

Evaluating the impact of Rtime: An intervention for schools that aims to develop relationships, raise enjoyment and reduce bullying

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Developing social and emotional well-being amongst children and young people is part of national educational policy (e.g. Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2004; Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS), 2008). A relatively recent intervention known as 'Rtime' (Sampson, 2004) appears to be able to improve relationships in school and at the same impact upon reducing bullying behaviours and raising enjoyment. Rtime is a 15-minute, weekly, structured relationship programme where children work in random pairs on a co-operative activity, incorporating time to greet and thank each other. The aim of this study was to research whether Rtime really did have the effects on children that it claimed. The study took place in 21 educational settings within a city in the south-west of England with 149 school-aged participants from Foundation to Key Stage 3 from both mainstream and specialist educational settings. The participants completed a questionnaire that investigated the above themes. Overall, the statistical analysis of the questionnaire responses suggested that Rtime had made a significant positive impact on children's development of relationships and friendships and contributed to some changes in the children's perceptions of bullying and enjoyment at school. Teachers reported that Rtime had made an impact on collaborative working, manners and general social skills. It is concluded that Rtime is a valuable programme that promotes significant positive changes in classrooms and schools consistent with national initiatives.

SOcial AND EMOTIONAL well-being has been placed at the heart of recent political and National Curriculum change in England (e.g. Every Child Matters, DfES, 2004; Social and Emotional Aspects Learning (SEAL)/Social and Emotional Aspects of Development (SEAD) Strategies, DfES, 2007 and 2005; DCSF, 2008). The need for healthy personal, social and emotional relationships has become a key focus in raising attainment and securing the best long-term outcomes for children and young people. (Sharp, 2000; Weare, 2004; Claxton, 2005). Notions of co-operation, community cohesion and civic responsibilities have also been given a priority in national policy in the UK, with the 'Respect Agenda' (Home Office Online, 2006) attempting to adopt both a supportive,

preventative approach and attempting to restore 'old fashioned' values of respect, courtesy and discipline in society.

A brief review of the literature: Emotional well-being

The importance of positive personal emotional and social development is something that is highlighted by Claxton (2005). His paper suggests that emotional literacy can improve social relationships as well as personal and emotional well-being, and improve how we think about others, and ourselves. Indeed, those from a humanist standpoint have long argued that as social beings, humans have a need to belong within a safe community before any 'higher-order' (e.g. academic or socio-economic achievements) can be realised (Maslow, 1998).

However, as teachers are facing increasing demands to improve basic skills such as literacy and numeracy (DfES, 2005; Tymms & Merrell, 2007) that draws ever increasing demands on their time (Cheisa & Robertson, 2000) the need to find creative ways of allowing children and young people to experience a broader social and emotional education is essential.

Rtime as a concept links very well with other social development initiatives such as Circle Time. Elements of the Circle Time process such as reciprocal communication, motor co-ordination development, and sharing time together are all elements which may be seen to improve self-esteem, co-operation and problem-solving (Lown, 2002). It is these elements that may hold the key to the noticeable psychological and behavioural changes. However, reviews on the use of Circle Time (Taylor, 2003) find a lack of quantitative research into the effectiveness of Circle Time and note difficulties with the implementation of it, including problems of facilitation with large class sizes, lack of transference of skills across the curriculum and the need for the teacher to be well skilled in enabling communication and interaction for Circle Time to be successful.

Rtime, whilst being similar in some respects, also has key differences that address some of these areas. Children work in pairs, avoiding the problem of waiting for your 'turn' and it can be used in a range of curriculum subjects. Rtime has been successfully trialled in a Midland county of England where results indicate reductions in bullying, greater social awareness and self-esteem and raised attainment (Trimmingham & Osborn, 2005). This study aims to build on that body of evidence with a city-wide quantitative evaluation of it's effectiveness as an intervention to address relationships, bullying and enjoyment of school.

The Rtime intervention

Rtime is a technique that aims to promote positive relationships for learning through short (10- to 15-minute) activities, which take

place weekly, over a 30-week period (Sampson, 2004). Rtime can be used as a whole-school approach and supports co-operative learning strategies and national strategies such as SEAL and Anti-Bullying initiatives (Sampson, 2005) whilst incorporating key psychological approaches.

Rtime is made up of five parts, in this order:

1. Random pairing

Children are divided into pairs using largely random but enjoyable techniques such as the use of pairs of picture cards. They are handed out to each child, making use of their name and with the child saying 'thank you'.

2. Greeting

The children are provided with a structure to greet each other and are encouraged to use each other's names and make eye contact. For example, they are asked to finish the sentence 'I'm glad I'm with you because ...' or 'My favourite lesson is ...'

3. Activity

Each activity in the Rtime manual is categorised 'practical', 'talking' or 'pretend'. Sufficient activities are provided in the manual but teachers are also encouraged to create their own. A nursery-based 'talking' activity includes using the nursery rhyme 'Jack and Jill' to talk about feeling hurt and keeping safe, whilst a Year 6 'practical' activity includes copying the picture from the pairing card ensuring they take turns and compliment each other.

4. Plenary

The children have a chance to show their work and to explain how they managed to work co-operatively.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion encourages the children to once again make eye contact and thank each other.

An important aspect of the Rtime model is that the activity is an opportunity to enable co-operative working, developing relationships and improving interaction skills.

As such the model promotes the *process* of the activity rather than the *product* of the activity. The over-riding aim of the approach is to break down barriers to learning by promoting positive relationships amongst children. It is these relationships that became an important element of other lessons and around the school.

The notion of randomised pairing and completing activities together is something that can be fully integrated into teaching across the curriculum. Many studies have used pairing as a method to enhance social skills amongst children (Mervis, 1985; Oden & Asher, 1977; Vaughn & Lancelotta, 1990). Many of these methods use peer-pairing and Mervis (1985) suggests that this enables children to focus on the skills they are learning and thus develop friendships with each other. Additionally, Rtime's random pairing means that children are consistently working with different people allowing the children to build positive relationship networks. Rtime brings a structure for whole classes to spend shared time attempting activities together and learning, through modelling and co-operation, effective communication skills and ways to engage in positive social interactions.

Rtime allows children to take time to work with different people in their class, communicate and discuss issues in a positive and productive way. The process also allows the children to reciprocally support each other using shared materials to work on a paired task and share responsibility to complete it successfully. This co-operative learning process has been shown to be highly beneficial in building a sense of community (Johnson, 1984, as cited in Bentham, 2002). Putnam (1993, as cited in Bentham, 2002) highlights how these forms of learning can indeed promote an inclusive environment enabling children with special or additional needs to integrate into mainstream settings. Therefore, the very nature of Rtime's approach in itself can be seen to have the potential to bring about change at the community level.

It is clear that classroom time needs to be used constructively to meet the demands on teaching staff, but imperative that social development can be an integral part of the school day. Sampson (2008) highlights the importance of making time to develop these social skills:

'We all recognise the importance of teaching the basics in other subject areas and there are many children who need to be taught the basic skills of communicating and relating effectively. Through relationships we can thrive and our sense of well-being is high. Without relationships we can be literally lost and alone. Sadly in our modern society there can be too great an emphasis on I and not We.' (Sampson, 2008, p.23)

Current research

Participating schools were recruited during a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) Conference and a Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Conference in a city in the south-west of England. Rtime was introduced to the group and a sheet was left for interested parties to sign up to take part in the training and subsequently the pilot on which this study is based.

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Rtime over time amongst children of different ages, abilities and socio-economic areas. It is aimed at adding to the evidence base of Rtime and to specifically investigate whether it supports children's social, emotional and personal development (as measured by relationships and friendships and enjoyment of school outcomes), and whether it helps to reduce negative social interactions (as measured by a 'bullying' outcome). It is also aimed at investigating the demands on schools and whether there is a need for Rtime as an additional tool within settings.

Research questions

In line with the broad aims outlined above, the research questions and hypotheses investigated were:

1. *What was the impact of Rtime on the children who took part?*
 - (a) It is hypothesised that Rtime will have a positive impact on the children's perceptions towards developing relationships and friendships after participating in Rtime.
 - (b) It is hypothesised that Rtime will have a positive impact on children's perceptions towards bullying at school after participating in Rtime.
 - (c) It is hypothesised that Rtime will have a positive impact on children's perceptions towards their enjoyment of school after participating in Rtime.
2. *How successful was Rtime across the participating class or classes from the teachers' perspective?*
3. *What aspects of Rtime did the schools find most useful and least useful?*

Methodology, methods, participants and procedures

Design, methods and procedure

Participating schools registered their interest during the 2006/2007 academic year. These schools were then contacted by the city's Psychology Service in October 2007 to confirm their interest. The participating schools were required to randomly select up to 10 children from across their school that were going to be taking part in the Rtime pilot. Permission was then obtained from these children's parents for them to participate in a short evaluative questionnaire carried out by a research assistant and a trainee educational psychologist.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was originally devised by the main author and colleagues in another Psychology Service in England and measures participants' perceptions across a number of dimensions including perceptions of self, school environment, friendships, bullying and social times during the school day. It also aimed to measure attitudes towards school and group work. Its composition drew on the work of Smith (HMSO, 1994), Booth and Ainscow (2002) and Arora (Arora & Thompson,

1987). The three key areas for further analysis were: friendships and relationships; perceptions of bullying; and enjoyment of school. These were addressed through questions such as 'How many people in your class do you think of as a friend?'; 'Do you know anyone who is being bullied now?'; and 'Do you enjoy break times and lunch times?' respectively. The questionnaire was structured using scales developed from those first proposed by Likert (1932) with cartoon 'faces' to denote the four options; 'A Lot', 'A Bit', 'Not Really' and 'Not At All'. The cartoon 'faces' were used to help them understand the scale of moving from a strong disagreement to an emphatic agreement, for example, on the question 'Do you like school?' the children could see a smiling face showing the response 'A Lot' to the opposite which was a sad face showing 'Not at all'. Other additional questions were answered either 'Yes', 'No' or 'Maybe' and two questions (including 'How many people in your class do you think of as a friend?') were answered using the options 5+, 4, 3, 2 or less.

Consistent with a repeated-measures design this questionnaire was administered twice, once before Rtime had started (November and December 2007) and again several months after Rtime had been implemented in the setting (June and July 2008). Those schools that participated were invited to a free training day in January 2008 before Rtime was introduced to the children.

Each school also received a very short school questionnaire, one during the first data collection point (2007) and another at the second data collection point (2008). The aim was to capture the views of each school in terms of how they were planning to use the approach before implementation, and latterly to capture the views of how it was actually used and general reflections on efficacy. In addition during May 2008 all of the schools were contacted to find out how they were finding the process, if they required any further support and if they had noticed any changes in the children. This data was collected by

using a short unstructured conversation with the key contact from each setting.

Predominantly quantitative methods were used in order to investigate whether or not previous positive findings on the impact of Rtime could be replicated in this city. This would help local school settings to see statistically analysed data supporting the perceived effectiveness of the intervention.

Participants

Twenty-one schools completed both the pre-Rtime questionnaires and the follow-up evaluation. The schools that participated were from all over the city; 46.3 per cent were from deprived areas, 37.6 per cent were in the middle group and 16.1 per cent were from the least deprived areas of the city (calculated using the locality deprivation maps in the 2001 Children and Young People's Plan for the city).

A total of 149 students participated in both parts of this evaluation. The students ranged from Foundation to Year 9 and were aged from 4 to 14 years of age ($M=7.61$, $SD=2.02$). The numbers of children in each year group are detailed below. The children from Year 8 and 9 were attending a special school for children with severe learning difficulties. The sample was 51 per cent female, 47.7 per cent

male and for 1.3 per cent the data was missing. Twenty-one adults (including teachers, teaching assistants, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Personal, Social and Health Education co-ordinators) took part and 18 of these responded to the questionnaires.

Analysis

The data was collated and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The pre- and post-data collected from the student participants were summarised using descriptive statistics and frequency tables and were then analysed using a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test. The results section details occasions where ratings of 'A lot' and 'A bit' have been combined in the final analysis. The questionnaire had 34 items; however, only the items related to the three outcomes were used in the final analysis. A total of 15 items were analysed. Questions 2, 10, 20, 21, 22 and 33 were analysed to look at relationships and friendships; Questions 23, 28, 29, 31 and 32 were analysed to look at bullying; and Questions 1, 4, 5 and 13 were analysed to look at enjoyment at school. The findings are discussed in the results section alongside thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from the Rtime lead teachers.

Table 1: Table to show the number of children from each year group.

School Year	Age (in years)	Number of Children
Reception	4 – 5	18
Year 1	5 – 6	20
Year 2	6 – 7	21
Year 3	7 – 8	27
Year 4	8 – 9	13
Year 5	9 – 10	35
Year 6	10 – 11	11
Year 7	11 – 12	0
Year 8	12 – 13	2
Year 9	13 – 14	2

Results and findings

This section has been laid out according to the three areas of interest to this study: relationships and friendships, bullying and enjoyment at school, followed by the responses from the school evaluation completed by the lead Rtime teachers. (Mean before and after intervention scores for each of the 15 questions are shown in Appendix B.)

Relationships and friendships

The pre- and post-data for the students' responses on the relationships and friendships questions are presented in Graph 1 in percentage format.

The graph points to a positive impact on those areas sampled through questions 2, 10, 20, 21 and 33, alongside a slightly negative impact on question 22, where 2 per cent less students felt they had had a chance to make new friends in their class; this however was not statistically significant ($p>.05$). Specifically, the positive increases were found in these areas:

- 13.4 per cent more students chose A lot or A bit in the post-intervention questionnaire for Question 2, which was statistically significant ($p<.05$).
- 12.1 per cent more students chose Not really or Not at all in the post-intervention questionnaire for Question 10 (this question was negatively worded and so needs to be interpreted in reverse), which was statistically significant ($p<.05$).
- 2 per cent more students chose 'Yes' in the post-intervention questionnaire for Question 20; this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- 6.7 per cent more students chose 'Yes' in the post-intervention questionnaire for Question 21; this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- 14.1 per cent more students indicated that they thought of five or more people in their class as their friends in the post-intervention questionnaire (Question 33), which was statistically significant ($p<.05$).

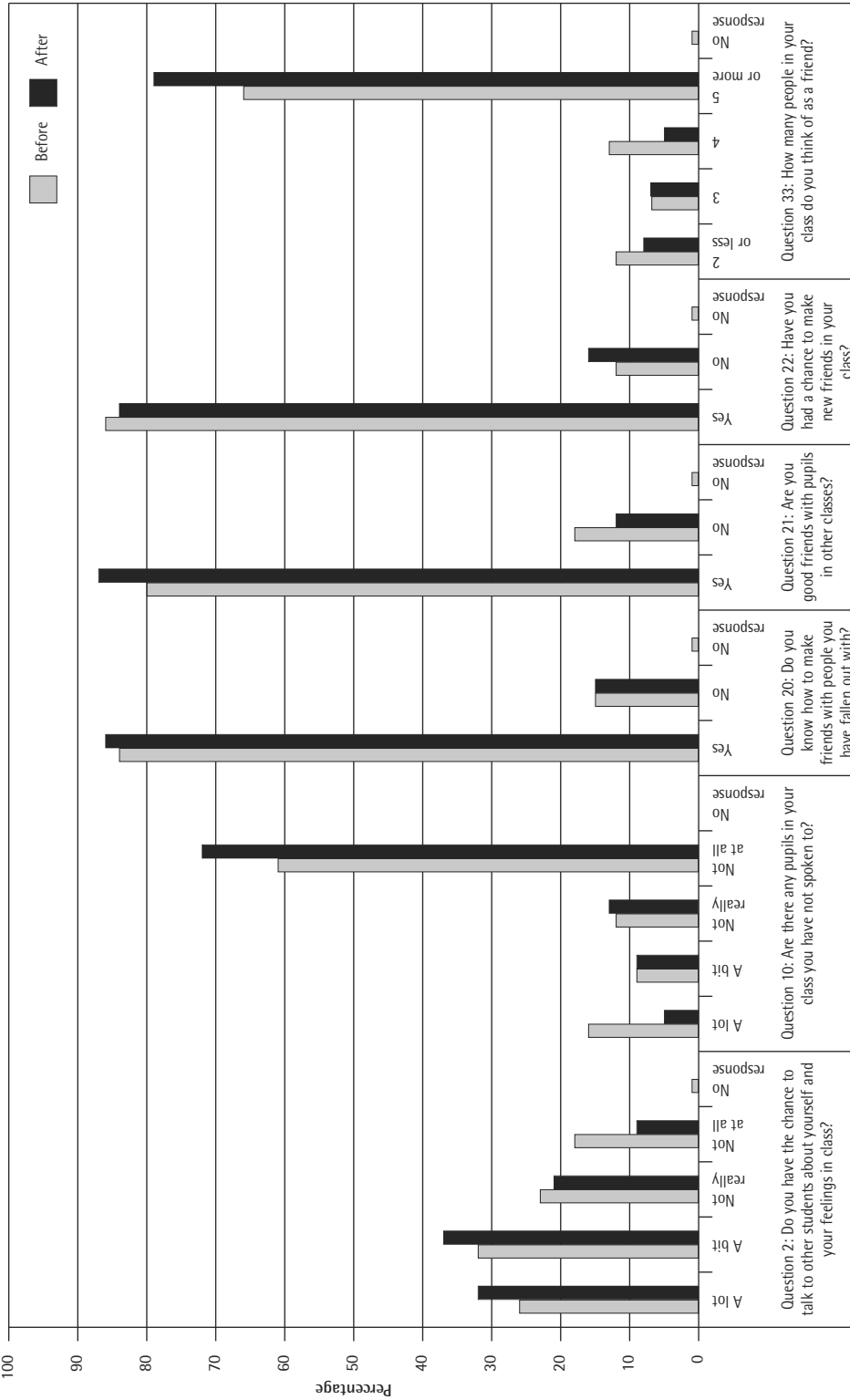
Bullying

The pre- and post-data for the students' responses on the bullying questions are presented in Graph 2 in percentage format.

From the graph, it can be seen that there was a positive impact on question 29 and a slightly positive impact on questions 23, 28 and 32. There were mixed results for question 31. Specific findings from this area were:

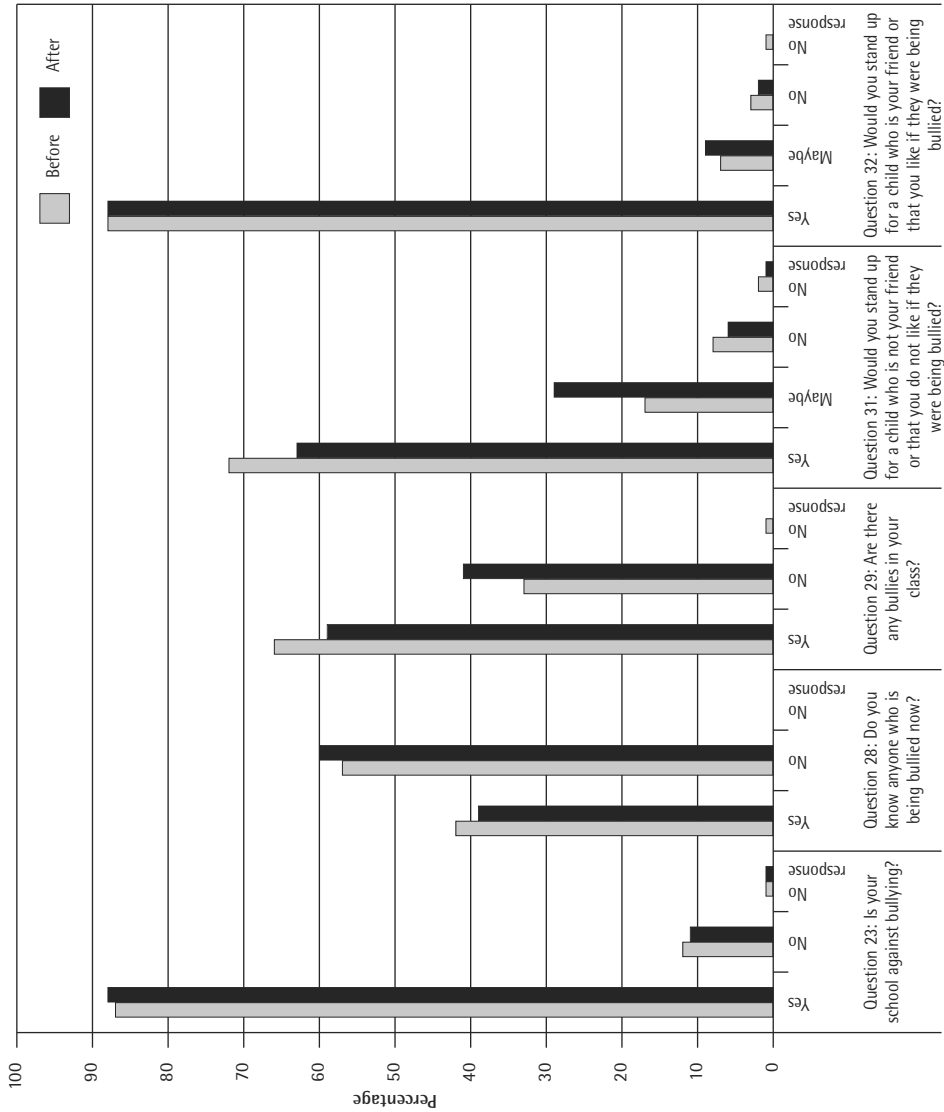
- 0.6 per cent more students agreed that their school was against bullying (Question 23: Is your school against bullying?) in the post-intervention questionnaire; this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- 2.7 per cent more students stated that they did not know anyone who was being bullied (Question 28: Do you know anyone who is being bullied now?) in the post-intervention questionnaire; this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- 6.7 per cent more students stated that there were not any bullies in their class (Question 29: Are there any bullies in your class?) in the post-intervention questionnaire; this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- 2.1 per cent less students answered No to Question 31 (Would you stand up for a child who is not your friend or that you do not like if they were being bullied?) in the post-intervention questionnaire and although less students answered Yes, 12.1 per cent answered Maybe; this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- There was no change in students responding Yes in Question 32 (Would you stand up for a child who is your friend or that you like if they were being bullied?), but there were 2 per cent more students responding Maybe; this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).

Graph 1: Students' pre- and post-data on the questions related to relationships and friendships.



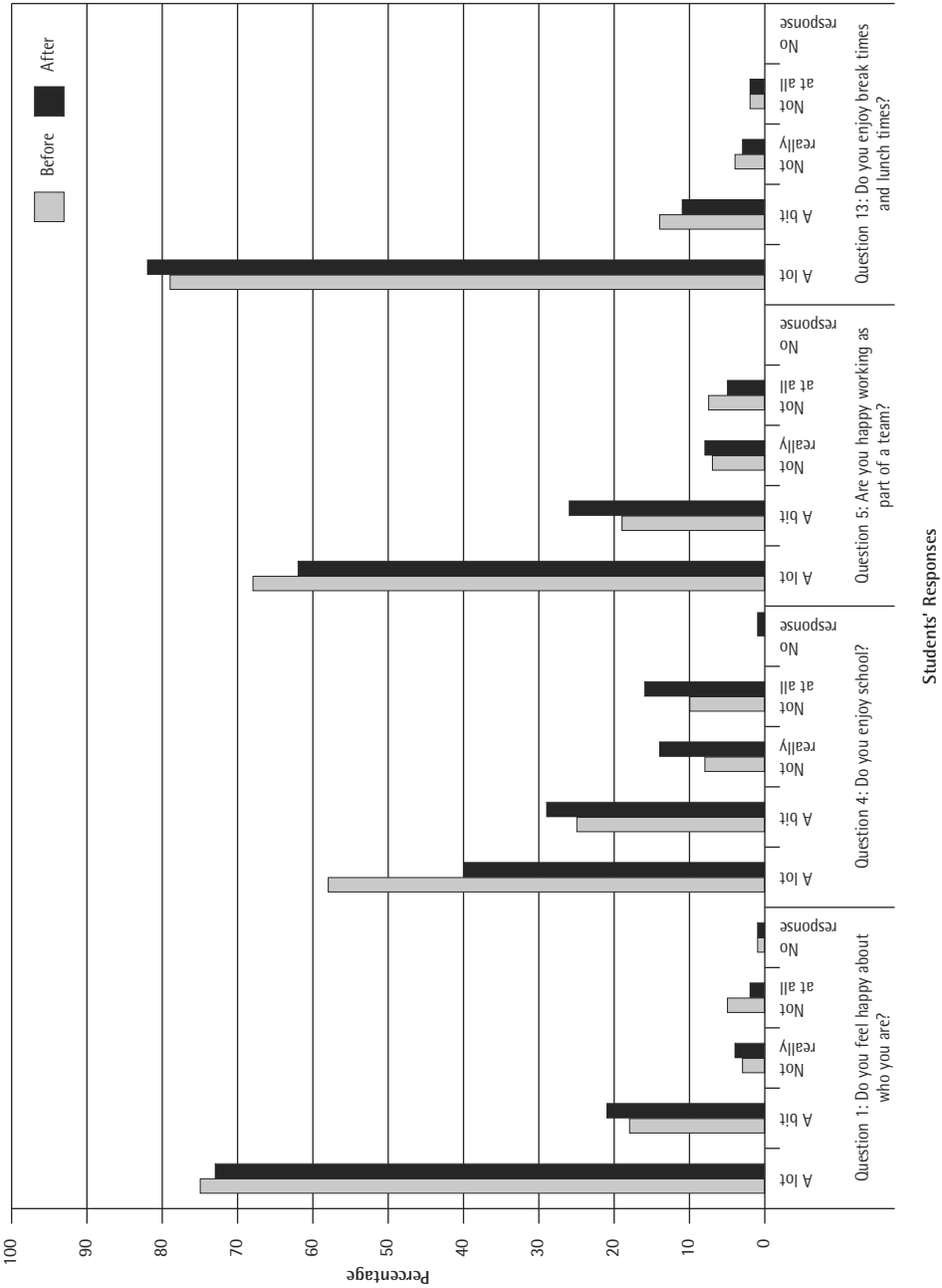
Students' Responses

Graph 2: Students' pre- and post-data on the questions related to bullying.



Students' Responses

Graph 3: Students' pre- and post-data on the questions related to enjoyment of school.



Enjoyment at school

The pre- and post-data for the students' responses on the enjoyment of school questions are presented in Graph 3 in percentage format.

From the graph, it can be seen that the results for the enjoyment of school outcome were mixed. Specific findings from this area were:

- 2.1 per cent more students chose A lot or A bit in the post-intervention questionnaire for Question 1 (Do you feel happy about who you are?); this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- 5.3 per cent more students responded Not at all to 'Do you enjoy school?' (Question 4) and 5.3 per cent more students responded A bit. 6 per cent more students responded Not Really; these changes were statistically significant ($p<.05$).
- 0.6 per cent more students chose A lot or A bit in the post-intervention questionnaire for Question 5 (Are you happy working as part of a team?); this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).
- 4 per cent more students chose A lot in the post-intervention questionnaire for Question 13 (Do you enjoy break and lunch times?); this was not statistically significant ($p>.05$).

School evaluation

Of the 21 schools, 18 responded to the school evaluation questionnaire. The mean score (on a scale from 1 to 9) for how successful Rtime had been in their school was $M=7.18$, $SD=1.19$. The schools were asked whether they were considering or would consider expanding Rtime across the whole school; 83 per cent (15) responded yes, 11 per cent (2) responded no and 6 per cent (1) did not give a response.

Discussion of findings

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Rtime within an academic year amongst children of different ages, abilities and socio-economic areas. The study

asked three research questions. These will now be discussed with the results below.

Research Question 1: What was the impact of Rtime on the children who took part in Rtime?

Hypothesis A stated that Rtime would have a positive impact on the children's perceptions towards developing relationships and friendships after participating in Rtime. The results provided evidence that this hypothesis was supported by the data collected. Of the six questions underpinning this outcome three had statistically significant changes from the pre-intervention to the post-intervention data. All the changes were positive except for Question 22, which had a very small negative change (two per cent). This could be explained by the comments that the participants made when answering this question; many of the students stated that they were already friends with everybody in the class and so there were no opportunities to make new friends.

These results were further supported by some of the statements made by the children during an informal group interview following the completion of the questionnaire.

'It tells you how to work with people you don't know how to work with.'

[Primary student]

'Me and [child] weren't really friends before but now after doing Rtime we are.'

[Primary student]

Furthermore, the teachers' responses in the school questionnaire also suggested a positive impact on relationships and friendships.

'Random pairing has made a positive impact upon friendship groups.'

[Rtime lead teacher]

Hypothesis B stated that Rtime would have a positive impact on children's perceptions towards bullying at school after participating in Rtime. This hypothesis was somewhat supported by the data collected. The results showed that there were some positive changes towards the perception of bullying in school after the Rtime programme was implemented, and within the participating

classes 6.7 per cent more children perceived that there were less bullies in their class after doing Rtime.

In the current study, the school questionnaires showed the following:

'Children much more caring towards others.'

[Rtime lead teacher]

'Manners, collaboration, willingness to work with a variety of pupils.'

[Rtime lead teacher]

Hypothesis C stated that Rtime would have a positive impact on children's perceptions towards their enjoyment of school after participating in Rtime. For all but one of the questions the pre-Rtime responses were already very positive for enjoyment and remained the same in the post-Rtime responses. For example, 91.9 per cent of children said they were happy about who they are before doing Rtime and this rose to 94 per cent after Rtime. One notable finding was a significant decrease in the number of children responding positively to Question 4 'Do you enjoy school?' However, the statements students made about doing Rtime during the informal group interviews do not suggest that this was related to the initiative itself:

'[I want] to do it every single day because it's that fun.'

[Primary student]

'It's fun because you get to learn about other people...'

[Primary student]

This finding indicates that although the children enjoyed Rtime, the programme did not help them to enjoy school more. Enjoyment of school is likely to be related to a number of additional factors that Rtime did not impact on including their attainment within the curriculum and feeling successful as a learner.

Interestingly, four per cent more children said they enjoyed break times and lunch times in the post-Rtime evaluation. It is possible that although Rtime did not have a positive impact on school life in general it did have a positive impact on social times in school. This could have been due to a number of reasons, one

being that the positive impact Rtime had made on relationships and friendships could have contributed to more children enjoying their social break times because they now had friends to play with.

Summary of findings

Overall, it seems that Rtime had the most impact on developing children's relationships and friendships, and, to a lesser extent, it also made a positive impact on bullying and enjoyment of school. This might be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, Rtime is aimed at building relationships and so it would make sense that the outcome that had the greatest change would be on developing relationships and friendships. Also, bullying could be viewed more as a whole-school issue, and not all the schools chose to implement Rtime across all their classes. It is possible that should Rtime be made available to all students and adults there will be a greater impact on such broader issues. Lastly, the positive responses for enjoyment of school were quite high both before and after Rtime was implemented, so it was not surprising that no statistically significant changes were to be found for this outcome.

Research Question 2: How successful was Rtime across the participating class or classes?

School responses suggest that Rtime was very successful. On a scale from 1 to 9, the mean reported score was 7.18 ($SD=1.19$) and all of the schools scored 5 or above. Furthermore, all of the responses from the teachers suggested that Rtime had made a positive impact on the classes using the programme.

'Good manners being used in everyday classroom activities.'

[Rtime lead teacher]

'Finally getting the class to work and cooperate.'

[Rtime lead teacher]

Overall, it would seem that schools were happy with the success of Rtime and would continue to use it in the future. This finding is in line with responses from schools using Rtime in a rural county in England where

one Head Teacher has said, 'It is one of the best things any school could introduce' (Rtime website, www.rtime.info/).

Research Question 3: What aspects of Rtime did the schools find most useful and least useful?

Responses to questions 'What has been the most useful part of Rtime?' and 'What, if any, has been the least useful part of Rtime?' from the school questionnaire, were qualitatively analysed for common themes. Five themes emerged from the data:

- resources and activity ideas;
- co-operative and collaborative working;
- mixed pairing related to the random pairing process;
- manners;
- impacts related to the children (e.g. social skills, friendship development and empathy skills).

Overall, the teachers appreciated that the programme was easy to use and had pre-prepared resources that required minimal effort to implement. They also appreciated that the impact on the children was evident and they could clearly see the changes that Rtime was bringing about. They could see the benefit of the children working with different people in the class and saw that it was developing collaborative and co-operative working between the children. Half of the teachers felt there were no aspects of Rtime that were not useful, while six out of 18 teachers identified the resources or activities as 'least useful'; this seemed to be because they had to be adapted for children of lower abilities or they took time to prepare. Other comments made by teachers related to fitting Rtime into a busy curriculum.

'Some activities have been replaced by other activities deemed more appropriate.'

[Rtime lead teacher]

'Some resources take a little long to prepare.'

[Rtime lead teacher]

New interventions are likely to take additional time to prepare for while the practice becomes embedded and the routines become familiar to the teacher. This may

explain why some teachers felt that Rtime took up more than the recommended 15 minutes. Comments on the constraints of the curriculum are also mirrored in research on the use of Circle Time (Taylor, 2003).

Conclusions

Programmes such as Rtime (Sampson, 2004) are useful in developing children's emotional well-being, social competence and, in turn, their ability to engage across a range of curricular areas. As such, this study looked at three outcomes relevant to current national initiatives in Children's Services. The findings suggest that Rtime can have a marked impact on children's development of relationships and friendships and contribute to improvements in the children's perceptions of bullying and enjoyment at school. The evidence provided here in terms of the initiative's effect on bullying warrants further exploration in future studies.

It is important to point out how aspects of the Rtime programme, such as collaborative working and random pairing, appeared to not only develop friendships between children in the classes that participated in this study, but also to enhance the skills they had with working together and as a team. Research suggests that peer interactions promote cognitive development because they allow children to gain new skills and reconstruct their knowledge through the discussions they have (Azmitia, 1988). Lown (2002) goes on to consider how socially mediated learning could be the process which elicits the changes seen in methods such as Circle Time, and how using these methods across the curriculum may enhance the learning experience. Indeed, many of the teachers we spoke to mentioned how they had used the Rtime method across the curriculum with great success.

Reports that Rtime had a positive impact on manners, social skills and the development of empathy in the children that participated replicates the findings of the previous evaluation of Rtime. Trimmingham and Osborn (2005) reported that the programme

had a positive impact on ‘empathy and positive attitude towards others’ (p.3), while children stated that Rtime ‘gave them the opportunity to make new friends and get to know others better’ (p.3) and teachers reported ‘increased tolerance and respect among pupils’ (p.3).

Recommendations for further research

Research involving children has many potential problems, including their desire to provide the perceived ‘correct’ answer (see Simons, 1982, and McCormick & James, 1988, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001, p.123, for further examples). Other difficulties include ensuring that all respondents have an understanding of the concepts. In this study it was found that some children required an explanation of the term ‘race’ in question 7 (see Appendix A). Future research may wish to consider amendments to the questionnaire especially if it were to include very young children, for example reducing the number of questions, simplifying the options and ensuring that all questions were positively phrased. Additionally a more qualitative methodology may be more helpful as many of the comments gained from the simple additional questions addressed to practitioners and children illuminated the impact of Rtime more emphatically than the results of the questionnaire.

An ‘Illuminative Evaluation’ approach (Burden, 1998) would also help to shed light on the implementation phases of the Rtime study which can be key to the success, or not, of such a project. The evidence has been collected from children who have been involved in Rtime and conclusions have been made that the findings are in some way attributable to Rtime. To further qualify this it would be helpful to compare changes in these areas of social interactions with children who have not been exposed to Rtime and/or those who have been exposed to an alternative form of social and emotional development, perhaps through a

SEAL programme or Circle Time. It would also be helpful to complete some ‘treatment fidelity’ checks such as those recommended by Eames et al. (2008). This would help to illuminate any effect that may have been caused by teachers implementing the programme in a way that was not in line with the original training.

It should be noted that Rtime is felt to be most effective when it is implemented at a whole school level. Most schools in this study were trialling Rtime in a number of classes but not all. More significant effects may be found on areas such as bullying when all children and staff in the school are part of the Rtime ethos.

Further research may consider addressing these points to investigate the fuller impact of Rtime on relationships in schools, to consider whether it has an impact on learning in schools or to take a more detailed qualitative approach to looking at the Rtime experience of individual children in depth.

In conclusion, it is suggested that Rtime could offer a valuable resource to schools and teachers in promoting positive relationships with students and extending aspects of respect and cohesion. It is an approach that appears largely appreciated by both teachers and students, who find the programme easy to use, enjoyable and effective. This research not only offers a platform for further evaluation and exploration of associated delivery and implementation issues (Roberts & Hampton, 2008), but also offers inspiration for those directly involved in addressing those national priorities that emphasise social and emotional well-being for all.

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Appendix A: Pre- and Post-Student Evaluation Questionnaire.

Number _____ School _____ Year _____

No.	Question	A lot	A bit	Not really	Not at all
1	Do you feel happy about who you are?				
2	Do you have the chance to talk to other students about yourself and your feelings in class?				
3	Do you have the chance to listen to other pupils in your class?				
4	Do you enjoy school?				
5	Are you happy working as part of a team?				
6	Do you have a chance to discuss each other's thoughts in your class?				
7	Are pupils of all races, boys and girls and those with disabilities accepted in your class?				
8	Do you feel happy in your class?				
9	Do you ever think about how other pupils in your class might feel?				
10	Are there any pupils in your class that you have not spoken to?				
11	Do you enjoy being in your class?				
12	Are you proud of yourself?				
13	Do you enjoy break times, lunch time?				
14	Do you like your teacher?				
15	Do you ever wonder what other pupils in your class are thinking?				
16	Do you like yourself?				
17	Do you enjoy classes?				
18	Can you trust your friends?				
19	Do the pupils in your class like you?				

Appendix A: Pre- and Post-Student Evaluation Questionnaire (continued).

No.	Question	Yes	No		
20	Do you know how to make friends with people you have fallen out with?				
21	Are you good friends with pupils in other classes?				
22	Have you had a chance to make new friends in your class?				
23	Is your school against bullying?				
24	Do bullies get punished in your school?				
25	Does the school do anything to stop bullying?				
26	Have you had a chance to say what you think about bullying?				
27	Would you tell your teacher if you were being bullied?				
28 (30)	Do you know anyone who is being bullied now?				
29 (31)	Are there any bullies in your class?				
30 (32)	Do you know any bullies in your year group?				
No.	Question	Yes	Maybe	No	
31 (28)	Would you stand up for a child who is not your friend or that you do not like if they were being bullied?				
32 (29)	Would you stand up for a child who is your friend or that you like if they were being bullied?				
No.	Question	5+	4	3	2 or less
33	How many people in your class do you think of as a friend?				
34	How many people in your class think of you as their friend?				

Appendix B: Mean responses before and after Rtime intervention.

Mean responses for questions relating to friendships.
Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
qu2before	149	1.00	4.00	2.3960	1.05791
qu2after	149	1.00	4.00	2.0671	.95623
qu10before	149	1.00	4.00	3.1812	1.15696
qu10after	149	1.00	4.00	3.5235	.86668
qu20before	149	1.00	2.00	1.1477	.35595
qu20after	149	1.00	2.00	1.1409	.34913
qu22before	146	1.00	2.00	1.1301	.33761
qu22after	149	1.00	2.00	1.1611	.36884
qu33before	149	1.00	4.00	1.6443	1.05314
qu33after	147	1.00	4.00	1.4286	.93633
Valid N (listwise)	144				

Mean responses for questions relating to bullying.
Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
qu23before	148	1.00	2.00	1.1216	.32796
qu23after	148	1.00	2.00	1.1149	.31994
qu28before	149	1.00	2.00	1.5772	.49567
qu28after	149	1.00	2.00	1.6040	.49071
qu29before	148	1.00	2.00	1.3243	.46971
qu29after	149	1.00	2.00	1.4094	.49338
qu31before	149	1.00	4.00	1.3423	.63429
qu31after	148	1.00	3.00	1.3986	.59178
qu32before	148	1.00	4.00	1.1554	.47685
qu32after	147	1.00	3.00	1.1293	.39295
Valid N (listwise)	143				

Mean responses for questions relating to friendships.
Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
qu1before	149	1.00	4.00	1.3893	.76857
qu1after	149	1.00	4.00	1.3423	.64485
qu4before	149	1.00	4.00	1.7248	.98543
qu4after	149	1.00	4.00	2.0403	1.08353
qu5before	149	1.00	4.00	1.5168	.86684
qu5after	149	1.00	4.00	1.5302	.81005
qu13before	149	1.00	4.00	1.3087	.67683
qu13after	149	1.00	4.00	1.2550	.64885
Valid N (listwise)	149				