

The Social and Emotional Education and Development intervention to address wellbeing in primary school age children: the SEED cluster RCT

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

We studied the Social and Emotional Education and Development (SEED) primary school intervention to see if it could improve the social and emotional well-being of pupils in Scotland. The SEED intervention is a process with several elements. We collected information from school pupils, staff and parents, and assessed if the schools involved were happy, safe and caring environments. We sought to highlight any strengths or weaknesses in how each school approaches social and emotional well-being. The SEED intervention also measures the social and emotional well-being of pupils. This includes pupils' strengths and difficulties, confidence, understanding of emotions and quality of relationships. We gave the information back to each school to help them decide what they can do to improve the social and emotional well-being of their pupils. We gave schools a guide to available resources, reviewed according to how well they are known to work elsewhere. The same social and emotional well-being measurements were repeated every 1 or 2 years, to see if any improvements had been made, and to guide any further adaptations of activities.

The study ran in 38 schools over 7 years; half of the schools were randomly selected to receive the SEED intervention and half carried on as normal. Two age groups of pupils were recruited; the younger group was aged 4 or 5 years and the older group was aged 8 or 9 years at the start of the study. We found that the SEED intervention did slightly improve social and emotional well-being. Improvements were greater for older pupils, in particular for boys, and lasted beyond their transition from primary to secondary school.

We also found that it was cost-effective for schools to run the SEED intervention. Schools valued the structure and shared ownership associated with the process.

We concluded that the SEED intervention is an acceptable way to modestly improve pupil well-being and school ethos.

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