

Facts4Life: Phase II Evaluation of the School-Based Resource

Summary of the Final Evaluation Report by the University of the West of England

2015-2018

PRIMARY

- Statistically significant short and longer term improvements in years 3 & 4
 - *'When I feel ill I always need to take medicine to feel better'*
 - *'There is nothing I can do to help when I am feeling low'*
 - *'It is useful to learn about illness'*
- Resilience significantly higher among intervention group children in years 5 and 6, six-months after receiving the intervention.
- Change in attitudes and, in some cases, behaviours towards health and illness
- Change in philosophy around the teaching of health and illness

Theme 1: Knowledge generation

- *'I learned about the importance of sleep. It's really good for your brain. As a child you need about 9 hours.'* Child, School 5
- *'Outcomes of Facts4Life include having a more positive view of what health and illness mean and how to look after themselves as a whole person.'* Teacher, School 5

Theme 2: Autonomy & Personal Responsibility

- *'My favourite thing was learning that I can work things out for myself and do things to help myself.'* Child, School 5
- *'The lessons are interesting and help me to feel control over my life.'* Child, School 2
- *'They talk much more about what they can do to help themselves whereas they didn't before.'* Teacher, School 5

Theme 3: Attitudinal & Behavioural Change

- *'I've learned about talking about things. So, sometimes now, if I've got a problem I go home and talk to my brother. He doesn't listen to me but I find it helps to just say it out loud!'* Child, School 3
- *'...I have definitely seen attitudes change. I can think of two children in particular whose attendance was low last year. They would be saying "I don't feel very well" and Mum would keep them at home even if they were quite capable of coming in, and their attendance has definitely improved this year and I do feel that it is this [Facts4Life] that's had an effect.'* Teacher, School 1

Theme 4: Value of Openness & Sharing

- *'I have a mental health thing, it's anxiety...when we were talking about it in class it made me feel a bit funny...[but] it was nice to talk about it and to let other people know, instead*

of just keeping it a secret.' Child, School 1

- *'Mental health in particular and lots of children in class do struggle with mental health, so it's been nice that it is a topic that can be brought up and spoken about. It's given them space to talk about their feelings a bit more.'* Teacher, School 1

Theme 5: Lesson Experience

- *'We all really looked forward to those lessons each week.'* Child, School 7
- *'It fitted in seamlessly. Children's emotional development...it's quite a priority for some of our children.'* Teacher, School 2

Overall:

- *'It has showed me how to live a good life and how to look after yourself properly.'*
- *'The children I spoke to afterwards could give me strategies that they could use if things were getting on top of them. They talked really confidently in a way that other classes who hadn't done it Facts4Life lessons, and that made me want to have a go with all the classes.'*

SECONDARY

Qualitative findings identified the following:

- Pupils and their teachers reported examples of changes in attitudes and perceived increases in autonomy and personal responsibility for health.
- There was strong appreciation for the mental health content of Facts4Life; this was seen to be the most novel and interesting aspect of the resource.
- In line with findings from primary schools, secondary school teachers reported a disconnect in pupils' awareness and understanding of the links between physical and mental health, with Facts4Life perceived to be a useful tool to 'bridge the gap' between the two.
- Teachers were impressed with the quality of Facts4Life training and the availability of ongoing support provided post-training.

Theme 1: Autonomy & Personal Responsibility

- *'Facts4Life] has helped me to understand more of the things that you can change to make yourself healthier'.* Pupil

Theme 2: Attitudinal & Behavioural Change

- *'It definitely did have an effect on some of [the pupils]. [There was] increased recognition and understanding [about health and illness]. Facts4Life builds an understanding that 'these things happen' and we have to build some resilience to deal with them'.* Teacher

Theme 3: Knowledge generation

- *'It taught us important life skills. Like, it's not such a good idea to either drink or smoke. It teaches you how to make the right decisions.'* Pupil

Theme 4: Facts4Life lesson experiences

- *'Facts4Life lessons are more creative. I think Facts4Life is more clever than the other PSHE lessons we've had.'* Pupil

Theme 5: Facts4Life training and resources

- *'I think the resource booklet is brilliant for adapting to different pupil needs and abilities.'* Teacher