



Roots of Empathy

Racines de l'empathie

Roots of Empathy

2017 Annual Programme Evaluation Report

Scotland

**“[Roots of Empathy can teach the world] To be kind and care for others
and the world would be a [happier] place.”**

–Primary 4 Pupil, Condorrat

*Our mission is to build caring, peaceful, and
civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults.*



Scotland Annual Programme Evaluation Report: 2016-2017

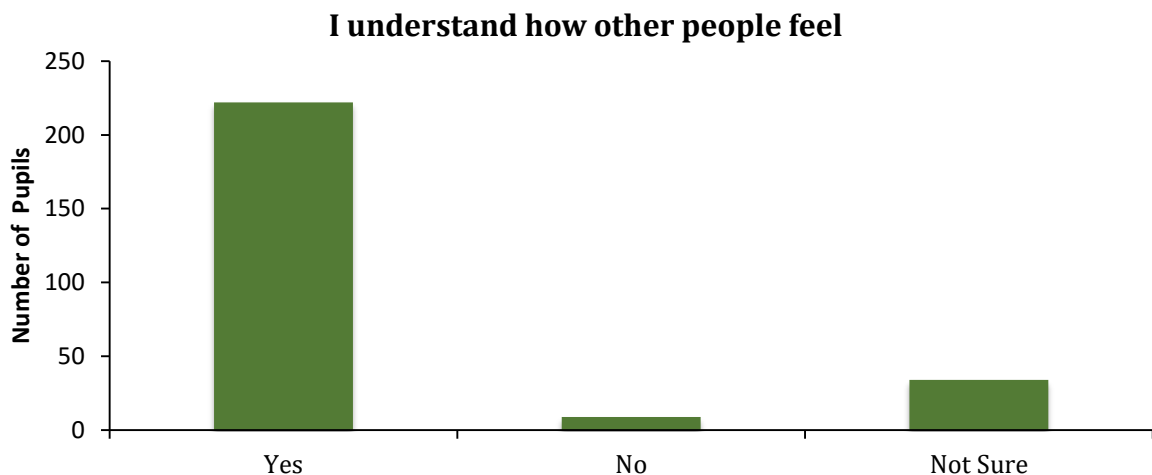
This report is a summary of the annual programme evaluation data collected from pupils and teachers throughout Scotland for the 2016-2017 school year. The teachers were asked to provide their perceptions of any changes in behaviour in pupils who participated in the Roots of Empathy programme. Unlike most school experiences, where pupils are asked to demonstrate what they know, Roots of Empathy invites metacognition. More specifically, pupils gain experience reflecting on what they learn in connection to the main goals of Roots of Empathy.

Goal #1: To Foster the Development of Empathy

The ability to take the perspective of another person (cognitive aspect of empathy) plays a key role in helping individuals resist aggressive behaviours by providing a buffer against antisocial and aggressive temptations. Empathy is regarded as one of the most desirable of personality traits due to its positive association with prosocial behaviours such as sharing, helping, and cooperating, and its crucial role in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships.

Feedback Results: Pupils

- 89% of pupils reported understanding how other people feel



Feedback Results: Teachers

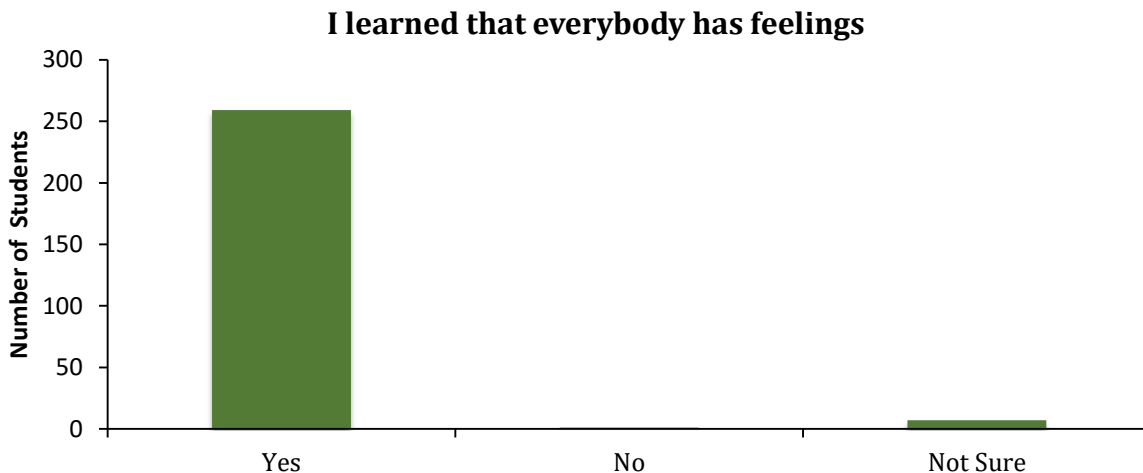
- 85% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, pupils are more able to understand other people's points of view

Goal #2: To Develop Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy, or social and emotional learning (SEL), includes developing the skills to recognize, manage, and express feelings. These skills are integral to the ability to regulate emotions. Children who can regulate their emotions are less likely to suffer from childhood psychological disorders, including anxiety and depression. Research also demonstrates that children with good SEL skills have better attitudes towards themselves and others, show more prosocial behaviours, and exhibit less aggression.

Feedback Results: Pupils

- 97% of pupils reported learning that everybody has feelings
- 91% of pupils reported learning to recognize their own feelings
- 94% of pupils reported learning to recognize how the baby is feeling



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 98% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, pupils talk about their feelings
- 96% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, pupils have increased their vocabulary of feeling words

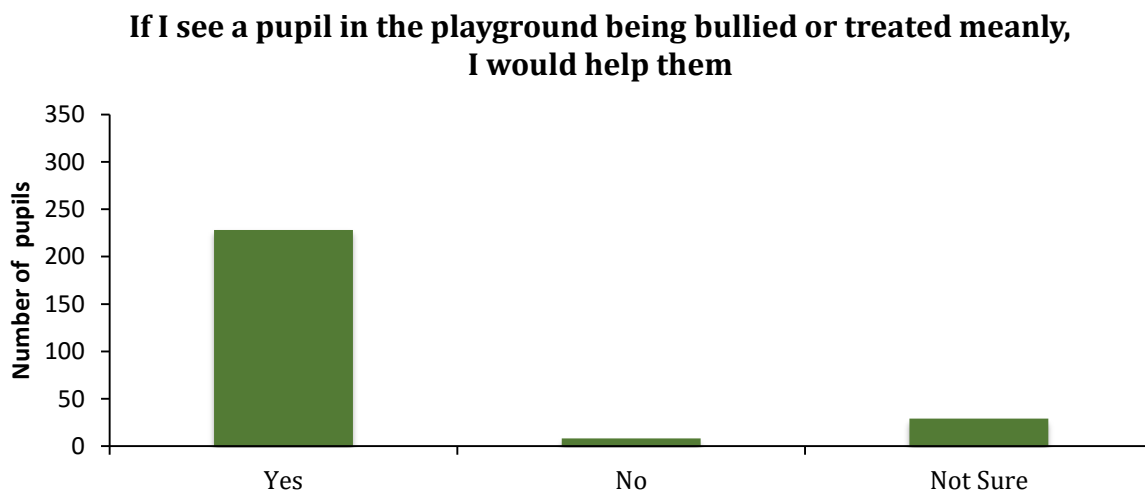
Goal #3: To Reduce Levels of Bullying and Aggression and Promote Children's Prosocial Behaviours

The presence of prosocial behaviours helps to promote positive development in children, improve the quality of their relationships, as well as the overall classroom atmosphere. Quality relationships and perceived social support greatly increase an individual's resilience and protect against negative and stressful experiences. Prosocial behaviour has also been linked to improved academic outcomes.

Aggressive children often have fewer cognitive, social, and emotional skills available to them and are therefore more likely to be rejected by other children, have deviant friends, and are less likely to get along with teachers. Children who display early aggressive behaviour are at highest risk for many negative outcomes, including depression, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug abuse, violent crimes, and neglectful and abusive parenting.

Feedback Results: Pupils

- 94% of pupils reported that if they saw a friend being bullied or treated meanly, they would help them
- 86% of pupils reported that if they saw a pupil in the playground being bullied or treated meanly, they would help them



Feedback Results: Teachers

- 82% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that as a result of Roots of Empathy, pupils are more inclusive or accepting of others who are different from themselves (including culture, race, special needs, gender, etc...)

Goal #4: To Increase Knowledge of Human Development, Learning, and Infant Safety

Providing information about safe parenting can effectively increase parenting knowledge, increase an individual's confidence in their ability to parent, as well as prevent negative outcomes such as sudden infant death syndrome, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and shaken baby syndrome.

Feedback Results: Pupils

- 97% of pupils reported learning that if a pregnant woman smokes or drinks, she can harm her baby
- 98% of pupils reported learning that it is dangerous to shake a baby

Goal #5: To Prepare Pupils for Responsible Citizenship and Responsive Parenting

Witnessing a caring parent-infant relationship as well as understanding how sensitive and responsive parenting in infancy and early childhood can protect against stress and negative influences will help to protect future generations and reduce vulnerability to future psychopathology.

Feedback Results: Pupils

- 85% of pupils reported learning babies' brains grow better when they are loved and cared for
- 86% of pupils reported learning that being a parent and caring for a baby is a lot of hard work

Additional Findings:

Curriculum Expectations

- 100% of teachers feel that the Roots of Empathy programme supports the school's curriculum

When asked, “What can Roots of Empathy teach the world?” pupils reported:

“[Roots of Empathy can teach the world] To be who you are and be kind and respect others.”

-Primary 4, Shotts

“[How] to be [better people].”

-Primary 3, Auchinleck

“[Roots of Empathy can teach the world] that you have to care or be nice and be there for them [always].”

-Primary 6, Dumfries

“Everybody has feelings. Care for everything, respect every faith.”

-Primary 4, Bellshill

“Kindness, being helpful and being [thoughtful]”

-Primary 3, Argyll

“[Roots of Empathy can teach the world] to be a better place”

-Primary 5, Maybole

“It can help you learn how to care for a baby and to be kind to others and care for everybody and not to [bully].”

-Primary 4, Shotts

“To love and care about people and empathy.”

-Primary 3, Glasgow

“How to treat babies properly until they grow up and can look after themselves and care for their own baby.”

-Primary 6, Maybole

“Recognise other people's feelings help other people.”

-Primary 3, Kilmarnock

When asked about the impact of the programme, teachers offered comments such as:

“Children are more aware of their emotions and behaviours and have a better understanding of how to deal with them.”

-Primary 2, Glen Fyne

“Children will not be able to learn if their emotions are in turmoil. I have witnessed this first hand. Roots of Empathy covers so many of the Health and Wellbeing outcomes for the Scottish Curriculum and does this ... with the baby visiting, and the pre and post family visits. The children have a safe environment in which to discuss their feelings and it helps them to know that all feelings are ok and it is best to talk about them.”

-Primary 4, Glasgow

"Children are more able to talk about their feelings and [understand] how to treat others... They can go home and share what they have learned with their families and this can then have a positive impact on the wider community."

-Primary 6/7, Brora

"It has had an impact on developing the empathy within the classroom amongst the children."

-Primary 3/4, Edinburgh

When asked about the impact of the programme, Roots of Empathy Instructors offered comments such as:

"I have observed the children being able to open up to share their emotions due to the safe, risk free learning environment that has been created within the classroom. Through discussions and heartfelt moments they have not only been able to identify their own feelings but understand their classmates' feelings and this is creating an empathic and inclusive environment for all."

-Primary 3, Glasgow

"The children are more in touch with their own feelings and know it's important to express them... I work as a PSA in a different school in Aberdeen and the [Roots of Empathy] programme has helped me in my approach to listening to the children and remembering that they learn from my response. I encourage them to be inclusive and empathetic and ... the [Roots of Empathy] knowledge that I have ... has made a difference. [I] am a better person for having [Roots of Empathy] in my life."

-Primary 2, Aberdeen

"It has helped the students to realise that their actions do have an impact- both positive and negative- on others and in the world; that what they do matters. They are more able to appreciate that other children are beings who have feelings just as important as their own, instead of thinking about the world only from their own perspective."

-Primary 2/3, Edinburgh

"The programme sows the seeds for early parenting skills and knowledge. The school and community benefit from the links that come from the [Roots of Empathy] family."

-Primary 2, Maybole