the school and/or curriculum*. Where it is seen as an 'add-on' or 'just another initiative' there is immediate resistance. Despite efforts in the SEAL guidance (DCSF, 2007) to demonstrate how the initiative could be assimilated into existing structures and practices, this was clearly not taken on board in some schools:

"What's happening with staff is they're given a presentation on SEAL and it's all… communicated as though it's something new and then they think they've got something else to do and…a lot of people could have negative feelings towards that" (CS10, AHT, V2)

"It would be better if the school things were a bit more joined up, so rather than all these initiatives coming from different places and somebody here saying *'you've got to have this initiative in all your lessons'* and somebody here saying '*you've got to have SEAL in all your lessons'* and somebody here saying, *'and here's a new Key Stage 3 curriculum'* and all these different things and so people in school saying, *'Oh right, OK, we'll put that in, we'll put that in…'* and it's left…I think it should be more joined up" (CS6, SL, V1)

In contrast, a teacher in CS8 drew clear links between aspects of SEAL and various ongoing or new initiatives, preferring to see them as related strands of activity that were all designed to lead toward the main goals outlined in Every Child Matters. Viewed from this perspective, she suggested, "I do find there is quite a lot of overlap between those things, so… its not created too much extra work" (CS8, Teacher, V2). Interestingly, the SEAL lead in CS8 was not so quick to draw links between initiatives, stating: "I'm just getting really mindful of the fact that the school is going for this quality mark or that quality mark and we're doing this initiative or that initiative… its just been completely squeezed" (CS8, SL, V3).

How SEAL is presented – either as an add-on or as something that can be assimilated into existing structures and practices – clearly impacts upon the perceived effort needed to integrate it throughout the school. This inevitably leads into discussions around *time constraints* – which was one of the most consistently reported barriers to effective implementation. Whether it was having the time to lead on SEAL and push it throughout the school, or time to rewrite lesson plans to incorporate SEAL objectives, school staff felt they did not have enough, and faced with competing pressures, SEAL-related work would typically be amongst the first to be dropped: "If I didn't have SEAL I'd probably be teaching another lesson" (CS8, Teacher, V2). This is further highlighted by the following excerpts:

"I think, if you speak to other people about it, it is all to do with time really 'cause lots of people are interested and have got lots of ideas, but then it's about when do you do it?" (CS6, Teacher, V2)

"I know that maths, English and science will take priority and I know SEAL… is going to be the bottom of the pile" (CS7, SL, V1)

"I think time is the most pressing issue" (CS9, SL, V3)

"I know the teachers are very busy - they're under a lot of pressure and the last thing they want is anything rammed down their throat and it seems, you know, SEAL's the last thing that should be rammed down anybody's throat because surely that is not what its about" (CS4, SL, V4)

"This could be a job on its own. And it could be, you know, really, a SEAL co-coordinator could be a post in a school. It can't be somebody doing it in the same allotted time that they were given to do [their other work]" (CS4, SL, V4)

"The danger is… you spend three weeks and you haven't thought of anything about SEAL. It's gone onto the back burner and other things, you know … you can rapidly become taken up with the day to day. Whereas if somebody's got that as their focus, their management allowance is for SEAL that's much better in a way" (CS10, SL, V4)

A lack of time to engage in implementation interacts strongly with the *resources allocated* for different kinds of activity. Indeed, the two are seen as inextricably linked by some – a teacher in CS10, for instance, considered human resources as equivalent to time: "We don't have enough staff, so we don't have time" (CS10, Teacher, V2). Having a budget that can be used to buy-out staff to free them up to aid implementation does, in essence, 'create time', but this was not the experience of most schools: "The amount of money that is given to SEAL, for us to be in this project as a school is minute and is nowhere near enough to cover the amount of time that is actually needed to make it good quality" (CS6, SL, V1).

More generally, there was a clear feeling among many that SEAL was under-resourced as an initiative. Most schools received little or no financial resources to aid implementation, meaning that simple needs such as being able to buy relevant media and prepare lesson resources was problematic for some: "I would like a special grant, a sustainable grant… what does come up as an issue is [when] I want to photocopy these resources, I want to buy this book, [or] I want to be able to take photographs and print them" (CS7, SL, V1).

The amount of *openness to change* among staff in some schools also proved to be a significant additional barrier. Various factors appear to contribute to an attitude of inflexibility here. Firstly, some staff are resistant to any kind of change as it interferes with their established routines. Secondly, there are those who feel that the objectives of SEAL are incompatible with or irrelevant to their specific, subject-based role. Thirdly, there may be staff who are resistant to SEAL simply because they feel that it is being pushed upon them by school management, the LA and/or government. Any combination of these attitudinal dispositions immediately creates difficulties elsewhere. For example, staff who are highly resistant to change are unlikely to be able or willing to play their part in integrating SEAL into the existing structures and

practices within the school (since any kind of assimilation inevitably deviates from established routines):

"If the staff don't…fully get on board and really use the materials to the best of their abilities and use things like restorative justice regularly within lessons, then it's going to fall down" (CS4, FT, V2)

"I think there are some staff that are resistant because…a) it's a new thing and there are some teachers that resist change …b) because it's something that's come from up above, as it were, from senior management or from the government and there are people that will always be resistant to that" (CS9, Teacher, V3)

"There was a lot of opposition from certain subjects where it was thought not to be relevant and I think we can highlight maths for that" (CS7, Teacher, V3)

"If they've been so regimented with their approach and delivery over the last 'x' number of years then it is scary, isn't it? (CS6, Teacher, V5)

The perception of SEAL as one of *multiple initiatives* to be 'juggled' alongside existing commitments also proved to be a barrier in some schools:

"You get initiative overload" (CS6, LA SL/BA, V2)

"There is so much else coming into school and you can only ask people to do so many things. People are pulled in different directions and dedicated staff are pulled in different directions and that's hard" (CS6, SL, V1)

Although interviewees were aware that SEAL was expected to be integrated with other initiatives, this was considered a difficult task by many respondents. Moreover, both local and government initiatives were at times seen as competing for time and resources, or even as having conflicting objectives. There was also some cynicism regarding longevity:

"So maybe there's a contradiction, whilst one Government initiative wants us to focus on SEAL, another one will publish league tables and…you know, and then send an OFSTED inspector into a school that can be considered to be failing because their results aren't what the Government expect that they should be. There's a contradiction somewhere" (CS9, Teacher, V3)

"I'm worried it's [SEAL] going to be replaced by something else. And then replaced by something else. Like a lot of things are. It would be a shame for all the work to happen for someone to say 'oh we're not doing SEAL anymore here's something else that we suggest that you do…. which happens all the time" (CS9, SL, V4)

"I really hope it doesn't die a death like other initiatives have. And I'm not talking about this school I'm talking about the Government" (CS7, Teacher, V5)

Set as a background to all of the above factors, the basic *climate* and general sense of *quality of relationships* in a given school provides the bedrock for effective implementation. Some schools felt that their general climate was such that there needed to be something of a paradigm shift if SEAL was to work: "There needs to be a big culture change" (CS9, Teacher, V3). In others, little titbits of information gave a sense of problematic relationships, either between members of staff ("I have problems with [Year 7 FT] who leads it[12], because you can walk past him and say hello, and you get nothing" (CS10, Teacher, V2)) or with certain pupils ("One of them [Year 10 pupil] said *'Oh! SEAL again!*'" (CS7, SL, V4)), classes or year groups ("I think Year eight are a different year group as well… they're more resistant" (CS10, SL, V3)). Such examples provide *prima facie* evidence of the kinds of difficulties that can severely restrict implementation progress. Consider the above example relating to the SEAL lead in CS10. Although this may simply be an artefact of a personal dispute between the teacher in question and the SEAL lead, it may also be a genuine reflection of a lack of social and emotional skills in the person who had undertaken responsibility for the promotion of such skills across the school. If this is the case, the opportunities for effective modelling, coaching and cascading of training are likely to be limited, sceptical staff are unlikely to 'buy in', and so on.

4.4.4 Implementer factors

Within the implementation environment, factors associated with the implementers themselves (e.g. school staff) are crucial, and two in particular stand out as being fundamental for effective implementation. Following Levin, we refer to these as the 'will' and the 'skill' in delivering SEAL. The former of these is an *attitudinal disposition towards SEAL* and related initiatives. As already mentioned (see 4.4.1 and 4.4.3), staff in some schools expressed resistance to SEAL (e.g. "I am under no illusions that some staff do not want to take it on board" (CS4, TA, V2)), either as part of a general unwillingness to change their practice or because they felt that it was not part of their remit as a teacher (e.g. "There's one science department in particular who absolutely think it's a load or rubbish and are not prepared to do anything in their science lessons. They do however do it in form time but obviously don't see it as being part of the curriculum as well" (CS7, SL, V5)). There was also a sense of ambivalence and/or discomfort with the need for SEAL among some staff: "You've got to get a balance… this idea of talking about feelings… some students [already] manage it really well" (CS8, Teacher, V5).

When explored in more detail, some of our data suggests that part of this 'SEAL-resistant' mindset stems from a strongly rationalist approach to teaching that is endemic among teachers of certain subjects:

"I've got fifty minutes and my priority is that they leave the room… knowing about particle theory, you know, the fact that they're emotionally illiterate, well really…it's not your problem is it?" (CS4, Teacher, V2)

[12] A new member of staff in CS10 had assumed a sort of unofficial responsibility for SEAL, much to the chagrin of other staff members.

"I can understand how some colleagues may feel uncomfortable with it. I can understand how there may be a negative perception of it, in that it all seems a little bit 'lovey dovey, touchy feely' - what has this got to do with science or what has this got to do with maths? (CS5, Teacher, V3)

"People probably didn't think that it was relevant and thought that it was a one hit wonder…*'well, that's touchy feely, why would I do that in my subject?'"* (CS5, SL, V3)

Even with the 'will' to deliver SEAL, implementation clearly suffers if school staff do not have the 'skill'. In this context we are referring to the specific social and emotional skills promoted through SEAL (e.g. empathy, self-awareness) which need to be present in staff in order for them to be effectively modelled throughout the school day. In one school, these skills were considered to be simply part of being a good teacher: "I believe if you're doing a good teaching role you're going to be doing the majority of that anyway. I don't think it's an aside that you have to attach on" (CS3, AHT, V3). Aside from these *skills*, the relative *experience and confidence in delivery* are also important:

"SL identifies a key barrier for the successful implementation of SEAL as individuals who lack their own self awareness skills, and wishes to work on this as part of the school strategy" (CS3, FN, V1)

"Staff is another problem really, because if the staff aren't emotionally intelligent then the children are going to struggle and I think training the staff is going to be a big problem because obviously…by the time you get to be an adult you've got your own ideas of how things go and how you are and what you like and you can't suddenly make somebody emotionally intelligent by telling them they've got to be" (CS9, Teacher, V2)

"It's not something that we do very well is it? Talking about our feelings and…when you've suddenly got these Year seven students that want to talk to you about their feelings, I think, you know, it's quite a learning curve for staff as well" (CS8, Teacher, V3)

Some tutors are more confident about using it than others and they can adapt things…they can see a lesson plan and think… they can relate this to personal experiences and… some tutors may be more open about that, whereas others are a bit more sensitive and a bit more…reserved about delivering certain lessons, that's my impression" (CS6, Teacher, V3)

Where staff members were recognized as being emotionally literate, the benefits were seen not just in the context of SEAL implementation, but more generally in effective classroom management: "I would say there are some teachers that naturally have the 'ethos of SEAL'. You can tell that and those teachers are usually the teachers that have the least …problems of discipline for instance because…they kind of have an empathy as well with the children, so… you don't have to teach them SEAL… you know, they have it, it's a natural thing" (CS2, Teacher, V3). Interestingly, this comment resonates with

the remark made by a teacher in CS9 (see above) – both appear to share an underpinning belief that being emotionally literate is something that is innate ("It's a natural thing" (CS2, Teacher, V3)), and perhaps therefore not amenable to intervention ("You can't suddenly make somebody emotionally intelligent" (CS9, Teacher, V2)), at least in adults.

4.4.5 Programme characteristics

The final major category in this analysis relates to the characteristics of the SEAL programme itself, as perceived by those implementing it in our case study schools. Opinion appeared to be divided on the *quality of materials* provided. Some staff spoke in general terms about the materials, saying for instance: "The good thing about SEAL is that it gives us a format" (CS2, AHT, V1). Others were more specific, citing features such as the programme website as containing useful information: "The website… there is more than enough out there… it is now improving and I think people are finding it more accessible" (CS7, SL, V4). However, others criticized the quality of the materials available in terms of feasibility, completeness and accuracy:

"I mean one of the negative things about that particular lesson plan was … seven objectives that were supposed to be…being achieved and that's not realistic - it's impossible to get that across" (CS4, FT, V2)

"We were finding with SEAL because we didn't have an overall theme per term per year group that people were doing bits and pieces from all over the place but not necessarily…the skills weren't being consolidated because it wasn't the same skill in this lesson that they were then having to demonstrate in the following lesson" (CS5, Teacher, V3)

"I have had a complaint from the science department this week about some of the Year seven materials… [that they are] not particularly accurate with regards to science or historical facts, so that's something to look into. I think this is the danger… highly trained specialists delivering things as form tutors, they are starting to pick up on things. And it does sort of make people think, *'Oh well does that mean we can rely on all of the materials?'*" (CS7, Teacher, V4)

Other than these general concerns, there was also a feeling among staff in some schools that the materials were not pitched at the appropriate *level* for the children in their school, meaning that significant adaption was required before they were considered fit for purpose:

"We've taken the theme and… we've used what we wanted out of them. But I think it was an original decision by the people that met together first, they didn't like the story… they thought our children would be, '*Urrr….*'" (CS10, Acting SL, V2)

"The characters that go with it, is just a little bit too cartoonish and baby like in my eyes" (CS8, Teacher, V3)

"Sometimes I look and think, hmmm a good twenty minutes of that lesson, I need to adapt it to make it more high level or low level" (CS8, Teacher, V3)

"By the time they've got to the end of the autumn term when they're becoming much more mature, the materials are regarded now as too patronizing" (CS7, SL, V5)

That said, there were members of staff who clearly felt that the level of the materials was appropriate for their pupils: "The pupils have liked following that theme through and carrying the same characters through and they can sort of empathize with the characters doing these things because they're sort of their age, they're in their situation, so that's been nice" (CS7, V2, Teacher). Aside from the fact that these are different members of staff in different schools, possibly working with different ages of pupils, one explanation for this division of opinion on the level of the SEAL materials is the willingness (or lack thereof) among individual members of staff to actively adapt them to suit the needs of their pupils. Clearly, some staff members would prefer the SEAL materials to be ready to use 'out of the box'. This issue is neatly summarized by the SEAL lead in CS6: "There are some nice ideas in there and there are some ideas where…they're not going to work at all. There are some things that you can tailor a bit and… although there's a lot of resources provided, there's very little in there that you can just take out and deliver. You have to do a lot of work, that's what we have found. We've had to do a lot of work ourselves to make them into a form that's going to be effective as a lesson, to teach to our pupils" (CS6, SL, V1).

The final issue raised in relation to barriers and facilitators at the programme level was the flexibility of SEAL. As previously outlined, SEAL was designed as a 'loose enabling framework' (Weare, 2010), to be adapted to suit the needs of the context of implementation. SEAL leads varied in their views as to whether this flexibility, and the potential for multiple models of implementation, operated as a barrier, facilitator or potentially even both:

"I think every school is very different and one of the schools down the way… they don't have the kind of issues that we might have in a school so therefore they might actually not really need the level that we might feel we need, so it is different isn't it? But you could have a series of models couldn't you? And it would be quite nice for people to actually see how that was done a lot more clearly" (CS8, SL, V4)

"The sort of practical thing I wanted and I was…I still am and I was at that stage trying to work out…where do we start with this? What are the practicalities of starting? Who's going to run it in my school? How do I coordinate this? Do I have a team approach? Is it a deputy? You know…do I do it through a subject? Those sort of real practical things and that's the one thing that nobody actually told us or gave us enough information about I would say" (CS9, HT, V1)

"I think if it was going to be taken very seriously it would need to be quite strict guidelines about how you would introduce something like this. And it wasn't or

it hasn't been, it's been very much 'you can do it like this you can do it like that' 'just give the kids a card a week to put in their planners to reflect on' [laughs] …. that could be SEAL, and what we could do could be SEAL, and you could coordinate your entire school building and build it around SEAL, you know, and have a SEAL shaped pond with sea lions and everything, you could do that and that would be all fitting in with it, but its how far you take it" (CS8, SL, V4)

Although one SL welcomed the flexibility inherent in SEAL ("It credits teachers with intelligence" (CS10, SL, V4)), he also commented, "I haven't decided where we're going with it next even" (CS10, SL,V4).

4.4.6 Summary and synthesis of barriers to and facilitators of effective implementation

Consistent with the findings of previous research (e.g. Greenberg et al, 2005; Durlak and DuPre, 2008), our analysis of qualitative case study school data revealed a range of barriers and facilitators relating to preplanning and foundations, implementation support system, implementation environment, implementer factors, and programme characteristics. The factors identified clearly interrelate in creating the conditions for effective (or ineffective) implementation of SEAL. Amongst these factors, we tentatively point to staff 'will and skill', in addition to time and resource allocation, as being the most crucial in driving implementation forward (or, indeed, holding it back).

5 IMPACT OF THE SECONDARY SEAL PROGRAMME

5.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter we present our analyses of data pertaining to the impact of SEAL on a variety of outcomes at the pupil and school level. As such, the content relates mainly to RQs 1 and 2. The data analysed is almost exclusively quantitative in nature – with the exception of elements of the final sub-section on the wider impact of SEAL, which also draw upon qualitative data collected during our case study visits.

The chapter is divided into two major sections. The first of these deals with impact of SEAL in pupil-level outcomes including social and emotional skills, pro-social behaviour, general mental health difficulties, and behaviour problems. The second section examines the impact of SEAL on school-level outcomes including climate, staff social and emotional skills, and other broad indicators (e.g. perceptions of impact among key stakeholders in case study schools).

As mentioned earlier in this report, when talking about 'SEAL schools' and the impact (or lack thereof) of SEAL, we are only referring to the programme *as implemented by the schools in our sample*. The flexible nature of the programme means that each school can take a very different approach (indeed, this was clearly seen in our case study data) and as such it is difficult to make generalisations about the success or failure of SEAL overall, even with the large and representative sample utilized in this research.

5.2 Analysis of pupil-level outcome data

Pupil-level outcome data was collected for social and emotional skills (using the ELAI), pro-social behaviour (SDQ pro-social behaviour subscale), general mental health difficulties (SDQ total difficulties composite scale), and behaviour problems (SDQ conduct problems subscale). Initial data screening, including loss-to-follow up rates, missing data analysis and checking of data requirements and assumptions was conducted prior to formal data analysis. This screening process indicated that both pupil and school attrition (e.g. 'drop-out') rates were well within acceptable limits for longitudinal research of this kind, that there was no discernible pattern to missing data, and that the data collected was suitable for the analyses presented later in this chapter. These findings are indicative of a robust dataset.

Descriptive statistics for the pupil level outcome measures outlined above are presented in Table 5. In the interests of demonstrating the representativeness of the dataset, normative dataset averages for the various measures are also included in the table.

Table 5. Mean scores (and standard deviations) for pupil level outcome measures in the secondary SEAL evaluation.

	Social and emotional skills (ELAI) Min = 20, Max = 100			Pro-social behaviour (SDQ) Min = 0, Max = 10			General mental health difficulties (SDQ) Min = 0, Max = 40			Behaviour problems (SDQ) Min = 0, Max = 10		
	SEAL	COMP	11-16 NORM	SEAL	COMP	11-16 NORM	SEAL	COMP	11-16 NORM	SEAL	COMP	11-16 NORM
Time 1	73.72 (8.64)	74.06 (8.59)	72.6 (8.6)	7.55 (1.86)	7.50 (1.91)	8.0 (1.7)	12.41 (6.0)	12.41 (5.93)	10.3 (5.2)	2.42 (2.02)	2.39 (2.01)	2.2 (1.7)
Time 3	73.10 (8.27)	72.59 8.14)		7.14 (2.03)	7.15 (1.86)		11.51 (5.87)	12.06 (5.69)		2.16 (1.88)	2.25 (1.91)	

NB: ELAI 11-16 normative dataset averages drawn from Southampton Psychology Service (2003); SDQ 11-16 normative dataset averages drawn from www.sdqinfo.com

Several clear patterns are evident in Table 5. Firstly, the Time 1 mean scores of pupils in both the SEAL and comparison schools are very similar to the 11-16 normative dataset averages for the ELAI and SDQ, adding strength to the claim that the evaluation dataset is representative of the population from which it is drawn. Secondly, the mean scores of pupils in the SEAL and comparison groups are equivalent at baseline (Time 1), which gives us confidence that any subsequent differences at Time 3 can be attributed to the implementation of SEAL. However, perusal of the Time 3 mean scores in fact reveals very little change in either group – indicating that the SEAL programme (as implemented by the schools in our sample) does not appear to have impacted upon any of the pupil level outcome measures.

Analytical strategy

The pupil level outcome data outlined above was analysed using a technique known as multi-level modelling (also called 'hierarchical linear modelling'). Multi-level modelling (MLM) is considered preferable to traditional inferential statistical analyses because it allows us to take into account the hierarchical (that is, pupils reside within schools, which reside within LAs) and clustered (that is, scores of pupils within a school will be correlated) nature of sample data (Paterson & Goldstein, 1991). Analytical techniques that ignore these natural structures (e.g. standard multiple regression) can seriously underestimate the standard error of the regression co-efficient (that is, the amount of sampling error associated with a regression) – which could lead to spurious results (Twisk, 2006).

MLM is essentially about the prediction of a response variable using a set of explanatory variables. In this evaluation study, our response variables were the pupil level outcome measures outlined above. We had a number of explanatory variables residing at the pupil, school and LA levels. In terms of establishing the impact of SEAL on pupil level outcomes, the key explanatory variable of interest is the school level variable of 'SEAL status' (that is, whether a given school is in the 'SEAL' or 'comparison' group). MLM analysis can tell us whether such a variable is a statistically significant predictor (that is, the probability that the pattern of scores is due to chance) of the response variable, and also its associated co-efficient value (that is, how strong a predictor it is). It provides us with such information after controlling for all

other measured variables – making it a particularly rigorous form of analysis in comparison to traditional techniques. In the context of our evaluation, it means that if a 'SEAL effect' is found, we can be particularly confident in our findings. Finally, MLM analysis also provides an estimate of the proportion of explained variance in the response variable that is attributable to each level in the analysis (e.g. pupil, school, LA). In our study, this is particularly useful because it can tell us about differences within and between schools in our sample.

Below we present four MLM analyses – one each for social and emotional skills, pro-social behaviour, general mental health difficulties, and behaviour problems. The analyses follow a standard format. In each, the response variable is pupils' scores at Time 3 for the given outcome measure. At the pupil level, the explanatory variables included are:

- Time 1 score for the given response variable
- Sex (male or female)
- Free school meal eligibility (yes or no)
- SEN provision (No recorded SEN, School Action, School Action Plus, Statement of SEN)
- Ethnicity (18 ethnicity categories – e.g. Bangladeshi)

At the school level, the explanatory variables included are:

- SEAL status (SEAL or comparison)
- Average attainment (% pupils obtaining 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths)
- Size (number of FTE pupils on roll)
- Socio-economic status (% of pupils eligible for free school meals)
- Attendance (% half days missed due to unauthorised absence)
- SEN (average number of pupils identified as having SEN in year group)

At the LA level, the explanatory variables included are:

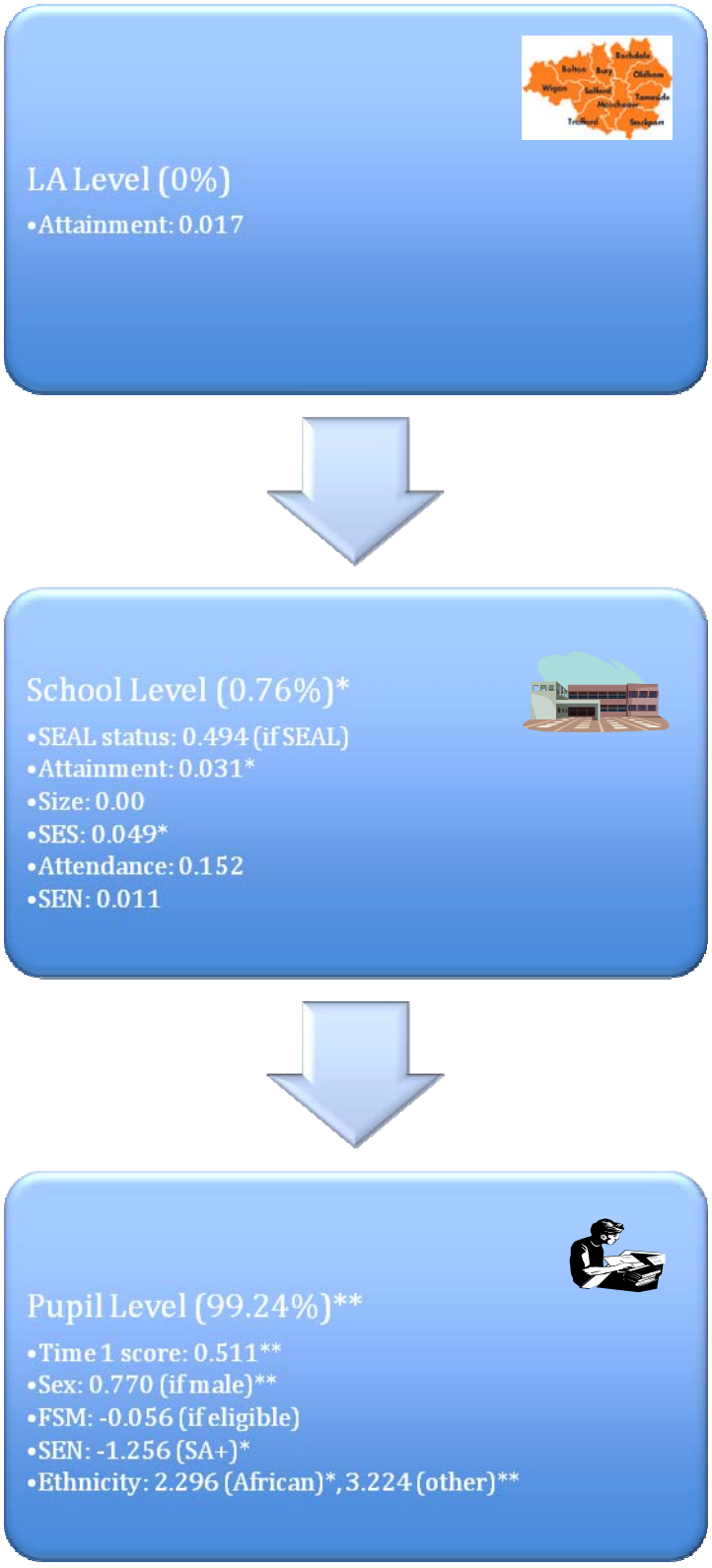
- Average attainment (% 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths)

In the interests of clarity and brevity, each model is presented in a simplified format with explanatory notes. The relevant technical tables (which contain the full details of each analysis) can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2.1 Impact on pupils' social and emotional skills

The simplified multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' social and emotional skills is presented in Figure 16:

Figure 16. Multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' social and emotional skills at Time 3 (N=3307).



NB: '*' = p<0.05, '**' = p<0.01

The information presented in Figure 16 can be interpreted as follows. Firstly, for each level (e.g. pupil, school, LA), a percentage figure is presented in parentheses – this is the amount of explained variance in the response variable (in this case, pupils' social and emotional skills at Time 3) that can be attributed to the level in question. For example, in Figure 16, 0.76% of the explained variance in pupils' social and emotional scores at Time 3 can be attributed to the school level. Secondly, for each explanatory variable within a given level, a co-efficient value is presented[13]. This value represents the amount of change in the response variable (pupils' social and emotional skills at Time 3) that is associated with a change of one unit on the explanatory variable in question. For instance, in the pupil level of Figure 16, for every increase of one unit on the Time 1 score, there is an associated increase of 0.511 units on the Time 3 score. Those co-efficient values that are statistically significant are marked with either a single or double asterisk (depending upon which significance threshold they fall below).

Figure 16 indicates that the school level variable of SEAL status is not a statistically significant predictor of pupils' social and emotional skills at Time 3, although the co-efficient is in the direction expected (that is, being at a SEAL school is associated with an increase in Time 3 scores as compared to being at a comparison school). The 'p' value for this variable was close to the 0.05 threshold (see Table 1 in Appendix 1), and so can be classified as a marginal, non-significant trend.

The MLM analysis demonstrates that both the school and pupil levels were responsible for a statistically significant amount of the explained variance in Time 3 scores. At the school level, those explanatory variables associated with statistically significant change in pupils' social and emotional skills at Time 3 were:

- Attainment – for every 1% increase in the proportion of pupils obtaining 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths, there was an associated increase of 0.031 units in Time 3 ELAI scores;
- SES – for every 1% increase in the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, there was an associated increase of 0.049 units in Time 3 ELAI scores;

At the pupil level, those variables associated with statistically significant change in pupils' social and emotional skills at Time 3 were:

- Time 1 score – for every increase of one unit in the Time 1 ELAI score, there was an associated increase of 0.511 units in Time 3 ELAI score;
- Sex – being male was associated with an increase of 0.77 units in Time 3 ELAI score;
- SEN – being at School Action Plus was associated with a decrease of 1.256 units in Time 3 ELAI score;

[13] For nominal variables with only two categories (e.g. sex), a co-efficient is always presented; for those with more than two categories (e.g. ethnicity), only those categories associated with a statistically significant change in the response variable are listed.

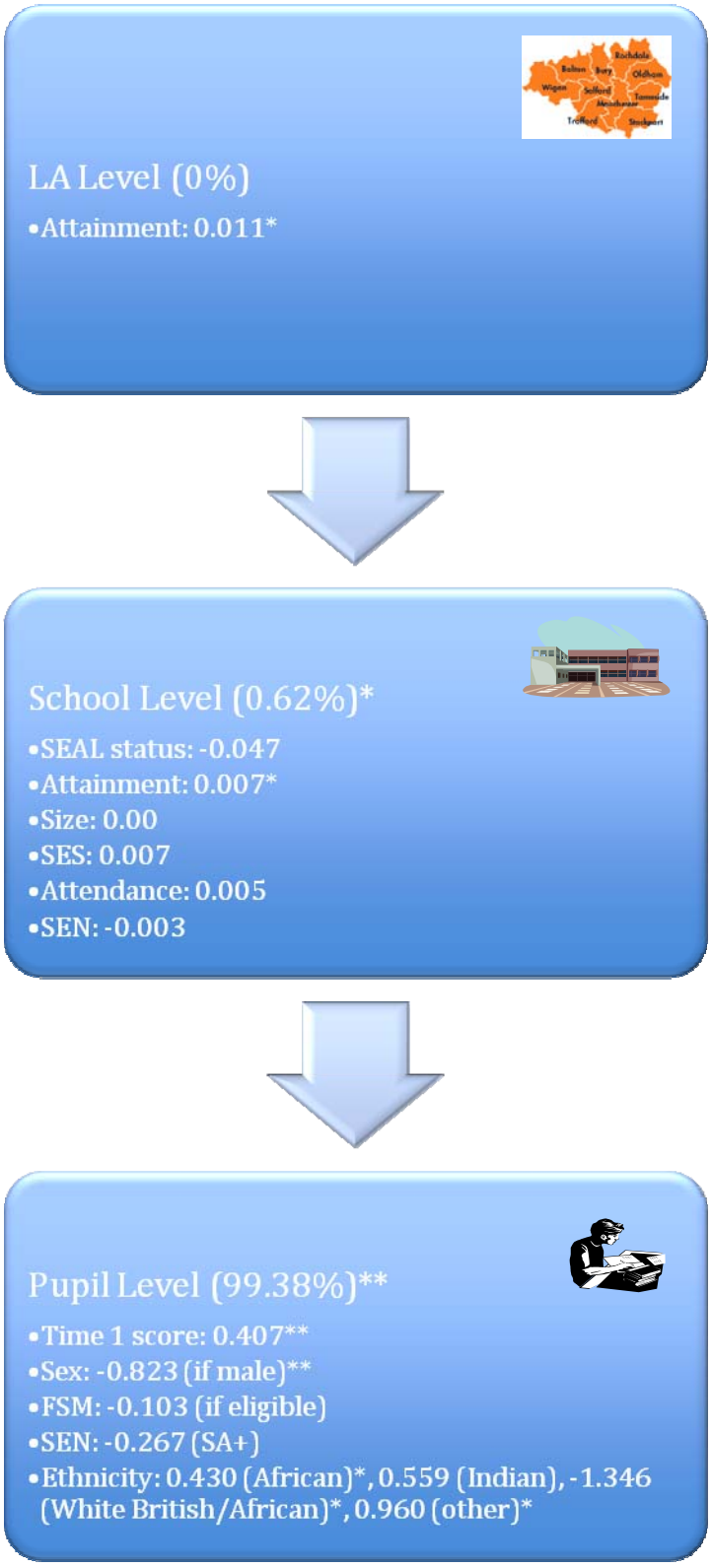
- Ethnicity: being from an African or 'other' background were associated with an increase of 2.296 and 3.224 units (respectively) in Time 3 ELAI score.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the secondary SEAL programme (as implemented by the schools in our sample) failed to impact significantly upon pupils' social and emotional skills.

5.2.2 Impact upon pupils' pro-social behaviour

The simplified multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' pro-social behaviour is presented in Figure 17:

Figure 17. Multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' pro-social behaviour at Time 3 (N=4507).



NB: '*' = p<0.05, '**' = p<0.01

Figure 17 indicates that the school level variable of SEAL status is not a statistically significant predictor of pupils' pro-social behaviour at Time 3.

The MLM analysis demonstrates that both the school and pupil levels were responsible for a statistically significant amount of the explained variance in Time 3 scores. At the school level, those variables associated with statistically significant change in pupils' pro-social behaviour at Time 3 were:

- Attainment – for every 1% increase in the proportion of pupils obtaining 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths, there was an associated increase of 0.007 units in Time 3 SDQ pro-social behaviour scores;

At the pupil level, those variables associated with statistically significant change in pupils' pro-social behaviour at Time 3 were:

- Time 1 score – for every increase of one unit in the Time 1 SDQ pro-social behaviour score, there was an associated increase of 0.407 units in Time 3 SDQ pro-social behaviour score;
- Sex – being male was associated with an decrease of 0.823 units in Time 3 SDQ pro-social behaviour score;
- SEN – being at School Action Plus was associated with a decrease of 0.267 units in Time 3 SDQ pro-social behaviour score;
- Ethnicity: being from an African, Indian, White British/African or 'other' background were associated with an increase of 0.430, 0.559, a decrease of 1.346, and an increase of 0.960 units (respectively) in Time 3 SDQ pro-social behaviour score.

Additionally, the explanatory variable of attainment at LA level was associated with statistically significant change in pupils' pro-social behaviour at Time 3:

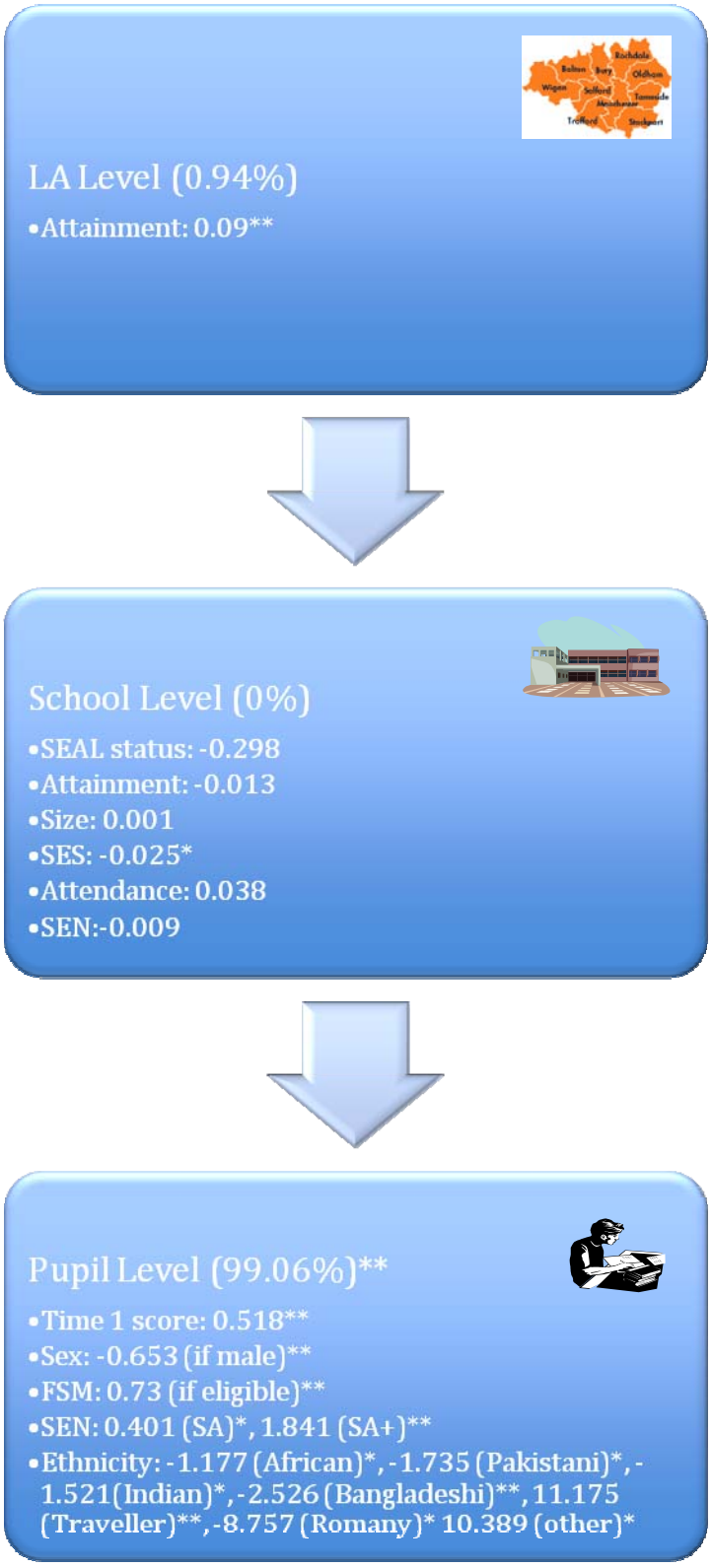
- Attainment – for every 1% increase in the proportion of pupils obtaining 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths, there was an associated increase of 0.011 units in Time 3 SDQ pro-social behaviour scores.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the secondary SEAL programme (as implemented by the schools in our sample) failed to impact significantly upon pupils' pro-social behaviour.

5.2.3 Impact upon pupils' general mental health difficulties

The simplified multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' general mental health difficulties is presented in Figure 18:

Figure 18. Multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' general mental health difficulties at Time 3 (N=4460).



NB: '*' = p<0.05, '**' = p<0.01

Figure 18 indicates that the school level variable of SEAL status is not a statistically significant predictor of pupils' general mental health difficulties at Time 3, although the co-efficient is in the direction expected (that is, being at a SEAL school is associated with a decrease in Time 3 scores as compared to being at a comparison school). The 'p' value for this variable was close to the 0.05 threshold (see Table 3 in Appendix 1), and so can be classified as a marginal, non-significant trend.

The MLM analysis demonstrates that only the pupil level was responsible for a statistically significant amount of the explained variance in Time 3 scores. At the pupil level, those variables associated with statistically significant change in pupils' general mental health difficulties at Time 3 were:

- Time 1 score – for every increase of one unit in the Time 1 SDQ total difficulties score, there was an associated increase of 0.518 units in Time 3 SDQ total difficulties score;
- Sex – being male was associated with a decrease of 0.653 units in Time 3 SDQ total difficulties score;
- FSM eligibility: being eligible for FSM was associated with an increase of 0.73 units in Time 3 SDQ total difficulties score;
- SEN – being at School Action or School Action Plus were associated with an increase of 0.401 and 1.841 units (respectively) in Time 3 SDQ total difficulties score;
- Ethnicity: being from an African, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Romany, Traveller or 'other' background were associated with reductions of 1.1177, 1.735, 1.521, 2.526, 8.757 and increases of 11.175 and 10.389 units (respectively) in Time 3 SDQ total difficulties score.

Additionally, the explanatory variable of attainment at LA level was associated with statistically significant change in pupils' general mental health difficulties at Time 3:

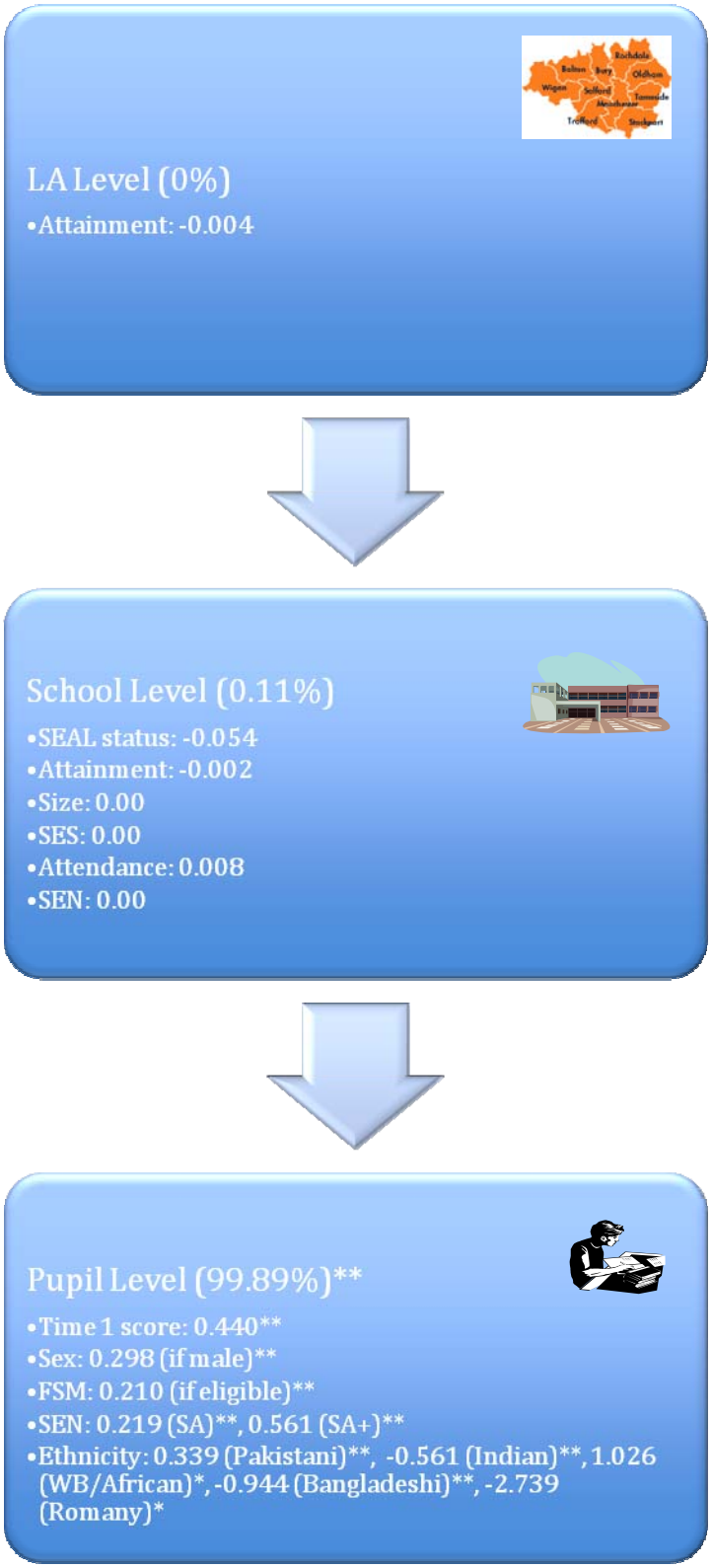
- Attainment – for every 1% increase in the proportion of pupils obtaining 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths, there was an associated increase of 0.09 units in Time 3 SDQ total difficulties scores.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the secondary SEAL programme (as implemented by the schools in our sample) failed to impact significantly upon pupils' general mental health difficulties.

5.2.4 Impact upon pupils' behaviour problems

The simplified multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' behaviour problems is presented in Figure 19:

Figure 19. Multi-level model analysis of the impact of secondary SEAL on pupils' behaviour problems at Time 3 (N=4460).



NB: '*' = p<0.05, '**' = p<0.01

Figure 19 indicates that the school level variable of SEAL status is not a statistically significant predictor of pupils' behaviour problems at Time 3.

The MLM analysis demonstrates that only the pupil level was responsible for a statistically significant amount of the explained variance in Time 3 scores. At the pupil level, those variables associated with statistically significant change in pupils' behaviour problems at Time 3 were:

- Time 1 score – for every increase of one unit in the Time 1 SDQ behaviour problems score, there was an associated increase of 0.440 units in Time 3 SDQ behaviour problems score;
- Sex – being male was associated with a decrease of 0.298 units in Time 3 SDQ behaviour problems score;
- FSM eligibility: being eligible for FSM was associated with an increase of 0.21 units in Time 3 SDQ behaviour problems score;
- SEN – being at School Action or School Action Plus were associated with an increase of 0.219 and 0.561 units (respectively) in Time 3 SDQ behaviour problems score;
- Ethnicity: being from Pakistani, Indian, White British/African, Bangladeshi, or Romany backgrounds were associated with an increase of 0.339, a decrease of 0.561, an increase of 1.026, and decreases of 0944 and 2.739 units (respectively) in Time 3 SDQ behaviour problems scores.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the secondary SEAL programme (as implemented by the schools in our sample) failed to impact significantly upon pupils' general mental health difficulties.

5.2.5 Summary of analysis of pupil-level outcome data

Overall our analysis indicated that the secondary SEAL programme (as implemented by the schools in our sample) failed to impact significantly upon pupils' social and emotional skills, general mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour or behaviour problems. Although the school level variable of SEAL status was close to statistical significance in the analyses of social and emotional skills and general mental health difficulties (indicating the possibility of a 'SEAL effect'), the effect sizes associated with this variable were marginal – for instance, being at a SEAL school was associated with just a 0.298 reduction in SDQ total difficulties score at Time 3.

5.3 Analysis of school level outcome data

School level outcome data was collected for school climate (using the pupil and teacher versions of the SSCP), staff social and emotional skills (using the RTS) and broader indicators of impact (using qualitative data from interviews with key stakeholders such as teachers and pupils) in the nine longitudinal case study schools. However, for both the teacher version of the SSCP and the RTS, the response rate was insufficient to allow for an inferential analysis to be conducted. In relation to the SSCP, there were 203 questionnaires completed at Time 1 and 140 at Time 3. However, only 7 of these could be

matched (that is, the same teacher completing questionnaires at Time 1 and Time 3). For the RTS, there were 141 questionnaires completed at Time 1 and 136 at Time 3. However, only 14 of these could be matched (that is, the same teacher completing questionnaires at each Time 1 and Time 3). The likely causes of this response rate are discussed in the next chapter.

Response rates for the pupil version of the SSCP were much better. Initial data screening, including loss-to-follow up rates, missing data analysis and checking of data requirements and assumptions indicated that both pupil and school attrition (e.g. 'drop-out') rates were well within acceptable limits for longitudinal research of this kind, that there was no discernible pattern to missing data, and that the data collected was suitable for the analyses presented later in this chapter. These findings are indicative of a robust dataset.

5.3.1 Impact upon school climate

Descriptive statistics for the pupil version of the SSCP are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Mean scores (and standard deviations) for pupil-rated school climate domains.

	Trust and Respect in Others Min=1, Max=4	Liking for School Min=1, Max=4	Classroom and School Supportiveness Min=1, Max=4	Pupil Autonomy and Influence Min=1, Max=4
Time 1	2.88 (0.6)	3.07 (0.55)	2.89 (0.51)	2.34 (0.55)
Time 3	2.51 (0.29)	2.67 (0.25)	2.55 (0.51)	2.89 (0.5)

As can be seen in Table 6, there is a tendency for pupil-rated climate scores to worsen over time. The only exception to this trend is pupil autonomy and influence, which increases between Time 1 and Time 3.

Analytical strategy

As the SSCP data was drawn from only 9 schools, all of whom were SEAL schools, the kind of multi-level analyses outlined above were not feasible. Instead, a factorial repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) with two factors (time – 1 vs. 3; and domain – trust and respect in others, liking for school, classroom and school supportiveness, pupil autonomy and influence) was conducted. This factorial repeated measures ANOVA allows us to examine whether there is a 'main effect' of time (that is, do overall climate scores change significantly from Time 1 to Time 3?) as well as any possible interactions between time and domain (that is, are there significant changes from Time 1 to Time 3 in some domains but not others?).

The factorial repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of time on pupil's responses, $F(1, 232) = 14.270$, $p < 0.01$ (partial $eta^2 = 0.058$). This effect is consistent with a general decline in scores between Time 1 and Time 3 (see Table 6). A significant effect of domain was also found, $F(3, 696) = 49.186$, $p < 0.01$ (partial $eta^2 = 0.175$). This effect is consistent with the

average score for pupil autonomy and influence being somewhat lower than that of other domains. Finally, there was also a significant interaction between time and domain, $F (3, 696) = 180.140$ $p < 0.01$ (partial $eta^2 = 0.437$). This interaction appears to stem the decline over time in trust and respect for teachers, liking for school, and classroom and school supportiveness, juxtaposed against the increase over time in pupil autonomy and influence.

Taken together, these findings indicate a statistically significant negative change in pupil ratings of trust and respect for teachers, liking for school, and classroom and school supportiveness in the case study SEAL schools, alongside a statistically significant increase in pupil autonomy and influence.

5.3.2 Wider impact – perceptions of key stakeholders

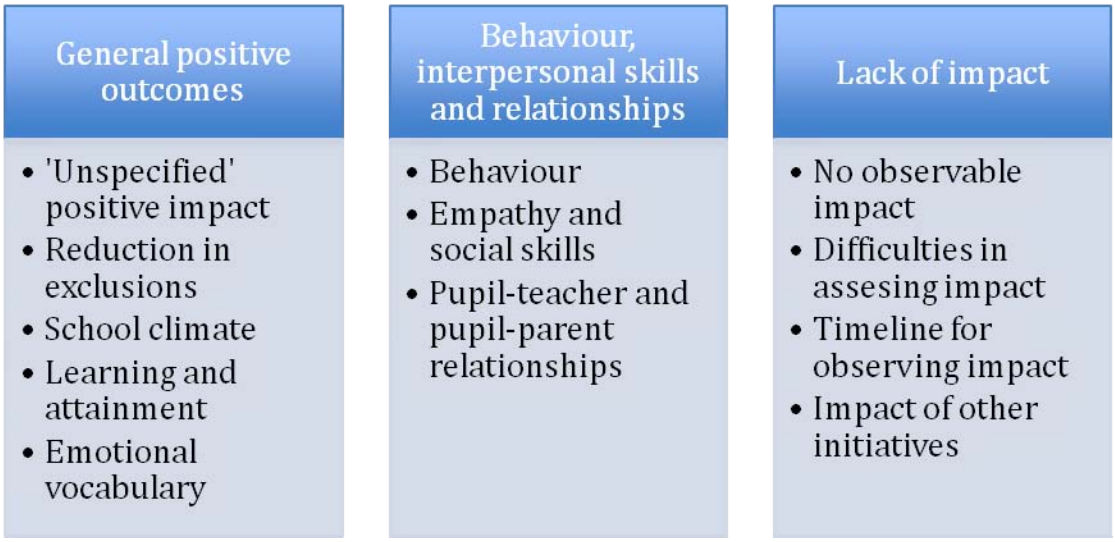
Perceptions of the wider impact of secondary SEAL were collected during our visits to the nine case study SEAL schools. Relevant data was extracted from interview and/or focus group transcripts.

Analytical strategy

Interviews were transcribed verbatim. These data were collated in NVivo 7/8, qualitative analysis software. The six basic phases of thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) were implemented, namely (1) data familiarization, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) report production. Throughout this process, the aims and objectives of the research were used to guide the organization and interpretation of data. Consistent with accepted guidelines for analyzing qualitative data, examples of textual passages that did not conform to the emergent themes ('negative cases' or 'divergences') were also noted.

The process outlined above led to a number of themes and sub-themes being developed, which are captured in Figure 20:

Figure 20. Perceptions of impact of secondary SEAL.



Generalized positive outcomes

This aspect of perceived impact relates to the more general, school-level change that our case study participants reported. At the most generic level, some school staff reported *'unspecified' positive impact*, wherein they were unable to precisely pinpoint what had changed for the better. Often these statements were personal reflections on the whole process of implementation and how their school had changed, perhaps explaining their lack of acuity:

"It's gone better than I thought it would really" (CS3, SL, V5)

"I think there's been an impact" (CS6, SL, V4)

"Whether there's a direct impact of SEAL… I can't say a hundred percent but I feel strongly that there is" (CS7, HT, V5)

"I can't put my finger on it but it just feels different" (CS6, Teacher, V5)

Some respondents gave more specific examples. In two schools (CS2 and CS4), positive changes in *school climate* were noted, for example: "I think you'll probably find as you go round that there's a decent atmosphere, so that's how I would evaluate it" (CS2, SL, V5). Additionally, two schools cited a perceived *reduction in exclusions*. In CS8 this was seen as specific to the year group that had been targeted during implementation: "We have taught SEAL to the Year 8, [and] the one thing I would definitely say is that we have had a reduction in exclusion" (CS8, SL, V5). Likewise, in CS10, the deputy head teacher felt that her work in dealing with exclusions had dropped dramatically, a change that she attributed to SEAL (CS10, DHT, V4). In CS5 and CS6 staff and pupils also perceived an impact upon *learning and attainment*, e.g. "I think within their learning, that it [SEAL] has had an impact on pupils" (CS6, SL, V4). Finally, in CS6 and CS7 there was a feeling that pupils' *emotional vocabulary* had developed: "I was teaching a sixth form

class and this girl started saying, 'This is really along the lines of empathy'. I don't think she would have used that context and that vocabulary is she hadn't met SEAL through her role as a peer mentor" (CS7, SL, V4).

Behaviour, interpersonal skills and relationships

In relation to *behaviour*, school staff cited a number of anecdotal instances of improvements they perceived as being the result of SEAL implementation. In some cases these were rather vague (e.g. "I think it's really helped them to improve their behaviour" (CS6, LTS, V5)), but in others there was clear evidence presented:

"Behaviour in Year 7, 9 and 11 (2008-9) is significantly improved on previous years. Our adoption of SEAL as a major whole-school priority can be credited with some of the reasons for improved attitudes and behaviour. SEAL influences focus sessions, assemblies, PSHCE and mentoring" (CS10, DA, V5)

"There have been less instances of [head of year] being called out to deal with a whole class… and he feels that the impact of SEAL [is that]… pupils are more self aware, and that is impacting on the way they conduct themselves in lessons" (CS6, SL, V4)

"31 students identified as high to medium behaviour problems were mentored using weekly SEAL targets. Progress for 15 students judged to be good or better" (CS10, DA, V5)

The above excerpt, which implies a link between improvements in pupils' social and emotional skills and their behaviour in school, is given some credence by evidence of perceived changes in *empathy and social skills*. In CS10, for example, a youth worker discussing knife crime (and in particular, a recent fatal stabbing), reported being amazed by the empathic responses of two pupils whose discussion of the case involved taking on the perspective of the victim and his different family members (CS10, V4). Pupil focus groups at this school seemed to validate this, with pupils also reporting they felt more socially confident (CS10, PFG, V5). This was also evident in other schools: "You get to understand how other people feel, so it kind of helps to build relationships and stuff because you know how they feel" (CS7, PFG, V5).

These perceived changes in interpersonal skills, which were linked to improvements in behaviour, were seen as facilitating both *pupil-teacher and pupil-parent relationships.* With regard to pupil-teacher relationships, pupils in CS5 were actually able to cite a lesson objective that had impacted upon their interactions with a staff member: "There was one PLEATS [SEAL] lesson that said at the end of this lesson I will not be afraid to go to the teacher if I need to… then the next day I did actually go to her" (CS5, PFG, V5). In CS4, the SEAL lead spoke of the positive impact of a workshop for children targeted for intervention: "Every child without fail kissed their parent at the door… now you don't see that in secondary school" (CS4, SL, V4).

Lack of impact

Despite the examples cited above, there was also a groundswell of opinion across the case study schools that SEAL had produced *no observable impact*:

"I'd struggle to put my finger on it [and say] that's SEAL at work" (CS10, SL, V4)

"I honestly feel like I've failed on this [SEAL]" (CS2, SL, V5)

"We can look at behaviour logs. Well, that would just show the same as ever" (CS8, SL, V4)

"I don't think in a conscious way at the moment it's having an impact on my teaching" (CS7, FT, V5)

The perceived reasons for this lack of impact were threefold. Firstly, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, disentangling the impact of SEAL from the *impact of other initiatives* was seen to be very difficult: "You can't say that's to do with SEAL. [It is] very difficult to unpick exactly what impact SEAL has had because as I said earlier its part of a whole raft of different things that we're trying (CS10, SL, V5). Secondly, several respondents *mentioned difficulties in measuring impact:*

"I think it's very difficult to measure whether it actually has an impact on attainment. To actually measure that? I don't think you can" (CS7, SL, V5)

"It's your nature of the school and you can't quantify that" (CS7, SL, V5)

"The behaviour of that year group is better than another year group in the past? In fact I would say no it isn't. So I don't know how you would actually show that" (CS8, SL, V4)

Thirdly, the *timeline for observing impact* was also cited, with one school in particular feeling that it was too soon to expect observable change: "Obviously it's too soon to say whether there's going to be any change… because it's going to take a while to work through" (CS10, SL, V5).

5.3.3 Summary of school-level outcome data

As with our analysis of pupil-level outcome data, the general trend of our school-level data indicated that SEAL (as implemented by schools in our sample) failed to have a positive impact, although the results were less straightforward here. Analysis of school climate scores indicated significant reductions in pupils' trust and respect for teachers, liking for school, and feelings of classroom and school supportiveness from Time 1 to Time 3. Additionally, qualitative data around perceptions of impact indicated a feeling that SEAL had not produced the expected changes across schools. However, school climate data also showed a significant increase in pupils' feelings of autonomy and influence, and this was supplemented by anecdotal examples

of positive changes in general outcomes (e.g. reductions in exclusion), as well as more specific improvements in behaviour, interpersonal skills and relationships.

6 DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter we provide a recap of our main research methods and findings, discuss the relationship between our findings and those in the broader literature, consider the limitations inherent in our research design, and make some recommendations for future development of policy and practice in this area.

6.2 Recap of main research methods and findings

This national evaluation combined quantitative and qualitative inquiry. The former was utilised mainly to provide data pertaining to the impact of secondary SEAL, and the latter was used primarily to provide insights into the implementation process. For the quantitative component, 22 SEAL schools and a matched group of 19 comparison schools were recruited to take part in a quasi-experimental study. Pupils in Year 7 at the beginning of the academic year 2007/8 were the target cohort. Key outcome data (e.g. pupils' social and emotional skills, mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour and behaviour problems) was collected from the target cohort via self-report surveys on an annual basis: at the beginning of 2008 (Time 1 – baseline), at the beginning of 2009 (Time 2 – interim; note: this wave of quantitative data collection was only used to inform our unpublished interim reporting) and finally at the beginning of 2010 (Time 3 – post-test). Further details of this aspect of the research design can be found in section 3.3. For the qualitative component, nine of the 22 SEAL schools from the quantitative impact strand were recruited to participate in longitudinal qualitative case studies. These case study schools were visited five times (roughly once per term) during the course of our fieldwork. Data collection in the case study schools comprised of observations of lessons and other contexts, interviews and/or focus groups with members of the school community (e.g. pupils, teachers, SEAL leads, head teachers, and LA staff) and analysis of school documents (e.g. SEAL self-evaluation forms, policy documents). Further details of this aspect of the research design can be found in section 3.4.

After fieldwork had begun, the then DCSF requested that additional quantitative data be collected pertaining to pupil and staff perceptions of school climate, staff social and emotional skills, and pupil understanding, knowledge and involvement in SEAL. These additional quantitative measures were implemented in our nine longitudinal case study schools following the same timetable as described above for the quantitative impact strand. Further details of this aspect of the research design can be found in section 3.5.

In terms of implementation, our analysis of case study schools' approaches to, and progress in SEAL implementation revealed a very mixed picture. Schools such as CS5, CS6 and CS3 made comparatively good progress in implementation, and were able to provide clear evidence of engagement in

the suggested school improvement cycle. However, schools like CS2, CS4 and CS10 made comparatively little progress over the same period of time. Our subjective impressions of these schools and analysis of other relevant data (see major subsections 4.3 and 4.4) suggest that a whole range of issues were influential in determining these differences – including a somewhat superficial approach to implementation ('box ticking') and a failure to sustain initial activity levels in the latter schools. However, our analysis of impact data for each school revealed that this made little difference to outcomes for pupils, with very little variation evident between schools.

Our nine case study schools were extremely variable and fragmented in the extent to which they adopted a whole-school approach to implementing SEAL. An issue here may be the necessarily limited time frame within which this evaluation study was conducted. Development of a truly whole-school nature inevitably takes time to become fully embedded. This may be particularly true of large, complex institutions such as secondary schools. The 'patchy' approach seen in most schools may simply be a reflection of this truism. However, there also other issues which may have contributed to the lack of a consistent whole-school approach. Firstly, some schools interpreted the SEAL guidance in such a way that they purposively selected pockets of activity or development to focus upon, at the expense of the 'bigger picture'. This was often in tandem to a perception that SEAL did not offer them something new. Sustaining the effort and energy required to drive SEAL forward at various levels was also a problem for some, especially in the face of competing pressures. Alongside this, a perception that things would begin to change in the short-term among some staff lead to a withdrawal of effort and interest when this did not happen.

Consistent with the findings of previous research (e.g. Greenberg et al, 2005; Durlak and DuPre, 2008), our analysis of qualitative case study school data revealed a range of barriers and facilitators relating to preplanning and foundations, implementation support systems, implementation environment, implementer factors, and programme characteristics. The factors identified clearly interacted in creating the conditions for effective (or ineffective) implementation of SEAL. Amongst these factors, we tentatively point to staff 'will and skill', in addition to time and resource allocation, as being the most crucial in driving implementation forward (or, indeed, holding it back).

Finally, in terms of impact, our analysis of pupil-level outcome data indicated that SEAL (as implemented by schools in our sample) failed to impact significantly upon pupils' social and emotional skills, general mental health difficulties, pro-social behaviour or behaviour problems. Although the school-level variable of 'SEAL status' (e.g. whether a given school were implementing SEAL or not) was close to statistical significance in the analyses of social and emotional skills and general mental health difficulties (indicating the possibility of a 'SEAL effect'), the effect sizes associated with this variable were marginal – for instance, being at a SEAL school was associated with just a 0.298 reduction in SDQ total difficulties score at Time 3. In relation to school-level outcome data, our analyses indicated that SEAL (as implemented by schools in our sample) failed to have a positive impact, although the results

were less straightforward here. Analysis of school climate scores indicated significant reductions in pupils' trust and respect for teachers, liking for school, and feelings of classroom and school supportiveness during SEAL implementation. Additionally, qualitative data around perceptions of impact indicated a feeling that SEAL had not produced the expected changes across schools. However, school climate data also showed a significant increase in pupils' feelings of autonomy and influence, and this was supplemented by anecdotal examples of positive changes in general outcomes (e.g. reductions in exclusion), as well as more specific improvements in behaviour, interpersonal skills and relationships.

6.3 Relationship of the main findings to the literature on SEL programmes

As seen in chapter 2, there is an established evidence base relating to both the implementation and impact of SEL programmes (e.g. Durlak et al, in press; Blank et al, 2009; Durlak and DuPre, 2008; Greenberg et al, 2005). Additionally, there is a small evidence base relating specifically to the SEAL programme (e.g. Hallam, Rhamie & Shaw, 2006a; Humphrey et al, 2008; OFSTED, 2007; Smith et al, 2007; Downey & Williams, 2010). Our findings resonate with certain elements of previous studies, but in other areas there are disparities.

6.3.1 Implementation

In relation to implementation progress, the most appropriate sources of comparison are the studies of the SEBS pilot carried out by OFSTED (2007) and Smith et al (2007). It is clear that the overall development of SEAL implementation reported in the SEBS pilot bears some striking similarities to the findings we reported in section 4.2. In particular, the initial 'spike' of enthusiasm, energy and activity in relation to SEAL, followed by a gradual drop-off in activity was something that was clearly evident in most of our case study schools and those studied by Smith et al (2007): "It was obvious many of the pilot schools had 'slowed down' in relation to their roll-out… there was a definite 'change' in attitudes towards the implementation of the pilot" (p.44). Another key similarity in our findings was the variability of staff awareness and understanding of SEAL/SEBS. Like Smith et al (2007), we found a great deal of variability both within and between schools, which created difficulties in 'securing the vision' and setting plans in motion in the early stages of implementation. This was also found by OFTSED (2007): "By the end of the first term of the pilot, schools had typically not developed a secure plan to guide their work" (p.8).

The difficulties experienced by some of our case study schools in relation to auditing and monitoring are also reflected in the findings of OFSTED (2007), who reported that schools found it difficult to analyse and identify pupils' social and emotional needs. This was also found by Humphrey et al (2008) in the evaluation of the primary SEAL small group work element. In particular, school staff in that study struggled with the notion of formal evaluation of pupils' social and emotional skills and related outcomes, opting for a more

‘intuitive’ approach in determining whether interventions had been successful. This approach was clearly evident in our case study schools; although plans had been drawn up for the use of a variety of data sources to evaluate progress, in most cases these were not enacted and staff instead relied on the feeling that things were changing (see section 4.3.12). Although our schools had the advantage of guidance to aid them in more formal profiling, monitoring and evaluation of secondary SEAL (DCSF, 2007a), we saw little evidence of it being utilized.

In discussing schools’ progress in implementation it can be easy – given the null results obtained across all of our quantitative impact measures – to focus upon problematic issues and difficulties experienced by schools in an attempt to understand why the intended outcomes of the study were not realised. However, it is also important to remember that some case study schools – notably CS3, CS5 and CS6 – made comparatively good progress in their implementation of SEAL, and as such it is worth briefly discussing what factors appeared to enable this and how these relate to the broader research on SEAL and SEL. An appropriate set of foundations for SEAL gave the schools a good starting point. For instance, CS5 were involved in the SEBS pilot, CS6 had also been part of the UK Resilience Project and CS3 had a strong pastoral system in place prior to the roll-out of SEAL. These findings link closely to those of Humphrey et al (2008), who found that schools who were the most effective in implementing the primary SEAL small group work element often had a history of work in similar or related areas.

A further factor that perhaps distinguished schools such as CS5 and CS6 was the overall level of ongoing staff development activity. This perhaps enabled more CPD and training to occur in relation to SEAL, further increasing staff skills and helping to reduce pockets of resistance among reluctant teachers (indeed, the SEAL lead in CS6 was also responsible for staff development, meaning that SEAL-related CPD was offered more consistently than in other schools). In these two schools, SEAL was seen as compatible with, and able to be integrated with, other initiatives that had a high priority in the Local Authority, such as Assessment for Learning, and Behaviour for Learning (CS5 and CS6 are both in LA D). Finally, in terms of leadership support, although none of the SEAL leads in CS3, CS5 or CS6 were on their respective school management teams, they each professed to a high degree of support and encouragement from school leaders, with SEAL and related initiatives being given higher priority than in other schools. We tentatively suggest that it is these contextual factors that enabled these three schools to make relatively more progress than our other case studies.

Table 7. Barriers and facilitators of implementation identified in this study and the wider literature

	Barriers and facilitators identified in this study	Durlak and DuPre (2008)	Greenberg et al (2005)	Forman et al (2009)
Preplanning and foundations	Awareness		✓ 'awareness'	
	Buy-in	✓ 'shared vision'	✓ 'commitment and engagement'	✓ 'alignment with school philosophy'
	Staff involvement	✓ 'formulation of tasks'		✓ 'engaging the school in planning'
	Incentive to change	✓ 'openness to change'	✓ 'incentive for change'	
Implementation support system	Provision of training	✓ 'training and technical assistance'	✓ 'structure and content of training'	✓ 'provision of high quality training'
	Ongoing LA support		✓ 'timing of training'	
Implementation environment	Leadership support	✓ 'leadership'	✓ 'staff feel unsupported'	✓ 'principal support'
	Integration with other aspects of school or curriculum	✓ 'integration of new programming'		✓ 'integrating the intervention with other school programmes or the curriculum'
	Time constraints	✓ 'organizational capacity'	✓ 'insufficient time'	
	Resource allocation		✓ 'resources'	✓ 'development of resources to sustain practice'
	Openness to change	✓ 'openness to change'	✓ 'incentive for change'	
	Multiple initiatives			
	Climate and relationships	✓'positive work climate'	✓ 'school and classroom climate'	
Implementer factors	Implementer experience, skills and confidence in delivery	✓ 'self-efficacy and skill proficiency'	✓ 'implementer skills and knowledge'	✓ 'teacher characteristics and behaviours'
	Attitudes to SEAL	✓ 'perceived need for innovation'	✓ 'implementer perceptions'	✓ 'development of teacher support'
Programme characteristics	Quality of materials	✓ 'characteristics of the innovation'	✓ 'quality of materials'	
	Level of materials			
	Flexibility			

In terms of barriers and facilitators of implementation, the findings presented in chapter 4 mirror many of those found in the wider literature. As can be seen in Table 7 above, the work of Durlak and DuPre (2008), Greenberg et al (2005) and Forman et al (2009) fits closely with the issues raised by respondents in our qualitative case studies. In this subsection we discuss two of these issues which – through our reading of the data and overall experiences in the schools – seemed to be most crucial to the implementation process. Firstly, the staff 'will and skill' (see section 4.4.7) in relation to SEAL emerged as a key barrier in many schools. We have highlighted this aspect in particular because it can be argued that school staff are the fulcrum on which the success or failure of a programme like SEAL rests. Staff are the delivery agents of the 'taught' element of SEAL (e.g. the curriculum component and provision of support), in addition to being the central figures through which the 'caught' element (e.g. developing the ethos and climate of the school and modelling appropriate behaviour and skills) is manifested. Thus, the resistance to SEAL among a core of staff evidenced across our case study schools provides a critical barrier that prevents other important implementation activities from taking place. Where staff resistance is high, work at the initial stage of implementation is hindered – for example, securing the shared vision for SEAL. Likewise, subsequent work around planning, taking action and reviewing progress also suffers, since staff feel unwilling

(the 'will') or unable (the 'skill') to carry out the various implementation-related activities. We propose that this critical accumulation of a lack of activity in key areas compounds existing staff concerns about a lack of observable impact in relation to SEAL, leading to further withdrawal of effort. That is, if staff are not carrying out implementation duties, outcomes for pupils will not change; they may then see the lack of change as a sign that SEAL is 'not working', providing further justification for their original decision. This vicious cycle of inactivity and lack of change creates what Raudenbash (2008) calls 'implementation failure', wherein null results relating to an innovation can be attributed to inactivity rather than a failure of the innovation itself ('theory failure').

The second major barrier that we identified as crucial to implementation was resource allocation and time constraints (see section 4.4.6). We propose that like staff resistance, unresolved problems with resource allocation and time constraints pervade every aspect of the implementation process, contributing to eventual implementation failure: "Resources play a prominent role… by facilitating the enactment of proven instructional regimes" (Raudenbash, 2008, p.207). Greenberg et al (2005) agree, citing the importance of human, informational, technological, financial and physical resources as key components necessary for program implementation. Finally, Elias et al (2003) state that: "the effective use of economic and social capital often underlies the ultimate success of real change" (p.312). Our case study schools received little or no additional financial funding to aid SEAL implementation, meaning that other resources – in particular human resources – had to be allocated from within existing systems (this contrasts sharply with Forman et al's (2009) emphasis on development of financial resources to sustain practice). Even though SEAL was designed (and intended) to be assimilated into the existing structures and practices of schools, the reality in implementation was often very different, with it being viewed by many as an additional task in the busy professional lives of school staff. This was the case for staff involved more centrally (for instance, the SEAL lead in CS4 who felt that coordinating implementation could be a full-time job in itself) as well as those across the school as a whole – a finding which echoes that of Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw (2006b) in their evaluation of primary SEAL. In this set of circumstances, a feeling of lack of available time is understandable, and staff deal with this by prioritizing their tasks. It is at this stage in the process where SEAL begins to drift, unable to compete in the minds of staff with delivery of the academic curriculum. This hypothesized process is lent support by Forman et al (2009), who report on the implementation experience of teachers in the USA. One quote in particular is striking in its resonance: "I can't take the time out to teach these lessons, because if they [students] don't do well on their reading and math, we'll lose our jobs" (Forman et al, 2009, p.32). Additionally, similar issues were raised in the SEBS pilot; for instance, when Smith et al (2007) questioned schools about their decrease in implementation activity, "many staff said that the pilot had not been a priority due to their involvement in other programmes of work and initiatives combined with the pressures of delivering their core curriculum and teaching and learning responsibilities" (p.44). A similar issue was also raised in the OFTSED evaluation: "the exam driven culture makes it difficult sometimes to concentrate on social, emotional and

behavioural skills. Teachers are worried about the exam focus – they still need to get outcomes from exam results" (p.17).

6.3.2 Impact

Our completely null quantitative findings contrast with much of the published literature outlined in chapter 2 of this report. Although a similar null finding in relation to pupil outcomes was reported by OFSTED (2007) in relation to the SEBS pilot (see section 2.5), other evaluations of the various components of SEAL (e.g. Humphrey et al, 2008; Hallam, Rhamie & Shaw, 2006a, Downey & Williams. 2010) have yielded some positive findings in relation to impact. For some of these studies, this may be a reflection of the more 'targeted' and/or small scale nature of the components being evaluated. However, this notion does not apply to Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw's (2006a/b) evaluation of primary SEAL, since this was neither targeted or small-scale, and yet reported some positive changes in pupil outcomes – most notably awareness of emotions in others, social skills and relationships (albeit alongside some negative/null findings).

In terms of the wider SEL literature, reviews conducted by Durlak et al (in press), Adi et al (2007), Blank et al (2009), Catalano et al (2004) all provided indications of the positive impact of universal programmes. Given that no such positive outcomes were found in this evaluation, it is important to consider why this may be the case. One immediate possibility is the well established publication bias against null results in the educational and psychological literature (Hubbard & Armstrong, 1997), which means that the positive trend outlined in the aforementioned reviews may in fact be overly optimistic in comparison to what is actually happening in the field. However, given that some of the above reviews included unpublished work (e.g. Durlak et al, in press), this seems unlikely.

A second possibility relating to the contrast between our impact findings and those in the literature was originally raised by Hallam, Rhamie and Shaw (2006b) in their explanation of anomalous findings in the evaluation of primary SEAL. These authors argued that the impact of the programme on children's awareness of their emotions made them more critical of their own emotional responses, reflected in a reduction in scores on certain variables. This 'conscious incompetence' hypothesis suggests that positive changes brought about by a programme like SEAL may therefore, seemingly paradoxically, bring about negative changes in children's outcomes in social and emotional domains. That is, as children become more aware of their behaviour and relationships through increasing self-awareness, they actually score themselves more negatively because they are more aware of their problems. However, this notion does not hold up to closer scrutiny. Firstly, as already discussed, our qualitative case studies were not indicative of successful implementation for most schools – indeed, taken on their own, these findings would not seem to suggest that we would find positive impact in our quantitative measures. Secondly, with the exception of school climate (discussed separately below), our quantitative measures did not demonstrate negative change – rather, both the ELAI and SDQ scores of pupils

demonstrated remarkable stability from Time 1 to Time 3. This does not fit with the idea that increases in emotional awareness caused by SEAL translated into negative changes in scores. Indeed, the very slight change that occurred was in fact in the expected direction for the SDQ total difficulties and behaviour problems scores, indicating a *reduction in difficulties*. Finally, if the 'conscious incompetence' hypothesis holds for our evaluation, it presumably also applies to other SEL evaluations, which makes their positive findings rather more difficult to explain.

Age-related changes in pupils' attitudes towards school may also have masked or interfered with the potential positive impact of SEAL. Our school climate measure demonstrated negative changes in liking for school, trust in and respect for teachers, and feelings of classroom and school supportiveness among the target cohort in case study schools. This finding is ratified by research which demonstrates that pupils' attitudes towards school can become more negative as they get older, particularly in the secondary phase of education (see Payne, 2002, for a review). However, given that both the SEAL guidance (DCSF, 2007) and the dominant logic model (e.g. Elias et al, 2003) both point to an *increased attachment to school* as a key element in the process through which SEL programming increases pupil outcomes, we would have to assume that secondary SEAL (as implemented by schools in our sample) has not been successful in this regard.

The limited timescale of our evaluation may also help to explain the contrast between our impact findings and those in the wider SEL literature. The time elapsed between our Time 1 and Time 3 measures was 24 months, which may not have been enough time for the implementation of SEAL to have begun to impact upon pupil outcomes. Indeed, in the various keynote addresses at the secondary SEAL launch conference in October 2007, it was emphasized to schools that it would take some time before they saw measurable change. Thus, it may simply be that secondary SEAL exhibits a 'sleeper effect', in that positive outcomes become evident in the future rather than at end-point of the evaluation. Indeed, in a recent knowledge review of strategies to improve emotional resilience and narrow the gap in achievement for children and young people with additional needs (which included reference to aspects of SEAL), Dyson et al (2010) stated: "it is in the nature of such interventions that some indirect impacts on outcomes are likely to take place, if at all, over the long term. They therefore need to be viewed as a long-term investment in children and young people's learning and overall well-being" (p.46-47). This possibility cannot be discounted, but seems rather unlikely given that our qualitative data seemed to indicate a reduction in implementation activity over time rather than an increase. Also, most (87%) of the universal SEL programmes highlighted in the major review by Durlak et al (in press) were evaluated over a *shorter* period of time than this evaluation. Finally, Adi et al's (2007) review found no discernible association between length of study and impact.

Having explored some of the possible reasons for the lack of congruence between our impact findings and those of the wider SEL literature, it is important to also consider some of the key differences in both the research

and the nature of the programmes themselves, as this may provide additional insights. In terms of the research, as we noted in chapter 2, the overwhelming majority of the studies reported in the various SEL reviews stem from the USA, with only a small handful from the UK. The notion of cultural transferability (or lack thereof) therefore needs to be considered as a possible mediating variable. However, although it draws inspiration from many of the programmes that originated in the USA, SEAL was designed 'from the ground up' as an innovation to suit the specific needs of our schools.

Another key difference between our research and that reported in the wider literature is the analytical model adopted. With a few notable exceptions (e.g. Battistich et al, 1995), work in this area has tended to use traditional null hypothesis tests of statistical significance (e.g. t-tests, analysis of variance) that are extremely sensitive to sample size (such that even very small effects are highlighted as statistically significant when samples are large). Furthermore these types of tests do not enable the type of rigorous control offered by more advanced techniques such as multi-level modelling. Thus, in our MLM analyses we were able to test for the possible impact of SEAL after controlling for a large number of potential confounds at both school (e.g. size, attainment) and pupil (e.g. sex, FSM eligibility, ethnicity) levels. The possible disadvantage of this approach is that the analysis may be too conservative, leading to the possibility of a 'Type 2 Error', more commonly known as a false negative outcome. However, a simple inspection of the sample means for the various outcomes at Times 1 and 3 rules out this possibility, as there is no indication of any change that our MLM analyses may have been overlooked.

The final and perhaps most telling difference between our research and that reported in the broader SEL literature relates to the 'efficacy' of SEL programmes versus their 'effectiveness'. The broader SEL literature reports primarily on efficacy trials; that is, programmes delivered under well-controlled circumstances with high levels of resources to promote implementation and monitor fidelity. This evaluation of secondary SEAL, by contrast, is an effectiveness trial; that is, a more pragmatic evaluation of practice delivered in real-life settings. The potential dangers of such disparity were highlighted by Shucksmith et al (2007): "studies… have seen the investment of massive sums of money in large multi-component longitudinal trials. The results that emerge from these are very useful and are showing the way towards the design of more effective interventions, yet there must be serious doubts as to the availability of such resources within normal education budgets" (p.5). Elias et al (2003) agree, reporting that many attempts to 'scale up' social and emotional learning programmes in districts in the USA have been disappointing. In accordance with this, Greenberg et al (2005) argue that: "Even when schools and communities implement empirically supported programs, it may be difficult for them to achieve the same levels of technical assistance, support, resources, and prevention expertise available in well-funded, controlled prevention research trials" (p.3). Thus, the disparity in impact findings between the secondary SEAL evaluation and the broader SEL literature may be a reflection of the difficulties and complications associated with implementation in conditions where resources are limited and stretched. Our findings in relation to the implementation activities undertaken by our case study schools would seem to support this notion.

In addition to the differences evident between the SEL research base and the research model of this study, there are a number of differences in the *nature* of the SEAL programme and many of those reported in the SEL literature that may shed light on the lack of impact reported here. Firstly, as already mentioned in chapter 2, secondary SEAL was designed to be extremely flexible, with schools "encouraged to take from it what they wish" (Weare, 2010, p.10). A number of different suggested models of implementation were included in the guidance produced for schools (DCSF, 2007), in addition to case studies of how individual pilot schools adapted SEAL in very different ways to meet their needs (DCSF, 2007c). This 'bottom-up' approach was taken because, "too much top-down prescription and emphasis on programme fidelity can lead to a lack of ownership, disempowerment of those involved, and, ultimately, a lack of sustainability" (Weare, 2010, p.11). The emphasis on flexibility and tailoring to local need was evidenced clearly in our case studies, where we saw a great deal of variability in implementation both between and within schools, with approaches changing over time in some cases (for example, in CS2 the curriculum element of SEAL was abandoned halfway through our fieldwork).

The approach described above contrasts sharply with that taken in the SEL field in the USA, where the emphasis has been on prescribed programmes (Weare, 2010). However, as already mentioned, the overwhelming majority of the SEL evidence base derives from the USA, where research has shown that programme fidelity is crucial in determining the success and impact of interventions. For example, Durlak and DuPre's (2008) seminal review concluded that "higher levels of fidelity are significantly related to programme outcomes" (p.341). This is not, however, an indication that *any* adaptation should be considered implementation failure, but rather that implementers do need a coherent, structured and explicit model to follow from the outset in order to maximize outcomes (Catalano et al, 2004; Durlak et al, in press). Greenberg et al (2005) concur, and additionally comment that we need to understand more about which intervention components must be delivered as they were developed and which can be modified to suit local need and circumstances.

6.4 Limitations of our evaluation study

As with any piece of research, this evaluation suffered from a number of limitations that need to be taken into account before considering the implications of our findings (presented in the next section – 6.5). In this subsection we discuss what we consider to be the main issues and consider the extent to which they may have impacted on our results.

In relation to the quantitative impact strand of the evaluation, the most obvious limitation of the study was the reliance on child self-report in our dependent measures. The lack of triangulation with teacher and/or parent informant report data potentially limits the validity of our findings, since we have no other source of data against which to compare our child self-report findings (although this is not uncommon – indeed, more than 50% of studies reviewed in Durlak et al's (in press) meta-analysis of SEL programmes used child self-

report). This issue would affect any study, but is particularly pertinent in the context of this evaluation since children's levels of self-awareness and ability to consider their responses in relation to a specified time period (e.g. whether, for example, they have been feeling upset over several weeks or months as opposed to the specific point in time in which they complete the questionnaire), will have influenced their ability to provide reliable and valid responses to items on both the ELAI and SDQ. This notion is supported in part by the fact that for both instruments the psychometric properties (e.g. internal consistency, test-retest reliability, factorial validity) are better for the teacher and parent versions (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003; Goodman, 2001). It is also to be noted that children's self-reported scores for both measures tend to give more positive impressions (e.g. higher for the ELAI, lower for SDQ total difficulties) than those rated by informants (e.g. parents and/or teachers). (Southampton Psychology Service, 2003; Goodman, 2001). Despite these limitations, the use of child self-report carried with it the advantage of being able to survey a representative sample which would have been very difficult to achieve using teachers and/or parents as informants (additionally, we were mindful of the burden this would place on teachers in particular). Furthermore, it has been argued that child self-report is equally valid to informant report, bringing with it the advantage of introspection (e.g. children reflecting upon their own emotional states – something that informant reports can only speculate about) (Wigelsworth et al, 2010). Finally, with regard to psychometric properties, although these are more impressive for informant report versions of the instruments, the child self-report versions of both the ELAI and SDQ meet the standard requirements outlined in the measurement literature (see section 3.3.3).

In relation to the above, the failure to capture adequate numbers of teacher responses for the School as a Caring Community Profile and Reactions to Teaching Situations questionnaires to enable a proper analysis has to be considered as a limitation of the study, reducing as it does opportunities to quantify impact beyond the pupil[14]. As such, it is worth briefly considering the possible reasons why this may have occurred. Firstly, it may simply be a reflection of the timing of this additional strand of enquiry – in that schools had already agreed to a schedule of data collection which was then added to several months after the project began. Related to this, it may be that schools felt the SCCP and RTS surveys placed too much of an additional burden on their staff (despite the obvious monitoring and evaluation opportunities such data would present). Finally, it may simply be a reflection of a more systemic failure to engage with SEAL that was observed among staff across our case study schools (that is, if staff fail to engage in SEAL implementation, they are hardly likely to engage in completing surveys relating to the evaluation of SEAL). In all likelihood, it is a combination of these factors that produced such a poor response rate. In terms of implications for our findings, it means that we have been unable to quantify the impact of SEAL on staff social and emotional skills and their perceptions of school climate, which reduces the comprehensiveness of our evaluation. However, it is here where the

[14] The pupil version of the SCCP provided data about school climate rather than individual outcomes.

qualitative case study data can 'fill in the blanks' to a certain extent; from this, we would take an educated guess that as implemented across our nine case study schools, SEAL did not have any telling impact on either of the aforementioned variables.

The practice of the comparison schools in the quantitative sample also raises some potential issues in relation to the findings of this evaluation. Comparison schools were recruited on the basis of being in the same (or, in a minority of cases, a neighbouring) LA as SEAL schools, and being statistical neighbours in terms of some general school characteristics such as size, attainment and attendance. Crucially, they each declared that they were not implementing SEAL, a fact that was checked on an annual basis. What is not known is the reasons why they opted not to implement SEAL, and additionally what other related initiatives they were involved in which may have had a direct or indirect effect on the outcomes assessed in this study. However, given that all schools in England are required to promote children's emotional health as part of the Every Child Matters directive (DfES, 2003), this can be assumed as a constant across *all* our schools (as, indeed, we saw with CS5 and CS6, SEAL schools who had both been involved in additional related initiatives), meaning that our comparisons can still be considered valid.

As outlined in section 3.4.3, our qualitative case studies were designed to provide valid data through thorough triangulation. Nonetheless, there were gaps in our data collection, most significantly through the lack of interviews with parents or members of the wider communities surrounding our case study schools (with the exception of LA SEAL leads/Behaviour and Attendance consultants). However, as previously explained these proved impossible to arrange since the schools themselves were the gatekeepers of key contact information (e.g. parents), and they were unwilling and/or unable to provide this; considering the responses of school staff and pupils to questions relating to the involvement of parents and/or the wider community in SEAL implementation (see section 4.3.11), it is most likely that schools took this decision because they felt that parents and community members would not be able to add anything meaningful because they had simply not been involved to a significant degree.

A further potential issue in relation to our case studies is their limited range. Only nine schools were recruited for this strand of the research, which of course may not be representative of the practice of schools implementing SEAL across the country. Thus, caution is required in interpreting the implementation data presented in chapter 4. It may be, for instance, that practice in SEAL implementation in schools across the country is much more consistent and positive in terms of outcomes than we found in our nine schools. However, we consider this to be unlikely, for the simple fact that our schools not only volunteered to be part of the overall evaluation, but also for involvement in the case study strand. We would argue that schools that opted *not to participate* are the ones more likely to have *less developed practice* in this area. Furthermore, although the case study strand was never intended to be completely representative, care was taken to ensure that schools in a range of circumstances and contexts (see section 3.4.2), and they were

drawn from seven Local Authorities, reducing the chance that our findings were tied to issues at that level.

The final issue to consider in relation to the study as a whole is the representativeness of the SEAL schools in the quantitative component of the evaluation. Although we have already established that these schools and the target cohort of pupils within them are reasonably representative of schools across the country in terms of sampling error and school/pupil characteristics (see section 3.3.2), the process through which they were originally selected by their Local Authorities to take part in the initial SEAL roll-out may mean that they do not accurately reflect schools across England in other ways. Specifically, we understand that schools were initially chosen either because it was felt that their existing ethos and provision were in tune with the aims and objectives of SEAL, or because there was a specific need within the school that might be addressed through SEAL (e.g. behaviour problems). It is not known exactly how this selection process took place, and to which of the above categories each participating school belonged.

6.5 Recommendations

Having considered the relationship between our findings and those in the existing literature on both SEAL and SEL more generally, and having explored the limitations inherent in our research design, it is important to now consider what recommendations may be made for the future development of policy and practice in this area. At the outset, we would like to state as clearly as possible that the findings of this evaluation in no way undermine the promotion of SEL. We do not share the rather radical views of authors such as Craig (2007), Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) and Furedi (2004), who have argued that approaches such as SEAL are at best ill-conceived and at worst potentially damaging to children and young people. Our reading of the substantial evidence base in this area leads us to the conclusion that SEL programmes *can* impact positively on a range of outcomes (Durlak et al, in press). As such, we recommend that the Department for Education continue to fund initiatives related to this aspect of schooling. However, the findings of this evaluation have highlighted a number of issues related to the SEAL initiative and its implementation, such that as delivered by the schools in our sample it failed to impact upon the outcomes prescribed in the programme guidance.

In developing our series of recommendations, we draw from both the findings of this evaluation and the broader SEL literature. In particular, we focus on what appear to be the common elements of successful (e.g. well-evidenced) SEL programmes reported in the literature. We begin with the overall conceptualization and structure of the SEAL programme itself. SEAL was designed as a 'loose enabling framework', with a clear focus on choice and adaptation at the individual school level (Weare, 2010). Although schools in our study welcomed this in principle, the actual practice of implementation was very different, with the flexibility of SEAL actually emerging as a barrier (see section 4.4.8). Programmes that have a strong evidence base in the SEL literature, whether focused upon single or multiple components, provide

"structure and consistency in program delivery" (Catalano et al, 2004, p.114), based around the following practices:

- Sequenced – the application of a planned set of activities to develop skills sequentially in a step-by-step approach
- Active – the use of active forms of learning such as role play
- Focused – the devotion of sufficient time exclusively to the development of social and emotional skills
- Explicit – the targeting of specific social and emotional skills

Two recent reviews in this area (Durlak et al, in press; Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010) have demonstrated that programmes that adhere to these 'SAFE' principles have demonstrably better outcomes than those that do not. Furthermore, in terms of structure around implementation and adherence to a prescribed model, numerous reviews (e.g. Durlak and DuPre, 2008; Carroll et al, 2007; Greenberg et al, 2005) have demonstrated that, "the fidelity with which an intervention is implemented affects how well it succeeds" (Carroll et al, 2007, p.40). SEAL – both as conceived and as subsequently delivered in our case study schools – appears to lack some of these features (for instance, the inclusion of various suggested models of implementation and emphasis on adaptation seems to contradict the aforementioned finding with regard to a clear structure and fidelity to a central model). In moving forward, we recommend that future school-based initiatives to promote social and emotional skills would benefit from a much more explicit and structured approach, with more detailed guidance on a suggested model of implementation. Central to this would be the inclusion of a more *explicit*, *comprehensive* and *clearly sequenced* set of activities at a range of levels throughout the school (e.g. staff development, work with parents, activities with pupils). This approach, whilst providing more structure for schools, does not necessarily preclude some local adaptation, but it is important that detailed research be carried out in order to develop understanding about which components are considered essential to improving outcomes and which may be adapted to suit local needs (Greenberg et al, 2005).

Following on from the above, if schools are expected to engage fully in the implementation of programmes such as SEAL, we recommend that more resources and time are made available to staff to allow them to do this. In both our findings and those evident in the wider literature (e.g. Raudenbush, 2008; Greenberg et al, 2005; Elias et al, 2003, Forman et al, 2009), a perceived lack of resources (mainly human and financial, but also informational, technological, et cetera) has proven to be a barrier to effective implementation. We therefore recommend that greater allocation of such resources be made at both national (e.g. future funding for SEL-related work in schools) and local (e.g. prioritization of SEL; consistent and ongoing training and support from LAs; allocation of time to enable core staff to engage in implementation activities, including monitoring) levels. Such a shift would help to bridge the gap between the efficacy-based evaluations which produce the impressive outcomes upon which the rationale for SEAL is based and the 'real world' experience of schools in this country.

Our third recommendation for the future development of policy and practice in this area relates to work with parents. It became clear during the course of our evaluation that parental involvement in secondary SEAL was at best minimal, even in those schools that made relatively greater progress in implementation (e.g. CS3, CS5, CS6). Indeed, this was the most consistent 'gap' in provision. Parents and carers are of course crucial agents in all aspects of the development of children and young people, including their social and emotional skills, and so it is essential that future work in this area gives a higher priority to their involvement (Shucksmith & Summerbell, 2010). Just as specific learning opportunities within SEAL need to be reinforced across the school, work across the school needs to be reinforced in the home environment to maximize the chances of skill generalization (Bernstein et al, 2005). The Family SEAL resources developed as part of primary SEAL appear to have proven useful (Downey & Williams, 2010), and so it may be that these could be adapted or used with parents/carers of children in secondary schools, or that bespoke materials are developed for this purpose. If the latter option is used, then recent reviews (e.g. Moran, Ghate and van der Merwe, 2004) may be useful in developing the structure and content such that it is appropriate and based on good evidence.

Our fourth recommendation is that a greater emphasis needs to be given to the rigorous collection and use of evidence to inform developments in policy and practice in this area. Although SEAL is clearly 'evidence-informed' in that it draws inspiration from a range of programmes that have been subjected to rigorous evaluation, it is not truly 'evidence-based' as there has not yet been research wherein core programme materials are trialled and refined on the basis of empirical evidence about key outcomes. With hindsight, it may have been more judicious to engage in such activity prior to the national launch of secondary SEAL; although both SEBS pilot reports are highly informative in terms of process, neither demonstrates clear evidence of the effectiveness of the programme in terms of outcomes for pupils and/or staff. Furthermore, the clear resonance between the SEBS pilot evaluation findings and our own implementation data in important areas (e.g. staff resistance, gradual slow down of activity over time) suggests that perhaps more time was needed to adapt programme guidance and materials in order to iron out these fundamental issues (indeed, the secondary SEAL guidance was launched in April 2007, three months *prior* to the publication of the SEBS pilot reports). In moving forward, we recommend the adoption of the research and evaluation model proposed by Campbell et al (2000). Such an approach would be in line with recommendations made by experts such as Tymms, Merrell and Coe (2008) and Torgeson and Torgeson (2001), and would increase the credibility of programmes such as secondary SEAL since the version rolled out on a national level would have been refined on the basis of rigorous trials and (assuming that trials were successful), have demonstrable evidence of both efficacy and effectiveness in the English educational context.

Our final recommendation relates to the promotion of SEL within the new policy context that we find ourselves in following the change of government that occurred in May 2010. A clear steer has been given by the new education administration that future educational policy will revolve around the

principle of more autonomy and freedom for schools in how they educate their pupils and what use they make of the resources made available to them (evidenced by, for example, the cancellation of the new primary curriculum, the extension of the Academies programme, and the announcement of pupil premiums to help raise achievement). In this context, it is perhaps increasingly likely that schools look beyond SEAL in their efforts to promote the social and emotional skills of their pupils. Indeed, there is evidence that this was beginning to take place under the previous government. For instance, Curtis & Norgate (2007) reported on the successful implementation of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum in English primary schools; additionally, a large scale trial of PATHS involving 60 schools is currently underway in Birmingham as part of the Birmingham Brighter Futures strategy (Social Research Unit, 2010). Similarly, we understand that other evidence-based programmes such as Second Step are also being increasingly adopted by schools in England (Committee for Children, personal communication). Given this trend, we recommend that some form of guidance be produced to enable schools to make informed choices about programme adoption. Such guidance could include the nature and content of the various evidence-based programmes available, short summaries of their evidence bases (including cost-effectiveness), details of any existing implementation in English schools, financial and training implications, contact details of developers, and so on. Similar systems are in place in the USA – for example, the Institute of Behavioural Science at the University of Colorado houses the 'Blueprints for Violence Prevention' programme, which serves as a resource for schools and other bodies seeking to make informed judgements about the investment of their resources in this area (see www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html for details).

6.6 Conclusion

In concluding, we reiterate the message outlined earlier in this chapter – that the null findings reported in this evaluation should *not* be taken as an indication that the promotion of social and emotional skills is not an important or worthwhile endeavour for schools. As Weare (2010) states, "uncertainties and tensions should not be an excuse for inaction" (p.14). Thus, we see the findings of this evaluation as presenting an opportunity for review and reflection, and a timely reminder of the need to develop more rigorous systems for trialling innovations in the English education system (e.g. Tymms, Merrell & Coe, 2008; Torgeson & Torgeson, 2001). There is clear evidence that SEL programmes *can* impact upon a variety of key outcomes for children and young people (e.g. Durlak et al, in press). However, as delivered by the schools involved in our evaluation, the SEAL programme did not follow this trend.

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8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Multilevel Model Tables

Table 1 – Multilevel model for ELAI analysis.

Empty Model (β_{0jk} = 72.961 (0.252))				**Background Model** (β_{0jk} = 31.391 (2.174))				**Full Model** (β_{0jk} = 31.257 (2.113))			
	Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p
LA Level	0.233 (0.4%)	0.555	0.34	LA Level	0.00 (0%)	0.00	-	LA Level	0.00 (0%)	0.00	-
				LA Attainment	0.013	0.030	0.33	LA Attainment	0.017	0.029	0.28
School Level	1.260 (1.9%)	0.688	0.04	School Level	0.425 (0.92%)	0.221	0.03	School Level	0.349 (0.76%)	0.205	0.04
				FSM Eligibility	0.054	0.022	<.01	FSM Eligibility	0.049	0.022	0.02
Pupil Level	64.932 (97.7%)	1.607	0.00	Aggregate SEN	0.011	0.017	0.26	Aggregate SEN	0.011	0.016	0.25
				Attainment	0.033	0.015	0.02	Attainment	0.031	0.014	0.01
				Unauthorised absence	0.132	0.112	0.12	Unauthorised absence	0.152	0.108	0.08
				Size	0.00	0.001	-	Size	0.00	0.001	-
								SEAL	0.494	0.327	0.07
				Pupil Level	45.711 (99.08%)	1.131	<.01	Pupil Level	45.725 (99.24%)	1.131	<.01
				Gender (if Male)	0.765	0.249	<.01	Gender (if Male)	0.770	0.249	<.01
				Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	African 2.319	1.059	0.02	Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	African 2.296	1.056	0.02
					Other 3.239	1.177	<.01		Other 3.224	1.174	<.01
				FSM (if eligible)	-0.065	0.393	0.4	FSM (if eligible)	-0.056	0.393	0.4
				School action	0.407	0.405	0.15	School action	0.425	0.405	0.15
				School action plus	-1.232	0.647	0.02	School action plus	-1.256	0.647	0.02
				Statement	-0.299	1.085	0.39	Statement	-0.316	1.085	0.39
				ELAI Score Time 1	0.510	0.014	<.01	ELAI Score Time 1	0.511	0.014	<.01
-2*log likelihood = 2322.499				-2*log likelihood = 22040.991				-2*log likelihood = 22038.850			
χ^2 (30, n = 3306) = 1095.26, p < 0.001								χ^2 (1, n = 3306) = 2.141, p = 0.14			

Table 2 – Multilevel Model for SDQ Prosocial Behaviour Analysis

Empty Model (β_{cons} = 7.090 (0.084))				**Background Model** (β_{cons} = 3.855 (0.407))				**Full Model** (β_{cons} = 3.874 (0.408))			
	Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p
LA Level	0.082 (2.14%)	0.056	0.07	LA Level	0.00 (0%)	0.00	-	LA Level	0.00 (0%)	0.00	-
				LA Attainment	0.011	0.006	0.04	LA Attainment	0.011	0.006	0.04
School Level	0.106 (2.77%)	0.048	0.01	School Level	0.017 (0.62%)	0.009	0.03	School Level	0.017 (0.62%)	0.009	0.03
				FSM Eligibility	0.006	0.005	0.12	FSM Eligibility	0.007	0.005	0.09
Pupil Level	3.645 (95.09%)	0.077	<0.01	Aggregate SEN	-0.002	0.003	0.26	Aggregate SEN	-0.003	0.003	0.16
				Attainment	0.007	0.003	0.38	Attainment	0.007	0.003	0.01
				Unauthorised absence	0.007	0.023	0.38	Unauthorised absence	0.005	0.023	0.41
				Size	0.00	0.00	-	Size	0.00	0.00	-
								SEAL	-0.047	0.069	0.25
				Pupil Level	2.738 (99.38%)	0.058	<.01	Pupil Level	2.738 (>99.38 %)	0.058	<.01
				Gender (if Male)	-0.823	0.055	<.01	Gender (if Male)	-0.823	0.054	<.01
				FSM (if eligible)	-0.103	0.078	0.03	FSM (if eligible)	-0.103	0.078	0.09
				School action	-0.057	0.081	0.2	School action	-0.059	0.081	0.23
				School action plus	-0.270	0.130	0.02	School action plus	-0.267	0.130	0.02
				Statement	-0.296	0.197	0.07	Statement	-0.292	0.197	0.07
				Pro Social score Time 1	0.407	0.014	<.01	Pro Social score Time 1	0.407	0.014	<.01
				Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	African 0.429	0.209	0.02	Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	African 0.430	0.203	0.02
					Crbean 0.778	0.396	0.05		Crbean 0.781	0.396	0.05
					Indian 0.555	0.252	0.01		Indian 0.559	0.252	0.01
					WB/Afrc -1.349	0.527	>.01		WB/Afrc -1.346	0.527	>.01
					Other 0.959	0.245	>.01		Other 0.960	0.245	>.01
-2*log likelihood = 18688.909				-2*log likelihood = 17347.070				-2*log likelihood = 17346.618			
χ^2 (30, n =4506) = 1341.839 p < 0.01				χ^2 (1, n = 4506) = 0.452, p = 0.51							

Table 3 – Multilevel Model for SDQ Total Difficulties Analysis

Empty Model (β_{cons} = 11.900 (0.196))				Background Model (β_{cons} = 7.730 (1.1.362))				Full Model (β_{cons} 7.799 (1.312))			
	Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p
LA Level	0.424 (1.26%)	0.307	0.09	LA Level	0.007 (0.03%)	0.023	0.38	LA Level	0.213 (0.94%)	0.100	0.42
				LA Attainment	-0.029	0.015	0.04	LA Attainment	0.09	0.022	<0.01
School Level	0.484 (1.44%)	0.271	0.04	School Level	0.00 (0.00%)	0.00	-	School Level	0.00 (0.00%)	0.00	-
				FSM Eligibility	-0.029	0.015	0.03	FSM Eligibility	-0.025	0.014	0.04
Pupil Level	32.645 97.3%	0.695	<.01	Aggregate SEN	-0.008	0.011	0.23	Aggregate SEN	-0.009	0.011	0.20
				Attainment	-0.013	0.009	0.08	Attainment	-0.013	0.009	0.08
				Unauthorised absence	0.055	0.092	0.28	Unauthorised absence	0.038	0.089	0.34
				Size	-0.001	0.00	-	Size	0.001	0.00	-
								SEAL	-0.298	0.178	0.05
				Pupil Level	22.536 (99.97%)	0.479	<0.01	Pupil Level	22.535 (99.06%)	0.479	<0.01
				Gender (if Male)	-0.659	0.151	<0.01	Gender (if Male)	-0.653	0.150	<0.01
				FSM (if eligible)	0.733	0.227	<0.01	FSM (if eligible)	0.730	0.227	<0.01
				School action	0.413	0.236	0.04	School action	0.401	0.236	0.04
				School action plus	1.816	0.377	<0.01	School action plus	1.841	0.377	<0.01
				Statement	0.741	0.567	0.10	Statement	0.763	0.567	0.09
				Total Diff. Score Time 1	0.518	0.012	<0.01	Total Diff. Score Time 1	0.518	0.012	<0.01
				Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	African -1.165	0.610	0.28	Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	African -1.177	0.608	0.030
					Pakistani -1.716	0.463	<0.01		Pakistani -1.735	0.462	<0.01
					Indian -1.537	0.729	0.02		Indian -1.521	0.728	0.02
					Bngldshi -2.503	0.928	<0.01		Bngldshi -2.526	0.926	<0.01
					Traveller 11.075	4.756	<0.01		Traveller 11.175	4.756	0.01
					Romany -8.852	4.771	0.03		Romany -8.757	4.770	0.03
					Other 10.225	4.771	0.02		Other -10.389	4.772	0.01
-2*log likelihood = 28250.304				-2*log likelihood = 26570.272				-2*log likelihood = 26567.621			
χ^2 (30, n = 4459) = 1680.032 p < 0.01				χ^2 (1, n = 4459) = 2.653 p = 0.10							

Table 4 – Multilevel Model for SDQ Behaviour Problems Analysis

Empty Model (β_{0jk} = 2.268 (0.066))				**Background Model** (β_{0jk} = 1.433 (0.330))				**Full Model** (β_{0jk} = 1.444 (0.321))			
	Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p		Co-efficient β	Standard error	p
LA Level	0.051 (1.41%)	0.035	0.08	LA Level	0.00 (0.00%)	0.00	-	LA Level	0.00 (0.00%)	0.00	-
				LA Attainment	-0.004	0.005	0.21	LA Attainment	-0.004	0.005	0.21
School Level	0.053 (1.47%)	0.030	0.04	School Level	0.005 (0.19%)	0.006	0.21	School Level	0.003 (0.11%)	0.006	0.31
				FSM Eligibility	-0.001	0.004	0.4	FSM Eligibility	-.000	0.004	-
Pupil Level	3.504 (97.12%)	0.075	<0..01	Aggregate SEN	0.000	0.003	-	Aggregate SEN	0.00	0.003	-
				Attainment	-0.003	0.002	0.07	Attainment	-0.002	0.002	0.16
				Unauthorised absence	0.010	0.019	0.30	Unauthorised absence	0.008	0.019	0.34
				Size	0.00	0.00	-	Size	0.00	0.00	-
								SEAL	-0.054	0.056	0.17
				Pupil Level	2.608 (99.81%)	0.055	<.01	Pupil Level	2.609 (99.89%)	0.055	<.01
				Gender (if Male)	0.297	0.051	<.01	Gender (if Male)	0.298	0.051	<.01
				FSM (if eligible)	0.210	0.077	<.01	FSM (if eligible)	0.210	0.077	<.01
				School action	0.219	0.080	<.01	School action	0.219	0.080	<.01
				School action plus	0.556	0.128	<.01	School action plus	0.561	0.128	<.01
				Statement	-0.002	0.192	0.50	Statement	0.002	0.192	0.50
				Conduct Score Time 1	0.440	0.013	<.01	Conduct Score Time 1	0.440	0.013	<.01
				Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	Pkistani -0.340	0.154	0.01	Ethnicity (if p ≤ 0.05)	Pkistani 0.339	0.153	0.01
					Indian -0.564	0.245	0.01		Indian -0.561	0.245	0.01
					WB/Afrc 1.022	0.514	0.02		WB/Afrc 1.026	0.514	0.02
					Bngldshi -0.940	0.312	<.01		Bngldsh -0.944	0.312	<.01
					Romany -2.768	1.620	0.04		Romany -2.739	1.620	0.04
-2*log likelihood = 18301.159				-2*log likelihood = 16936.153				-2*log likelihood = 16935.304			
χ^2 (30, n = 4459) = 1365.006 p <0.01								χ^2 (1, n = 4459) = 0.849, p = 0.36			

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