

## Evidence that VisionWorks works

### Springfields School, Wiltshire

*“Ofsted has graded my school as Outstanding and one contributory factor towards this is the use of this wonderful EI programme. Our pupils are showing real empathy and tolerance towards each other for the first time.”*

Trystan Williams, Headteacher

Trystan Williams’s determination to improve behaviour amongst the students at Springfields led to the introduction of **VisionWorks** in January 2007. In November 2007 Ofsted rated the school as Outstanding and cited their Emotional Intelligence teaching and learning (**VisionWorks**) as a key element in this achievement.

On the 2 year path to 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating, Springfields School put in place 3 changes:

- One-third turnover of staff to encourage greater emotional intelligence
- Restructured curriculum to increase emphasis on core curriculum subjects and introduced a day a week for students to be taught outside the classroom at Cotswold Water Park, plus a 1pm finish on Friday.
- Delivery of a formal emotional intelligence programme, facilitated by care staff in 45 minutes sessions every week.

Results:

1. Within the first year physical intervention was reduced by 84 %.  
Calm talk, distraction and more emotionally intelligent methods of dealing with behaviour are used.
2. Over 2 years attendance improved to 98 %.  
Students are treated courteously; they want to come to school.
3. Rate of exclusions was the highest in the county; today there are none.
4. Average number of students who fail to reach the target of 75 % for good behaviour and learning has dropped from 12 per week to 2 per week.

Students report they:

- Are better able to tolerate, help and support each other
- Feel safe to share their feelings and experiences
- Are more aware of how other people are feeling
- Can cope with their feelings better
- Have enjoyed using their imagination and creativity in a group.

### Springfields Emotional Literacy Centre

In July 2009 students, parents and teachers celebrated the results of the first year of a pioneering project at Springfields School in Calne, Wiltshire in partnership with **VisionWorks**.

KS3 students from various schools in North Wiltshire who spent a day a week at the Centre for Emotional Literacy confirmed that their lives had turned around. Their attendance at school improved in over 90 % of cases, and the number of fixed-term exclusions dropped conclusively for each student.

In addition, pupils said that:

1. Attitude improved
2. Improved attendance
3. Improved positive thinking
4. Try harder in school
5. Listen more
6. More confident
7. Better at asking for help
8. Understanding people's feelings.

*(results from Professor Harry Daniels of University of Bath who appraised the project)*

### Serlby Park School, Doncaster

At this 3-18 community comprehensive, KS3 students are in their third year of enjoying **It's OK Being Me**. They began implementing the material for Y7 only, and this group is finishing the course in Y9 in 2011. Now well established in the school, each new Y7 cohort starts the programme and continues to completion in Y9.

*"A high percentage of students report that doing **VisionWorks** has helped them with their behaviour. Staff like the programme because they can pick it up and go with it.*

**VisionWorks** is part of a whole package which schools can use to improve behaviour and learning."

Mairi Murray, PSHRE co-ordinator

## University of Manchester

In November 2010 a team at the University of Manchester reported their findings - teaching SEAL in schools doesn't make any difference. Or at least, that's what the media would have us believe. Closer reading of the report reveals that the teaching of Emotional Literacy is as dependent on the school and the teachers as it is on the content.

The failures, according to Professor Neil Humphrey, Ann Lendrum and Michael Wigelsworth – all from the University's School of Education - are caused - among other factors - by a poor allocation of resources and time to staff and a failure to act on the findings of pilot studies.

There was also no clear framework to work from in implementing the programme, they added.

Antidote tells us, "Humphrey says that several of the schools examined took 'a somewhat superficial approach to implementation' and that an initial spike of 'energy, enthusiasm and activity' was often followed by a gradual drop-off in activity... ' The result was, he says, that SEAL was 'essentially what individual schools made of it rather than being a single, consistently definable entity. He says that US evidence from programmes such as PATHS and Second Step argues that 'programme fidelity is crucial in determining the success and impact of interventions' and suggests basically that schools need to adopt 'a coherent, structured and explicit model to follow from the outset' rather than continuing to use SEAL."

In our experience this is true; we have seen that no programme is going to work unless committed, trained teachers use it consistently. We know that when this happens, when it "becomes part of the-way-we-do-things-around-here" **VisionWorks** really does make a difference.

## Henbury School, Bristol

This inner city comprehensive introduced VisionWorks for Y7 in January 2008, and will roll it out for Y8 and Y9 in the next two years. **It's OK Being Me** is taught during 20 minute tutor registration periods once or twice a week. At a regular feedback session, students reported that the programme helped them to get to know each other better, and that they 'enjoy the calm after manic lunch times'.

## University of Sussex

Research by Robin Banerjee at the University of Sussex has found a link between work to ensure staff and pupils experience positive relationships and improvements in their attainment.

The researchers looked at 32 primaries and 24 secondaries involved in the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Programme, and differentiated between them on whether they viewed SEAL as simply a set of activities for a specific group of students, an initiative confined to the curriculum or something that affected the whole school ethos.

What they found was that ‘having a whole-school universal approach to SEAL was the strongest predictor of an enhanced school ethos, characterised by positive social relationships, attitudes and behaviour.’

Where schools had a more positive social ethos, they were found to have:

- More positive pupil experiences of peer interaction
- Better Ofsted ratings for behaviour
- Lower levels of persistent absence
- Higher attainment in KS2 SATs and GCSEs

How Ofsted rated behaviour in the school, how staff and students rated school’s social and emotional ethos and how well SEAL was integrated into students’ learning were all independently predictive of better attainment results.

A series of illustrative examples of effective practice from the project is being prepared, and will appear on the National Strategies site.

Social and emotional aspects of learning in schools: contributions to improving attainment, behaviour and attendance: a report on data from the National Strategies Tracker School Project by Dr Robin Banerjee can be downloaded from the National Strategies website.

## St Benedict’s School, London

An independent secondary day school which is affiliated to the Catholic church, St. Benedict’s started using the programme in 2008 with the new Y7 intake. The schools sees **It’s OK Being Me** as supporting the ethics and ethos they are promoting, and realizes that regular input throughout KS3 will pay dividends in KS4.

## The Corsham School, Wiltshire

*"VisionWorks has made a significant contribution to The Corsham School's outstanding value added measures. We are in the top 3% nationally and VisionWorks has helped by fostering independent learning and encouraging students to take responsibility for their own behaviour."*

Martin Williams, Head Teacher

**VisionWorks** has been trialled at The Corsham School since 2002. One of several initiatives to raise standards of pupil welfare and academic performance, **VisionWorks** is recognised as a vital element in its success. Students have received one 20-minute **VisionWorks** session per week.

Results show:

- A 35 % reduction in reported incidents of bad behaviour
- A shift towards more profound and personalised learning
- SSAT's 'Individual School Award for Creativity and Enterprise 2006'
- Membership of SSAT's Value Added Club
- Has provided positive evidence for the SEF

2007 GCSE exam results for Year 12 students, the first group exposed to **VisionWorks** throughout their time at the School, indicate a significant plus in the CVA (Contextual Value-Added) score for KS2 to KS4. This was 1010.3, putting The Corsham School in the top 25 % of schools nationally.

In March 2009 The Corsham School was rated outstanding by Ofsted. The school was given Grade 1 for Personal development and wellbeing.

*The report tells us "Students are open, friendly, welcoming to visitors and excellent ambassadors for their school. They develop exceedingly well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, as exhibited by their thoughtful responses in discussions and their considerate attitudes towards each other and adults. Racial intolerance and bullying are rare."*

Student evaluations indicate that **VisionWorks** effectively engages them in reflecting on their feelings and developing their ability to handle stressful and difficult social issues. 95 % of Year 7 students think that **VisionWorks** helps them make friends and helps them recognise and deal with their feelings.

### Oakhill Primary School, London

At Oakhill Primary School in London, **My World** is taught with Yr 6. Assistant Headteacher Angie Bull sets aside half an hour a week during PSHE lessons to focus on the activities. She reports that pupils look forward to the lessons and are starting to be more considerate towards one another. They are starting to acknowledge that when someone is grumpy or ignoring them it isn't necessarily their fault and that the other person may be pre-occupied for a different reason.

*"We are in the process of encouraging the children to ask questions of each other not just make assumptions. I enjoy using the programme and use some of its content when advising other teachers on behaviour strategies. The Transition module was particularly useful for Y6 pupils preparing for secondary school when I used it last term and I will indeed use it again with my current class."*

***My World** was also successfully used in my previous school. We had three form entry and all three class teachers felt it made a considerable difference to the way children coped. It was particularly good at showing how bullies felt."*