

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

Evaluation Report 2011/12



PATHS is a whole school evidence based early intervention-prevention programme designed 32 years ago by Professors' Greenberg and Kushche to use with all children aged between 5 and 11 years. It has been empirically proven to be successful in enhancing the social and emotional competence of children, as well as facilitating educational processes in the classroom. PATHS origins are rooted in child and social-emotional development theory. The structure of the programme has been created to support children develop healthy neuro-pathways.

PATHS was piloted in Norfolk in eight schools in West Norfolk starting in September 2009. A further 16 schools started to deliver PATHS in September 2011 supported by funding through the Early Intervention Grant. This report relates to the progress of the 2412 pupils aged 5 – 11 in these 16 schools.

Training was provided for all staff to support the development of a whole school approach. Each school identified an In-House Coordinator (IHC) to be responsible for the roll out of the PATHS programme and all schools were allocated a PATHS Coach in order to support and monitor the school's delivery of PATHS with fidelity.

To establish a baseline and to monitor the impact of PATHS on all pupils, data was collected in September 2011 prior to implementation of the programme and then again in June 2012. Two surveys provided as part of the PATHS programme were used. One survey focused on pupils in Reception and Year one (YR/1) and the other on pupils in Years two, three, four, five and six (Y2- 6). The questions in each survey are similar but not identical.

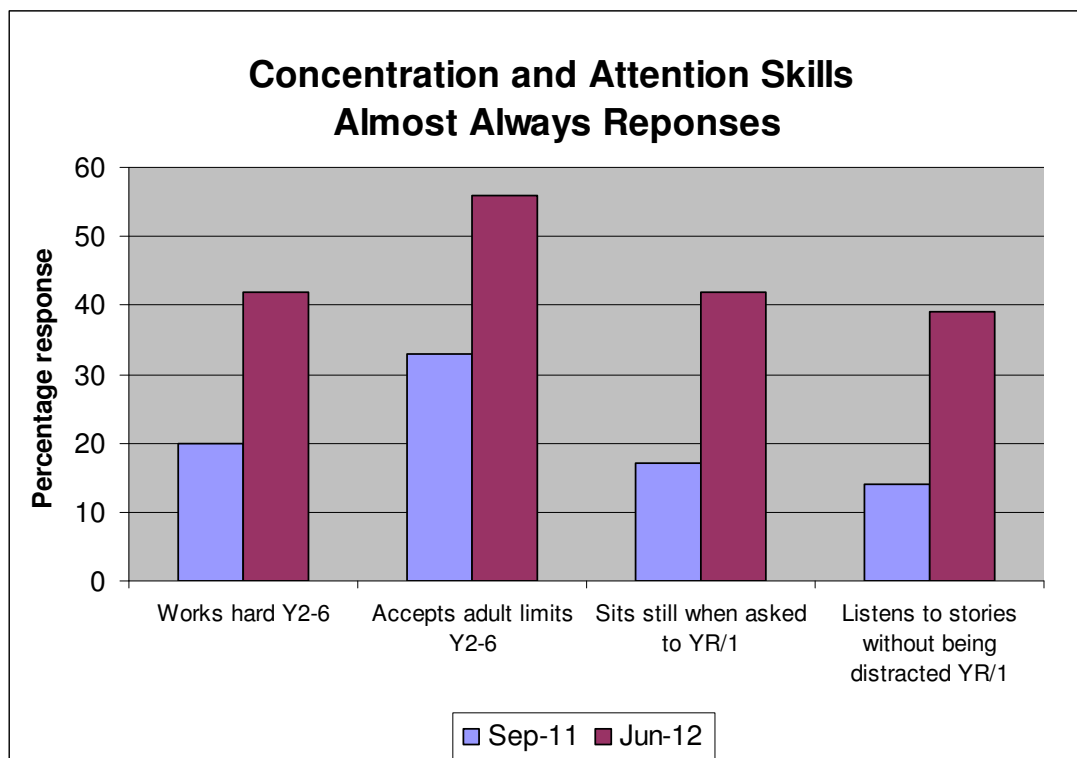
Teachers completed the electronic survey for all their pupils. Each pupil was rated on a six bar scale (almost never/rarely/sometimes/often/very often/almost always) in the following three areas:

- Concentration and attention
- Social and emotional competence
- Aggressive and disruptive behaviour

In addition qualitative data was collected from: In-House Coordinators, teachers and parents/carers. Perception data was also collected from pupils.

Concentration and Attention Skills

Results from the electronic survey showed that there was an increase from September 2011 to June 2012 in the ***almost always*** response for **all** questions relating to attention and concentration (See complete set of data in Appendix 1) Significant improvements in this area are shown below:



Teachers commented that the emphasis on class rules had helped to promote positive behaviours in class and using PATHS strategies had provided a consistent approach across the whole school. Their comments below reflect this:

“Attention and concentration has greatly increased especially during carpet times as pupils listened and respected others more. “

“Behaviour for learning is much better; children generally sit and listen.”

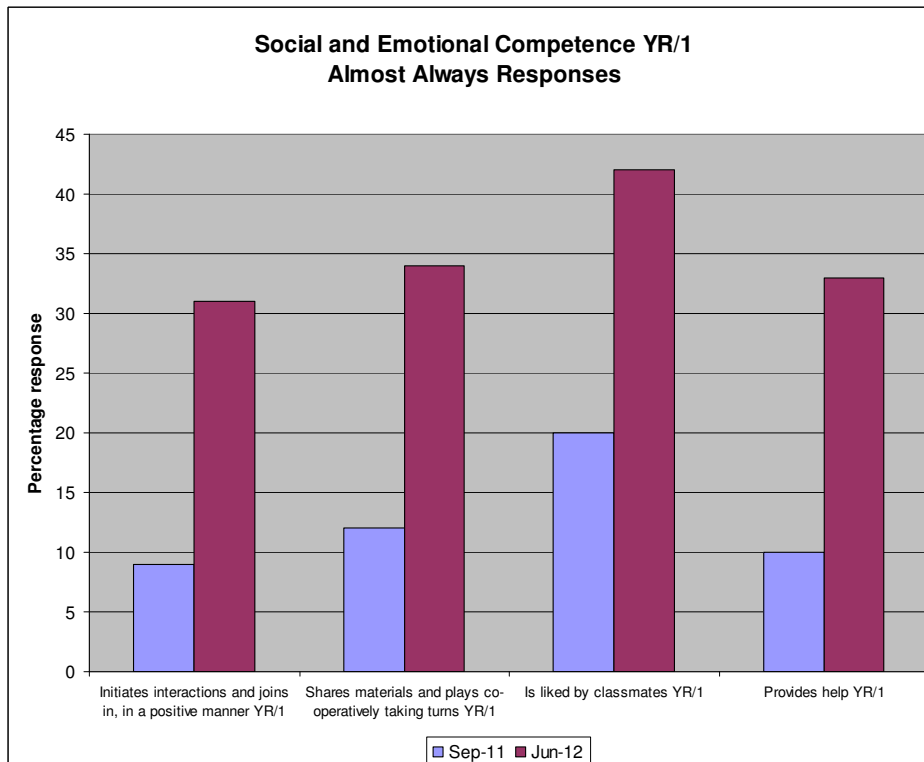
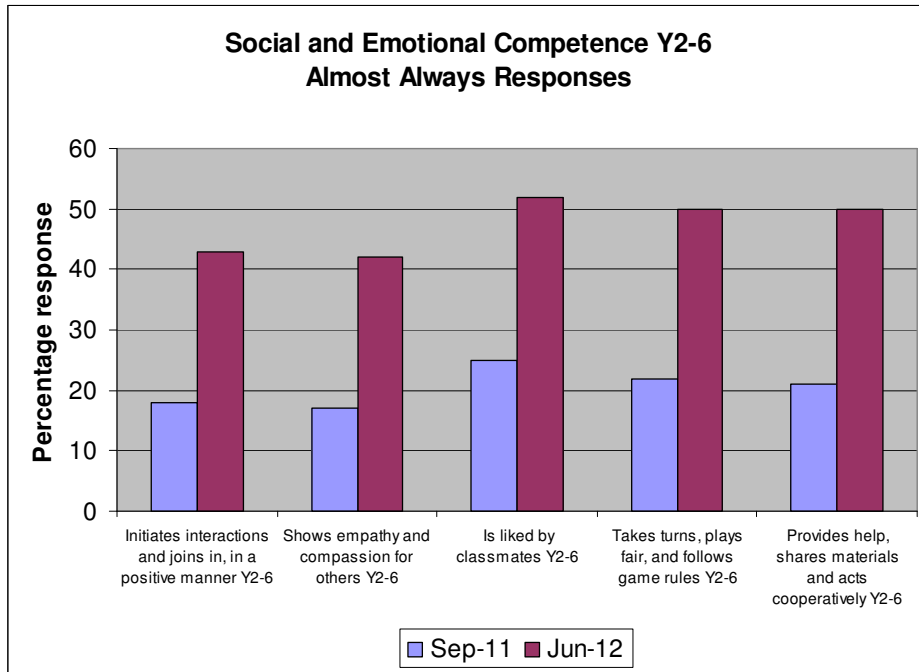
“The circle time pictures that introduce the rules are an excellent resource to encourage attention and reinforce concentration. “

“The puppets keep the children engaged..... and learning ‘Turtle’ has helped children to re-focus.”

“The defined roles in group work have been useful and we employ the strategies across the curriculum.”

Social and Emotional Competence

Results from the electronic survey showed that there was an increase from September 2011 to June 2012 in the ***almost always*** response for **all** questions relating to social and emotional competence. (See Appendix 1) The largest increases in the whole survey were seen in social and emotional competence and are shown below:



Pupils reported a 29% increase in their use of a strategy to calm down when they are excited or upset. (See Appendix 3)



Teacher's observed the impact on pupil's social and emotional competence:

"PATHS has exceeded expectations in terms of impact on emotional literacy and behaviour for learning."

"Emotional literacy has developed immensely."

"Children show greater empathy to others if they are hurt or upset."

"They are much more aware of others' feelings."

"We have daily examples of caring behaviour. "

"Children have become more thoughtful and kind towards each other, offering support and kind words."

"The feeling faces have provided us with valuable insight to how pupils are feeling and particularly for the quieter children, provided 'openings' to let children talk about issues they would have kept to themselves."

Teachers also commented on the improvements in children's self-esteem and confidence. They attributed this mainly to the regular giving and receiving of compliment through "PATHS Pupil of the Day. "



"Children value and look forward to being PATHS pupil of the day. They enjoy giving and receiving compliments."

"Compliments have developed friendships and boosted confidence. "

"We now have a lovely collection of compliments from parents and we have made these into a class book which they love reading. "

"Children are much better at accepting compliments and finding positive attributes in everyone. "

"Relationships within the class have improved generally."

"It has increased the idea of being a team and everyone being important."

"Children come out of their shells, gain confidence and feel more accepted."

"Children now look for the positives in children who display challenging behaviour."

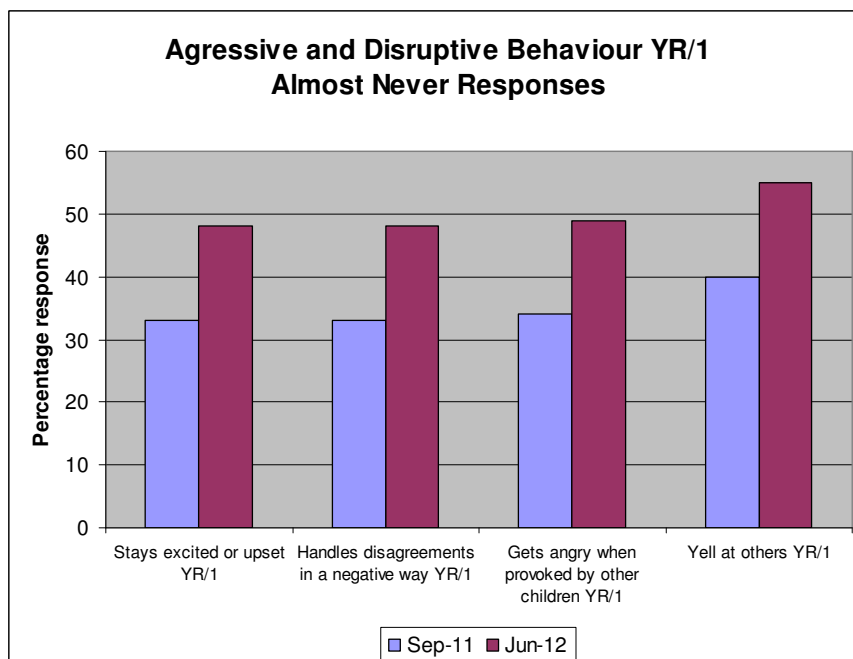
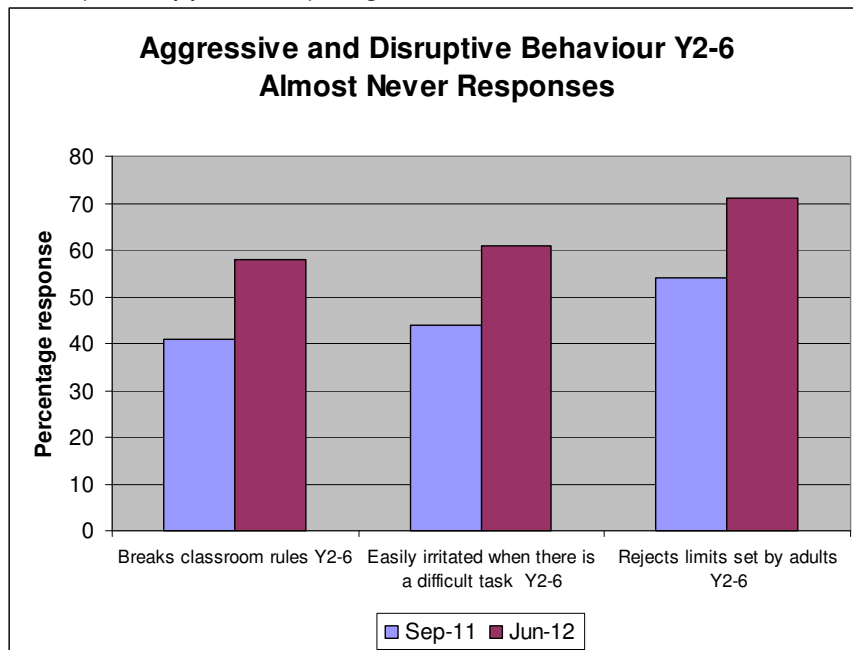
Some teachers reported that "PATHS Pupil of the Day" has become the most important part of the day, creating a positive atmosphere in classrooms and around the school.

Aggressive and Disruptive Behaviour

“This was a main driver for implementing the programme and we have found that PATHS has had a great impact. “

“A Teaching Assistant said last week that she had been sceptical about PATHS but is amazed by the impact after a term and a half.”

Results from the electronic survey showed that there was an increase from September 2011 to June 2012 in the **almost never** response for **all** questions relating to aggressive and disruptive behaviour (See Appendix 1). Significant increases are shown below:



PATHS has enabled children to recognise the difference between feelings and behaviour and to learn strategies to control their behaviour.



By using consistent language across the school, adults have found that this has helped to have an impact on the whole school ethos.

“Such a success; classes are better behaved, achieved more and can do more practical learning.”

“When new children join the school they are keen to learn the strategies and we notice the difference in the behaviour and attitudes of them and the rest of the class.”

“Observations of staff, visitors and governors are extremely positive about the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school.”

“A few of the most disruptive pupils have turned over a new leaf completely.”

“Children no longer ‘leave’ the class without permission or disturb others.”

“A child who hurt someone everyday at the start of the year has hardly any incidents now.”

“Children recognise when another child may need some adult support or time out which pre-empt difficult behaviour.”

“There is less peer disruption and distraction.”

“Children are proud of themselves when they use turtle independently.”

“The puppets are a useful tool for de-escalating situations instead of the teacher.”

Generalising PATHS

It is important to recognise that PATHS isn't just a curriculum (teaching specific skills), but that generalising (applying skills to new contexts) and parent/carers (extending learning to the home environment) are essential to its success. PATHS is a spiral curriculum so concepts are built on and extended in line with child development. To ensure that children are able to apply strategies independently it is important that all staff model and reinforce this learning across the whole school day.

Teachers and Ofsted both commented on the children's understanding and use of feeling vocabulary and its impact on writing and comprehension:

“When feelings come up in stories, they use the PATHS Feeling Posters to help relate those feelings to themselves.”

“Their vocabulary and feelings have developed well. This has extended into their writing.”

“Feelings vocabulary helps children understand the skills needed to work in a group.”



“The quality of their writing far exceeded that expected for their age. This excellent progress is underpinned by a carefully structured approach to promoting children's emotional and social development which results in them becoming increasingly confident learners.” Ofsted report March 2011 (PATHS pilot school – see Appendix 2).

Parents/Carers

Regular communication with parents and carers through home activities and compliments is a key feature of PATHS.

Parents/carers reported an increased openness at home allowing children to share their feelings. They also gave examples of how their children were coping with their uncomfortable feelings and frustrations and sharing strategies with the whole family.

Parents/carers valued the compliment sheets sent home as part of the “PATHS Pupil of the Day” and commented on improvements in self-esteem and self-confidence.

Using PATHS stories in Reading Cafes has been used to help parents/carers learn about strategies. PATHS strategies have also been identified on children's behaviour plans and shared with parents/carers.

Challenges and Next Steps

Many teachers felt that after implementing PATHS for one year, much more work was needed to develop and embed the 'control' element of PATHS so that children are able to use the strategies independently. To support this process Norfolk PATHS Coaches will continue to support schools.

“I’m sure the use of PATHS will have a much bigger, positive impact on the children, however as a teacher of yr 5/6 it will take time for the strategies to ‘work their way through the school’.”

For some teachers delivering PATHS was challenging as they felt that the lessons lacked creativity or were too passive. Teachers were encouraged by their PATHS Coach and IHC to introduce their own examples and make the lessons more interactive, responding to the needs of their pupils while still adhering to the goals to the lessons.

Problem solving issues and sharing good practice has been useful in supporting the development of PATHS in all schools. This has happened in a variety of ways such as during school visits by the PATHS Coach, IHC meetings, newsletters, email and follow up training in January.

All IHCs reported that they valued the support given to their schools by the PATHS Coaches. **99% of teachers reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied with PATHS in their school. “Support from the PATHS team has been excellent. “**

One school decided to stop delivering PATHS in February 2012 due to competing priorities. They are planning to introduce PATHS on a phased basis starting with younger pupils.

Conclusion

There has been a demonstrable improvement in outcomes for pupils participating in the PATHS programme over a relatively short period. PATHS is recognised internationally as an effective mechanism for improving children’s social and emotional skills and with local support and monitoring schools have the confidence that it will be applicable and important for their pupils. The PATHS team in Norfolk has supported schools by providing training, coaching, resource development and bespoke support.

The schools in this report have worked hard to implement PATHS with fidelity however, they have also identified the areas that need to be consolidated and developed over the next few years in order to embed PATHS more fully and build on these early outcomes. Schools are being supported by the Coaches in this process in a less intensive but needs led approach.

The PATHS team in Norfolk has been strengthened by the approval of four trainers by PATHS in the USA so they can provide high quality training to school staff as well as guidance and support.

A further 18 schools and 2 Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) were recruited and started to deliver PATHS in September 2012. Early indications are that staff are already observing the positive impact of PATHS on their pupils.

Final Thought

“I thought PATHS would be useful for the children who had behavioural problems. I also thought it would be good for staff to have strategies for these children. What I didn’t realise was that it would be good for all children. I was surprised to find how good it was for those quieter children who worry about things or who suffer with the behaviour of other children in the class and thought that they had to put up with it. It has given them confidence to say how they feel and what they want. They are aware that they have rights too and that there is a strategy for solving problems.”

October 2012

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Appendix 1 – PATHS Pupil Survey 2011/2012

Year R/1 PATHS Pupil Survey 2011/2012 (745 Pupils)

Year R/1 Concentration/Attention Skills						
	Response	Sep-11		Jun-12		% Increase
Stays on task	Almost Always	90	12%	245	33%	21%
Pays attention	Almost Always	88	12%	241	32%	20%
Maintains focus	Almost Always	83	11%	241	32%	21%
Engages in an activity or play for sustained time	Almost Always	103	14%	271	36%	22%
Listens to stories without being distracted	Almost Always	108	14%	294	39%	25%
Completes one task before moving to another	Almost Always	98	13%	266	36%	23%
Sits still when asked to	Almost Always	129	17%	312	42%	25%

Year R/1 Social/Emotional Competence						
	Response	Sep-11		Jun-12		% Increase
Understands other people's feelings	Almost Always	45	6%	185	25%	19%
Is liked by classmates	Almost Always	148	20%	311	42%	22%
Shares materials and plays co-operatively taking turns	Almost Always	93	12%	251	34%	22%
Provides help	Almost Always	78	10%	244	33%	23%
Listens to others point of view	Almost Always	63	8%	216	29%	21%
Initiates interactions and joins in, in a positive manner	Almost Always	71	9%	227	31%	22%
Recognises and labels feelings and those of others	Almost Always	59	8%	203	27%	19%
Expresses needs and feelings appropriately	Almost Always	68	9%	203	27%	18%
Resolves problems with other children on his or her own	Almost Always	47	6%	162	22%	16%
Copes well with disappointment or frustration	Almost Always	71	9%	190	25%	16%
Accepts when things don't go his or her way	Almost Always	72	10%	197	26%	16%
Stops and calms down when excited or upset	Almost Always	82	11%	229	31%	20%

Year R/1 Aggressive/Disruptive Behaviour						
	Response	Sep-11		Jun-12		% Increase
Yells at others	Almost Never	305	40%	410	55%	15%
Fights	Almost Never	351	47%	450	60%	13%
Is stubborn	Almost Never	224	30%	308	41%	11%
Loses his or her temper in a disagreement	Almost Never	287	38%	389	52%	14%
Breaks classroom rules	Almost Never	271	36%	390	52%	13%
Hurts others	Almost Never	369	50%	457	61%	11%
Breaks rules	Almost Never	287	39%	396	53%	14%
Is disliked by classmates	Almost Never	378	51%	468	63%	12%
Stays excited or upset	Almost Never	244	33%	361	48%	15%
Handles disagreements in a negative way	Almost Never	245	33%	356	48%	15%
Gets angry when provoked by other children	Almost Never	254	34%	365	49%	15%
Whines or complains	Almost Never	214	29%	321	43%	14%

Year 2-6 PATHS Pupil Survey 2011/2012 (1481 Pupils)

Year 2-6 Concentration/Attention Skills						
	Response	Sep-11		Jun-12		% Increase
Works hard	Almost Always	309	20%	627	42%	22%
Works through distractions	Almost Always	193	13%	482	32%	19%
Concentrates	Almost Always	234	16%	518	35%	19%
Stays on task	Almost Always	241	16%	534	36%	20%
Accepts adult limits	Almost Always	482	33%	825	56%	23%
Pays attention	Almost Always	261	18%	576	39%	21%
Performs at grade level	Almost Always	264	18%	551	37%	19%

Year 2-6 Social/Emotional Competence						
	Response	Sep-11		Jun-12		% Increase
Feels at ease to talk to you	Almost Always	288	19%	575	39%	20%
Shows empathy and compassion for others	Almost Always	253	17%	616	42%	25%
Is liked by classmates	Almost Always	373	25%	768	52%	27%
Provides help, shares materials and acts cooperatively	Almost Always	319	21%	741	50%	29%
Takes turns, plays fair, and follows game rules	Almost Always	322	22%	745	50%	28%
Listens to others point of view	Almost Always	284	19%	622	42%	23%
Initiates interactions and joins in with a positive manner	Almost Always	264	18%	644	43%	25%
Accepts when things don't go his or her way	Almost Always	312	21%	629	42%	21%

Year 2-6 Aggressive/Disruptive Behaviour						
	Response	Sep-11		Jun-12		% Increase
Takes others property	Almost Never	962	65%	1176	79%	14%
Yell at others	Almost Never	797	54%	942	64%	10%
Fight	Almost Never	899	61%	1058	71%	10%
Is stubborn	Almost Never	631	43%	760	51%	8%
Loses his or her temper in a disagreement	Almost Never	736	50%	878	59%	9%
Lies	Almost Never	781	53%	922	63%	10%
Breaks classroom rules	Almost Never	614	41%	854	58%	17%
Tease classmates	Almost Never	748	50%	887	60%	10%
Hurts others	Almost Never	998	67%	1149	78%	11%
Easily irritated when there is a difficult task	Almost Never	654	44%	899	61%	17%
Is disliked by classmates	Almost Never	832	56%	1039	70%	14%
Rejects limits set by adults	Almost Never	801	54%	1052	71%	17%
Stays excited or upset	Almost Never	697	47%	893	60%	13%
Handles disagreements in a negative way	Almost Never	697	47%	877	59%	12%
Gets angry when provoked by other children	Almost Never	625	42%	782	53%	11%

Appendix 2 Pilot Schools Responses

The responses below are from schools who have been delivering PATHS since 2009/10 as part of the PATHS pilot.

“PATHS has provided a tool whereby the children can develop the vocabulary and the confidence to discuss their feelings. This has been a very significant contributory factor to helping the children .to become more effective learners. It has also provided the staff with a clear, consistent and effective approach to managing challenging behaviours, de-escalating conflicts and creating a trusting ethos that the children feel safe to talk within.”

“ The children’s self-esteem has certainly improved through strategies such as the compliments and “PATHS pupil of the day” .”

“ In terms of creating a positive learning environment in which the children can “offload” their worries and clear their minds ready for learning, there is no doubt that PATHS has been the single most important element in this process. There is a high degree of confidence that PATHS provides a highly effective way of not just managing challenging behaviours, but actually using it as a proactive process for improving pupils emotional literacy and engagement with their learning.”

Ofsted report March 2011

“The care provided for pupils and the liaison with parents and carers about their children’s personal and social development are exemplary, creating a partnership that enables pupils to flourish. This applies particularly to pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. The support and guidance provided enable pupils to become confident learners who clearly enjoy their time at school. They know they can share any problems they might have with the staff, and can rely on receiving the support they need to meet any challenges they might encounter.

The quality of their writing far exceeded that expected for their age. This excellent progress is underpinned by a carefully structured approach to promoting children’s emotional and social development which results in them becoming increasingly confident learners.”

Letter to pupils from Ofsted 2011

“ We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour.... We also admire the way in which you all work together and help each other so well.”

The Church of England Diocese of Norwich Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools. May 2011

“Relationships and respect between pupils and staff are very good. The school is characterised by praise used effectively and the creation of a positive sense of well-being. This is enhanced by the practice of everyone paying compliments to the PATHS Pupil of the Day. “

Appendix 3 Pupil Perception Data

School	Social and Emotional Competence	Total pupils	2011 Sept	%	2012 June	%	% Imp
School A	Children who report that they find it easy to calm down if they are excited or upset	4	0	0%	2	50%	50
School B	Children who report that they are confident in using turtle to calm down when they are excited or upset	4	1	25%	3	75%	50
School C	Children who report that they can use calming down strategies in class with an adult's help	56	21	37%	40	72%	35
School D	Children who report that they use a strategy independently to calm down when they are upset or excited	167	113	67%	136	82%	15
School E	Children who report that they use a strategy to calm down when they are excited or upset	71	29	41%	55	75%	34
School F	Children who report that they use a strategy to calm down when they are excited or upset	37	28	76%	33	89%	13
School G	Children who report that they use a strategy to calm down when they are excited or upset	44	12	27%	31	70%	43
School H	Children who report that they sometimes use a calming strategy when they are excited or upset	198	38	19%	112	57%	38
School I	Children who report that they use a strategy independently to calm down when they are upset or excited	317	116	37%	209	66%	29
Total	Children who report that they use a strategy to calm down when they are excited or upset	898	358	40%	621	69%	29

