

# IN FOCUS

Believe in  
children



**Barnardo's**  
Northern Ireland

10/2018

## **The PATHS<sup>®</sup> Programme for Schools (UK Version)**

Findings from the  
implementation of The  
PATHS<sup>®</sup> Programme for  
Schools (UK Version) in  
N. Ireland (2014-2018)



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Barnardo's NI **In Focus** is a series of outcome-informed papers, including infographics, illustrating how our services effectively support children, young people and families in Northern Ireland.

## PATHS™

The PATHS™ Programme for Schools (UK Version)  
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

“An evidence-based universal social and emotional learning programme which promotes the positive mental health and emotional well-being of children in primary schools”

PATHS® is a trademark of Channing Bete Company, Inc.

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Enquiries about the original PATHS® programme should be directed to the Channing Bete Company, Inc., [www.channing-bete.com](http://www.channing-bete.com).

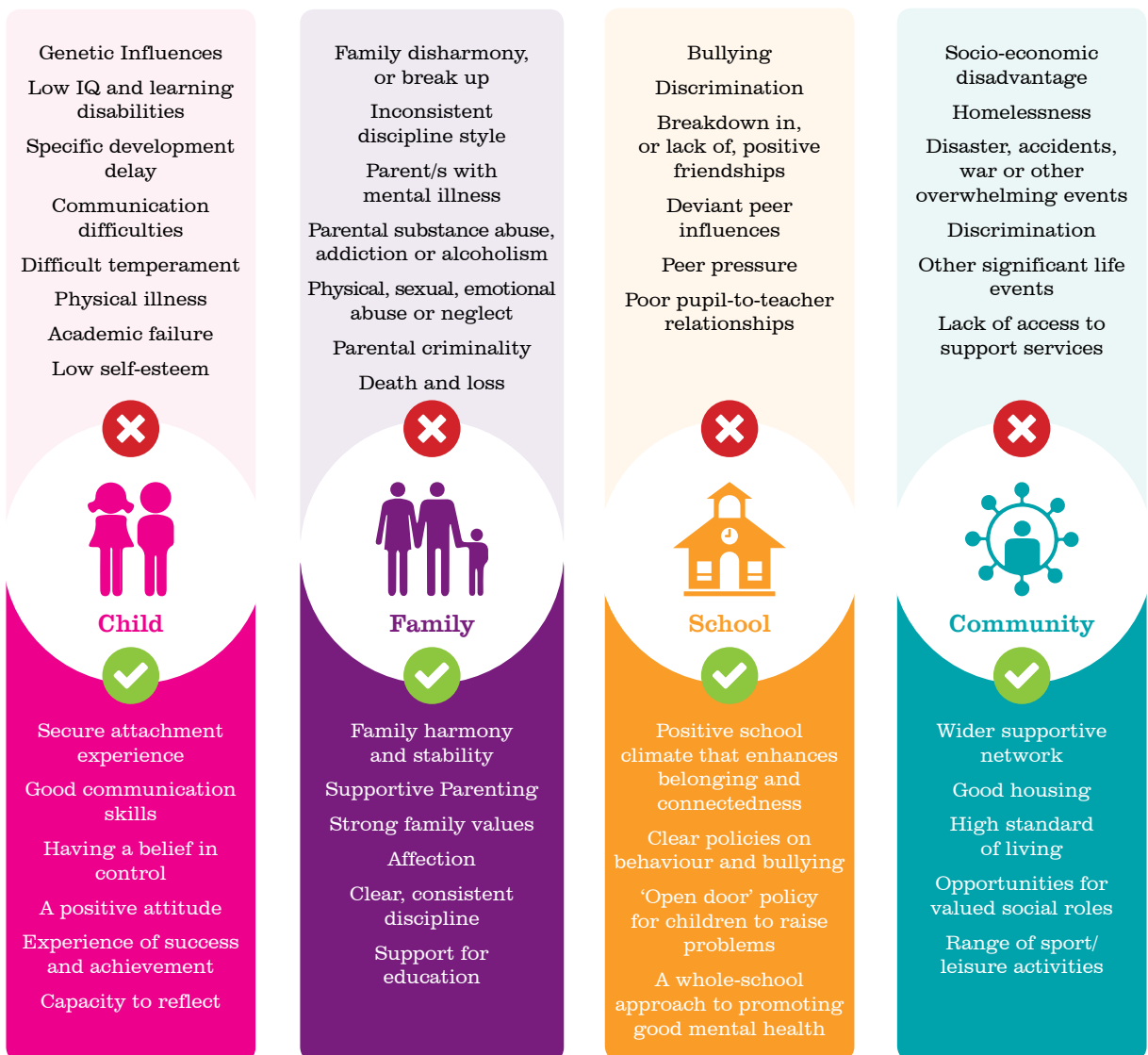
# Introduction

## Poor mental health in school children

Children come to school with different personalities, interests and skills. They also come from a range of backgrounds, homes and situations; and they will have experienced a range of factors in their homes and communities that can either lead to poor mental health (risk factors), or alternatively protect them and help them build coping mechanisms and resilience (protective factors) (see figure 1).

Figure 1

### Risk Factors



### Protective Factors

There is a growing concern in the UK that more and more children are experiencing increased risk factors, and as a result a higher level of children are experiencing mental health problems than ever before. In 2004, the last national survey (Green et al, 2005) suggested nearly 10% of children and young people aged between 5-16 years in England and Wales have a diagnosable mental disorder. This means in an average classroom of 30 pupils, 3 will suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder (Young Minds). Northern Ireland is reported to have a 25% higher overall prevalence of mental health problems than England (Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2014).



## What can schools do?

Evidence (Brooks, F. 2012) shows that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes which take a whole-school approach can have a positive impact in relation to mental wellbeing outcomes as they can help children build self-esteem, manage difficult emotions, and be able to cope with life's challenges.

Dr. Mark T. Greenberg, developer of the highly effective SEL Programme, *The PATHS® Curriculum*, suggests that schools are the perfect environment to support the mental health of children as they are ideal sites for interventions with children (Greenberg et al., 2018).



**1.** Most children attend school for many years and spend a substantial amount of time there each day.



**2.** School-based SEL programmes can improve students' competence, enhance their academic achievement, and make them less likely to experience future behavioural and emotional problems.



**3.** Evidence-based SEL interventions in all schools – that is, *universal* interventions – could substantially affect public health.

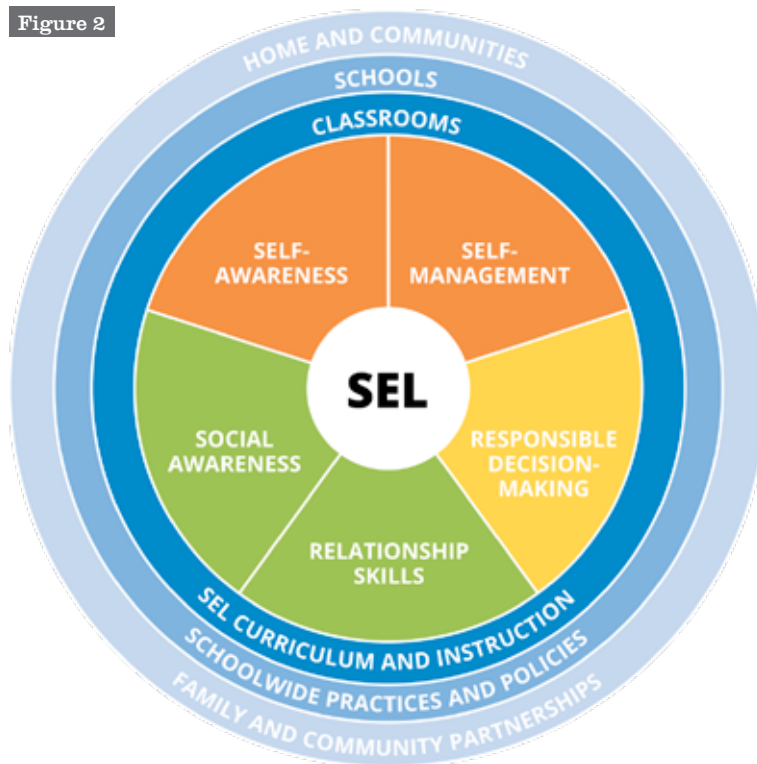


## What is Social and Emotional Learning?

“Social and emotional skills are crucial for children’s health, wellbeing and future success, including their educational attainment.”

(Goodman et al., 2015)

Figure 2



© CASEL, 2018

According to CASEL (The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning), “Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” (CASEL, 2018). CASEL identify five competences of SEL; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. High quality SEL programmes deliver lessons based on these five competences in a developmentally appropriate way. As highlighted in Figure 2, for SEL programmes to be truly effective, they should not only teach specific SEL skills through manualised lessons, but should also create a classroom and school culture that enhances and builds upon those SEL skills. Programmes which further extend learning beyond the school into the home and community can further enhance impact.

## Social and Emotional Learning, and Barnardo’s

For over 10 years, Barnardo’s NI has been committed to a whole system approach to health and well-being. The commitment we made over a decade ago was to embed more of our work in schools and local communities; and we have grown to working in over 200 schools throughout NI, and over 100 schools across the rest of the UK. We currently deliver a range of evidence-based programmes, including Incredible Years, LifeSkills Training, Ready to Learn, All Stars, Friendship Group, and The PATHS® Programme for Schools (UK Version).



# The PATHS® Programme for Schools (UK Version)

## What is The PATHS® Programme?

The PATHS® Programme is a manualised programme for teachers designed to facilitate the development of SEL skills in primary school aged children. The programme consists of a variety of lessons, additional materials and posters which reinforce the core components of SEL.

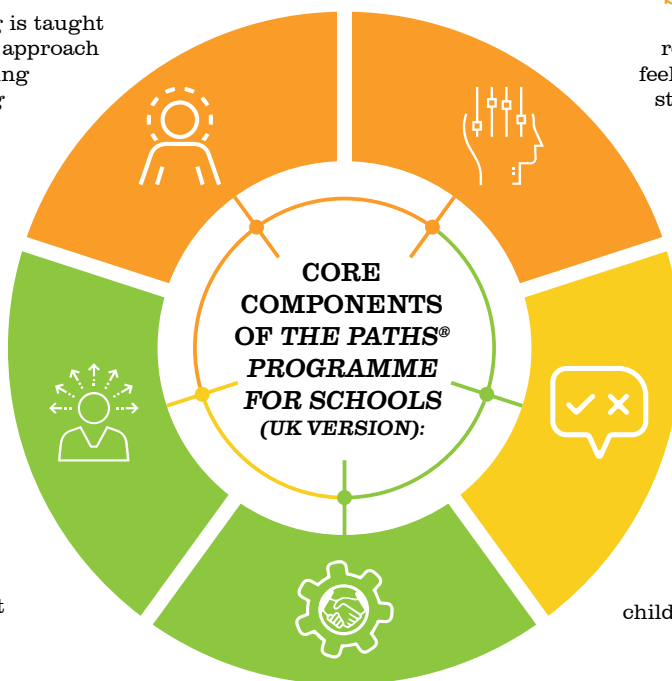
### Core Components of The PATHS® Programme:

#### SELF-AWARENESS

Emotional understanding is taught through a developmental approach across all year groups using *Feeling Faces* and *Feeling Dictionaries*. Self-esteem is covered in a variety of ways, for example, the regular activity of giving compliments through celebrating the *Pupil of the Day*.

#### SOCIAL AWARENESS

Once children have a better understanding and management of their own emotions, they are taught how to recognise emotions in others and to understand how behaviours can affect emotions.



#### SELF-MANAGEMENT

Children learn how to recognise and manage their feelings and behaviours using strategies such as the *Turtle Technique*, *Three Steps for Calming Down* and the *Control Signals*.

#### RESPONSIBLE DECISION- MAKING

Beginning in an informal, active manner using the *Control Signals Poster* and moving towards *The 11 Steps Problem Solving Poster*, children are taught the steps of social problem-solving.

#### RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Friendship and peer relations are introduced both in the context of feelings (i.e., angry, shy, lonely, etc.) as well as through thinking about how to solve problems that arise with friends. *Co-operative learning* roles and *Fair Play* Rules are used to develop positive relationships.

By focusing explicitly on these 5 core components, The PATHS® Programme helps teachers address barriers to learning. Through a systematic and developmental procedure for

reducing the adverse factors which negatively affect a child's adaptive behaviour, children are better equipped and more able to profit from his/her educational experiences.

## Summary of Evidence Base

Developed originally in the United States, *The PATHS® Curriculum* is one of the most rigorously researched, evidence-based, SEL programmes in the world. A series of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) with intervention vs. control schools (or groups of children) has been conducted over the past 30 years.

Evaluations have been conducted with differing populations of children, including children in regular education, and children with a variety of special needs including deaf/hearing impaired, learning-delayed, and those with significant behavioural problems. Findings indicate that *The PATHS® Curriculum* was successful in both significantly increasing protective factors for healthy development, classroom engagement and learning, and in reducing behavioural and emotional problems in all of these populations (Greenberg et al., 1995; Kam et al., 2004; Riggs et al., 2006).



Table 1

### INDEPENDENT RATINGS OF THE PATHS® PROGRAMME

#### ★ LEVEL 1 PROGRAM (UNITED KINGDOM)

Early Intervention:  
The Next Steps:  
A Report for Her  
Majesty's Government  
  
**HIGHEST  
POSSIBLE RATING**

#### ★ LEVEL 3+ PROGRAMME (UNITED KINGDOM)

Early Intervention  
Foundation: Guidebook  
  
**HIGHEST RATING FOR  
UNIVERSAL PROGRAMMES**

#### ★ LEVEL 3+ PROGRAMME (UNITED KINGDOM)

Mentally Healthy  
Schools UK  
  
**HIGHEST  
POSSIBLE RATING**

#### ★ SELECT PROGRAM (UNITED STATES)

Collaborative for  
Academic, Social, and  
Emotional Learning  
(CASEL)  
  
**HIGHEST  
POSSIBLE RATING**

#### ★ MODEL PROGRAM (UNITED STATES)

Blueprints for Healthy  
Youth Development  
University of Colorado  
  
**HIGHEST  
POSSIBLE RATING**

#### ★ MODEL PROGRAM (UNITED STATES)

Substance Abuse  
and Mental Health  
Services Administration  
(SAMHSA)  
  
**HIGHEST  
POSSIBLE RATING**

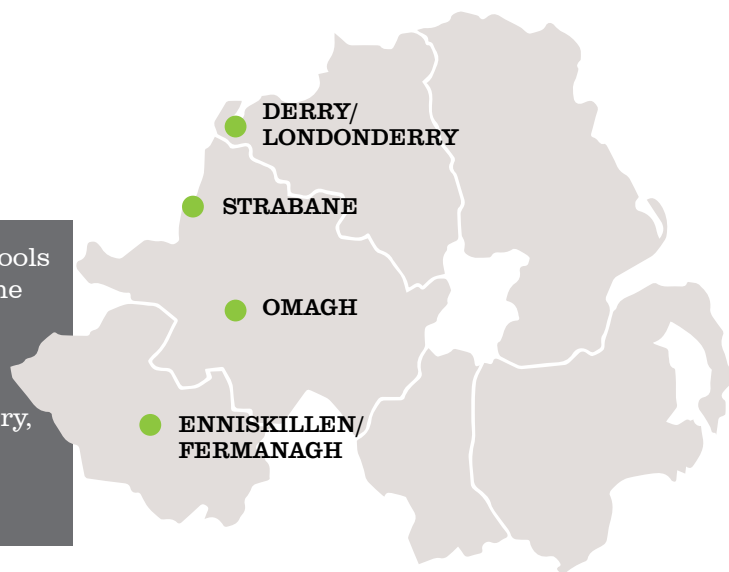
## The Barnardo's & PATHS® Journey

Thanks to support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, Barnardo's has been leading the delivery of *The PATHS® Programme* across the UK for over ten years. The project began in Lurgan and Craigavon in 2008 and led to a very successful RCT (<http://www.pathseducation.co.uk/paths-works/paths-research/>) of Barnardo's UK adaptation of *The PATHS® Curriculum*. During this initial implementation, the programme was delivered in 12 schools to 3765 pupils.

The programme was further replicated across the UK as part of the Realising Ambition programme, funded by Big Lottery. *The PATHS® Plus Programme* was delivered across the 4 UK regions in 126 schools to 23,646 pupils (<http://www.pathseducation.co.uk/paths-works/pathsr-plus-key-findings/>).

This current report is focusing on the delivery of *The PATHS® Programme* in 40 schools across N. Ireland who implemented the programme between 2014 and 2018. Participating schools were located in the border counties in the western region, namely Derry/Londonderry, Strabane/Omagh, Enniskillen/Fermanagh.

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40

SCHOOLS



12,270

INDIVIDUAL  
PUPILS



555

TEACHERS  
TRAINED



750

NON-  
TEACHING  
STAFF  
TRAINED



2040

PATHS® PALS  
TRAINED



1044

PARENTS  
TRAINED

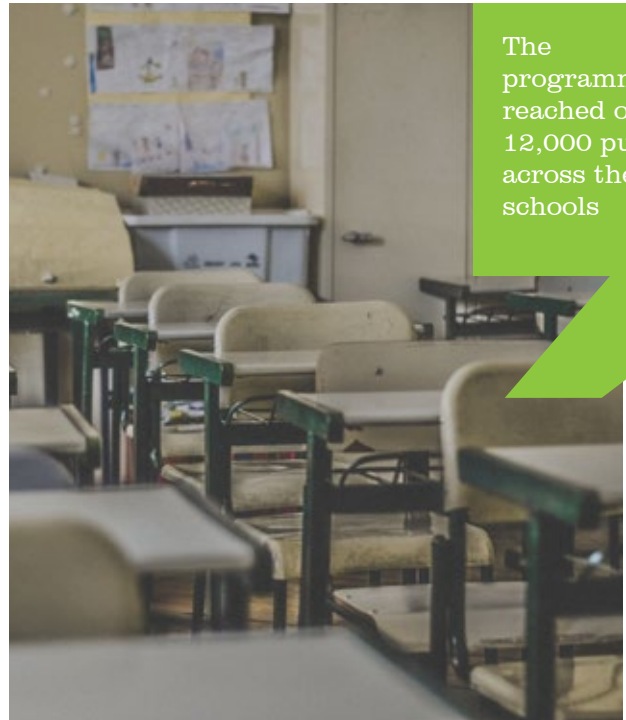


# PATHS® in Northern Ireland

The programme grew incrementally over the 4 years, starting with cohort 1 (9 schools) in September 2014 (P4-P7 pupils only); cohort 2 (19 schools) in January 2015 (P4-P7 pupils only); and cohort 3 (12 schools) in September 2015 (all 40 schools now delivering P1-P7).

## Participants

Throughout the four years of delivery, the programme reached over 12,000 pupils across the 40 schools. Table 2 shows PATHS® replication by year and cohort.



The programme reached over 12,000 pupils across the 40 schools

Table 2. PATHS® Participants in N. Ireland

	No. of schools	Sep-14	Jan-15	Sep-15	Sep-16 (New P1 classes)	Sep-17 (New P1 classes)	Total pupils
Cohort 1	9	1310 (P4-P7 Pilot)		1330 (P1-P4 added)	329	323	3292
Cohort 2	19		2411 (P4-P7 Pilot)	2758 (P1-P4 added)	917	662	6748
Cohort 3	12			1731 (Whole-school)	260	239	2230
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>2411</b>	<b>5819</b>	<b>1506</b>	<b>1224</b>	<b>12270</b>

## Delivery through Barnardo's Coaching & Implementation Support Plan

Barnardo's provides three levels of support for participating schools:



### LEVEL 1 PATHS® Materials

Schools were provided with complete sets of *The PATHS® Programme* which included programme manuals for teachers, child friendly classroom posters, and additional materials.



### LEVEL 2 PATHS® Training

All teachers who delivered the programme were supported with 2 days of initial training. The training covered the evidence base for the programme as well as the main concepts and learning techniques.



### LEVEL 3 PATHS® Technical Assistance

Three coaches provided tailored support to 555 teachers across 40 schools between 2014 and 2018. Each coach is an experienced teacher employed by Barnardo's to work alongside schools and provide bespoke support. The support reflected the needs of the school and decreased as teachers became more confident to deliver the programme.

The 4-year Coaching & Implementation Support Plan was developed by Barnardo's to support schools in two ways:

- 1** To ensure that *The PATHS® Programme* was implemented as designed.
- 2** To provide ongoing Technical Assistance to support teachers' delivery and whole-school generalisation.

*“I would find it difficult to separate any of these elements as the materials work alongside effective training and coaching and with it being rolled out throughout the entire school so children are experiencing excellent PATHS® beyond the classroom throughout the whole school community.”*

(Teacher)

## What did this support look like for schools and teachers?

### 1:1 SUPPORT (PLANNING AND MENTORING)

The coaches met with teachers for ongoing planning and reflection and developed pacing guides for teachers to guarantee the fidelity of the programme. Comprehensive guides were provided which aligned PATHS® lessons to the Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (PDMU) curriculum, while cross-curricular plans focused upon how the programme could be delivered across subject areas in an integrated approach.

### CLUSTER MEETINGS

Schools were encouraged to appoint an 'In-school Coordinator' to oversee the implementation of *The PATHS® Programme* on a daily basis. Principal and In-School Coordinator forums were held throughout the school year.

### WHOLE-SCHOOL TRAINING

In house training / workshops were also included for non-teaching staff, for example, playground supervisors. This supports the whole school generalisation of the programme beyond individual classrooms.

1



2



### IN-CLASS SUPPORT

The coaches provided direct in-class support to implementation through a variety of methods:

- ✓ Modelling lessons
- ✓ Team-teaching
- ✓ Peer Support

3



4



### MEASUREMENT AND FEEDBACK

Coaches worked with schools to assess the fidelity and strengths of delivery, and used this information to shape the support that was needed.

5



6



### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

**Parents:** Parent Information Sessions were organised to introduce parents to *The PATHS® Programme* and help them reinforce strategies at home.

**Pupils:** PATHS® Pals Training was provided for P6/P7 children to support younger children in the playground. **Extra support:** Additional support was made available through telephone, email and online methods, such as the PATHS® UK website ([www.pathseducation.co.uk](http://www.pathseducation.co.uk)) and Facebook and Twitter (@PATHSEdUK).

# PATHS® Impact

Outcome data included in this report focuses on a 3-year period, 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

## Measuring Impact

The impact of *The PATHS® Programme* in Northern Ireland has been tested using a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. This includes, *The PATHS® Programme* pre and post teacher questionnaires, pupil voice surveys, senior leadership team (SLT) surveys, teacher surveys and case studies.



### Measures

1

**The PATHS® Programme Pre and Post Questionnaires**

2

**Pupil Voice Surveys**

3

**SLT / Teacher Surveys**

4

**Lesson Tracking & RAG (Red-Amber-Green) Action Plans**

5

**Case Studies**

### Completed by

*Classroom teachers*

*Pupils from P4-P7.*

*Principals, in-school coordinators and teachers*

*PATHS® coach and in-school coordinators*

*PATHS® coach in conjunction with teachers and in-school coordinators*

### Purpose

Questionnaires examined pupil's progress across 3 areas: behaviour, attention, social and emotional competence.

At the end of each academic year, children from P4-P7 completed surveys which assessed their attitudes and opinions to *The PATHS® Programme*, and their knowledge and understanding on the core SEL competences.

At the end of each academic year, teachers, in-school coordinators and principals were asked to complete a feedback survey via Survey Monkey to assess their perceptions of both the impact of *The PATHS® Programme* and Barnardo's support.

Fidelity measures evaluated adherence to both the manuals and whole-school implementation and ensured adequate support was provided where needed.

Evidence included quotes, good news stories, photographs etc.

## Participants

Across the three years that this report relates to, there were a total of 28,789 enrolments on *The PATHS® Programme* across the 40 schools; this equates to 12,270 individual children.

Each year teachers were asked to complete questionnaires on approximately 20% of their pupils, and in total questionnaires were completed for 8,197 enrolments. Full data sets were available for 6,582 (23%) enrolments. Pupil Voice data was available for 4,197 (28%) enrolments (total number of 14,740 enrolments in these year groups). SLT and teacher surveys were completed by 33 SLT members and 165 teachers.

The impact of *The PATHS® Programme* in Northern Ireland has been tested using a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.



**40**  
SCHOOLS



**12,270**  
INDIVIDUAL  
CHILDREN



# PATHS® Results

## 1. Questionnaire Results

Results indicate a positive progression across all measures with improvements in the pre/post measures for behaviour, attention, social and emotional competence and in particular, empathy.

**FIGURE 5**

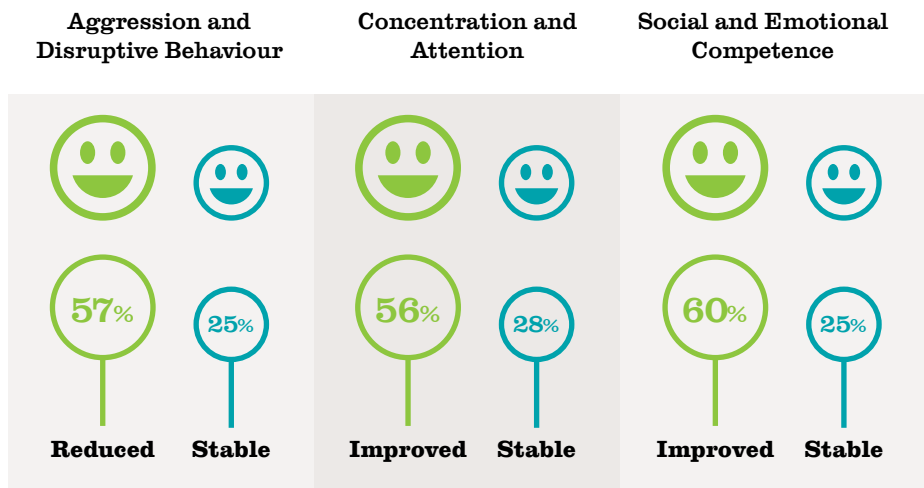
### The PATHS® Programme Pre and Post Questionnaire Results 2015-2018

**PATHS®  
Results for  
N. Ireland  
(2015-2018)**

**57%**

of pupils showed  
improved empathy

Figure 5:  
Overall PATHS®  
Results from N. Ireland  
between 2015-2018  
(6582 responses)



**CHART 1**

### The PATHS® Programme Pre and Post Questionnaire Results 2015-2016

● Improved Score ● Stable Score

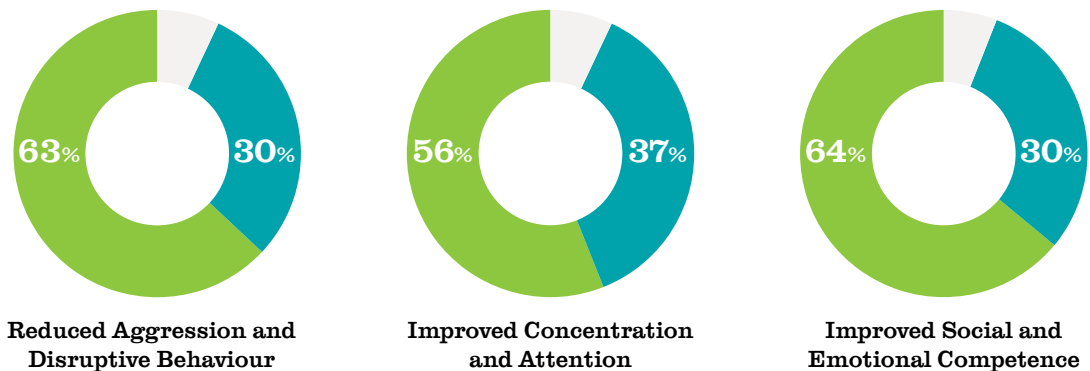
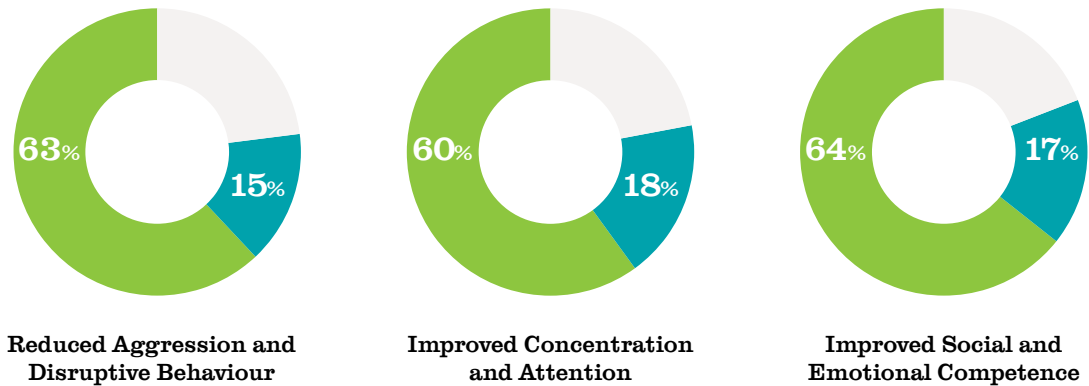


Chart 1: PATHS® Results from N Ireland for 2015/16 (2285 responses)

**CHART 2**  
**The PATHS® Programme Pre and Post**  
**Questionnaire Results 2016-2017**

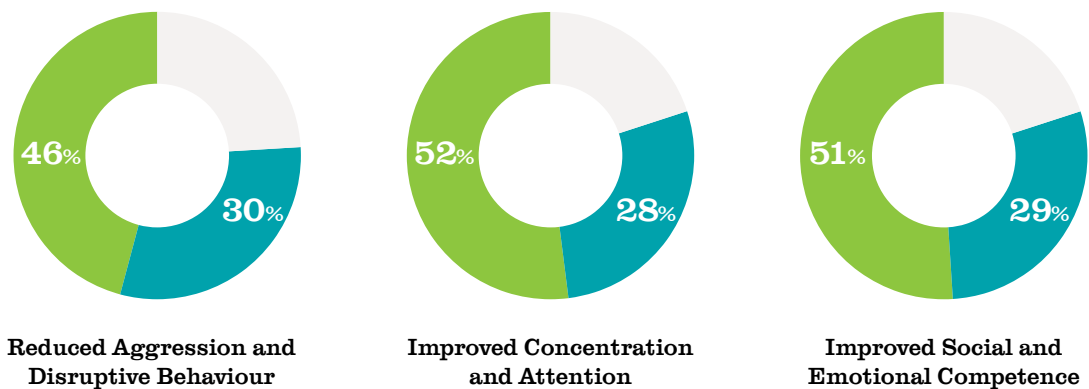
● Improved Score    ● Stable Score



*Chart 2: PATHS® Results from N Ireland for 2016/17 (2326 responses)*

**CHART 3**  
**The PATHS® Programme Pre and Post**  
**Questionnaire Results 2017-2018**

● Improved Score    ● Stable Score



*Chart 3: PATHS® Results from N Ireland for 2017/18 (1971 responses)*

## 2. SEL Impact

(assessed through pupil voice (n. 4197 responses), SLT (n. 33 responses), teacher (n. 165 responses) surveys)



### SELF-AWARENESS



of pupils reported that The PATHS® Programme has helped them to understand their own emotions moderately, very much or a great deal.



of teachers agree that children are using a wide range of emotional vocabulary to talk openly about how they are feeling.

#### Case Study 1

Child A had been reported by his teacher as someone who struggled to 'fit in' from beginning school, due to extreme shyness and lack of self-confidence. His teacher has been pleasantly surprised by the positive impact The PATHS® Programme has had, not only on child A, but her P3/4 class as a whole. His teacher stated, "Pupil of the Day was a big moment. It marked a breakthrough for Child A showing how his confidence had grown. It was a breakthrough for me too, underlining how The PATHS® Programme gives children the vital opportunities to risk communication without anxiety." (Teacher) 'I can see how useful PATHS® is for those children who are reluctant to join in giving them a safe platform to enjoy interactions both in the classroom and playground.' (Teacher)



### SELF-MANAGEMENT



of pupils reported that The PATHS® Programme has helped their understanding and management of feelings moderately, very much or a great deal.



of teachers agree children are able to use calming down strategies with support.



of SLT have reported that the The PATHS® Programme has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour.



of SLT have reported that they have noticed a positive improvement in children's ability to self-regulate.

#### Case Study 2

Child B had been described by his teacher as someone who struggles to manage his feelings and becomes easily angered, particularly during play and lunch breaks. As a result of his anger he struggles to communicate with the teacher or his peers, quite often refusing to do what is asked of him. He was regularly excluded during play times, due to rough, confrontational or violent behaviours. Through supportive strategies from The PATHS® Programme, child B is now able to communicate his feelings with more ease, and is encouraged to show his feelings during different times of the day using the feeling face cards. He has also regularly been using the '3 steps for Calming down' as well as developing some calming strategies of his own. His teacher reported that "PATHS® has given child B strategies and the vocabulary to begin to take control of his own feelings and behaviours...he realises he now has a choice, he can calm down and then react."



## SOCIAL AWARENESS



of pupils said The PATHS® Programme has helped them understand others' emotions moderately, very much or a great deal.



## RELATIONSHIP SKILLS



of pupils stated that The PATHS® Programme has developed their friendship skills moderately, very much or a great deal.



of SLT have reported that The PATHS® Programme has had a positive impact on pupil relationships.



## RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING



of pupils stated that The PATHS® Programme had helped their problem solving skills moderately, very much or a great deal.



of teachers agree that problem solving is being modelled and used during the school day.

### Case Study 3

Class C is a mixed group of boys and girls. The teacher reported that the girls in the class can often fall out and make comments to each other that can be very hurtful. The dynamic of the class was often affected by the friendship groups and when the girls fell out it could be very upsetting for some members of the class. Since beginning to implement The PATHS® Programme, the teacher has noticed that 'the ability of the pupils, in particular the girls, to resolve their differences by expressing how they are making each other feel is fantastic. The girls are not making as many hurtful comments and they are showing a great sense of empathy towards their peers. Their confidence in openly expressing how they make each other feel is the direct impact of PATHS®. PATHS® gives the children great empathy for others and we find they are really able to deal with difficult situations better as they have these strategies'.

### Case Study 4

Child D was identified by the teacher as demonstrating some autistic behaviours. Child D was a very quiet and shy pupil and extremely anxious in unfamiliar situations. The teacher worked with child D to develop friendship skills, and following many PATHS® lessons, reported the following conversation to her coach: 'We discussed what child D enjoys about school and feels nervous about etc. They said that they enjoy PATHS® and feels that they now have words to describe how they are feeling. Child D was able to relate to me many of the feelings they have learnt. Child D said that they were at a club the other night and was nervous because they didn't know anyone. Child D said that they went up and started talking to another child, saying "Have I seen you before somewhere?" Child D said that they remembered the roleplay we did in class about thinking ahead, being nice to people and making conversations, and that it kept going around and around in their head and it helped them. This demonstrates how PATHS® works for children like Child D.'

### Case Study 5

During a problem-solving lesson the pupils from class E were each given a post it note to record a problem that they felt needed to be solved in their class. Two thirds of the class (32 pupils) wrote about 'talking out in class'. Class E then discussed possible solutions to address the level of talking, and subsequently designed a traffic lights system that the teacher would implement to manage the noise levels. It was agreed the teacher would move an arrow to the red light if she needed their attention; yellow to reduce the working noise volume and green to show she is pleased with the level of noise. "This first year of PATHS® has made a significant difference in this class and allowed the pupils to be able to think differently about problems. Instead of simply reacting the pupils are now using the PATHS® strategies, allowing them to recognise and manage their emotions which, in turn means that they can think about the situation and problem solve." (Teacher).

### 3. Feedback

Feedback was very positive, highlighting high quality materials and resources, excellent training, and helpful implementation support from *PATHS®* Coaches.

Feedback was collected regularly from teachers, in-school coordinators, principals and pupils – post training events, during implementation, and through Survey Monkey questionnaires at the end of each academic year. Feedback was very positive, highlighting high quality materials and resources, excellent training, and helpful implementation support from *PATHS®* Coaches. Feedback also reported a high level of pupil engagement, a good fit with the PDMU curriculum and cross-curricular links, and an excellent programme for the development of a whole-school SEL ethos.

Some teachers did highlight challenges such as difficulties with timetabling *PATHS®* lessons; problems in keeping compliments fresh and exciting; or children not using newly learned *PATHS®* skills in real life situations. When such challenges did arise, *PATHS®* Coaches worked closely with teachers to problem-solve challenges and find effective solutions.





## TEACHER FEEDBACK

93%

of teachers reported that *The PATHS® Programme* has had a positive impact on the children in their class.



“Pupils love *PATHS®* and will ask when we’re doing it!”

“Children really enjoy *PATHS®*, especially Child of The Day, using the Feelings board, and listening to stories. They love using the puppets!”

“Children are much more emotionally aware. They know it’s ok to have an “off” day and to experience uncomfortable feelings. Group work has helped children to develop social skills and utilise these.”

“Every child has benefitted from it in their own unique way. Some gaining confidence to speak out, some controlling their temper and some making friends and giving advice to others.”

“Children are applying their self-control techniques in playground disputes.”

“I have noticed a huge difference in the relationships between pupils. Pupils are keen to compliment each other and are always trying to boost each other’s confidence. There is a more positive relationship between pupils.”

## PRINCIPAL FEEDBACK

97%

of principals reported that the majority of pupils are engaged in *PATHS®* lessons.



“Pupils thoroughly love the *PATHS®* lessons - they love Pupil of the Day & the stories used! Pupils love discussing stories, sharing their experiences & giving their opinions! Pupils also love sharing their learning during assembly.”

“The programme has gone down really well and is embedded in the culture of the school.”

“All of our children are engaged in *PATHS®* lessons - they really enjoy them and the wide variety of activities they offer.”

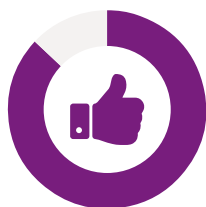
“All pupils in our school are engaged in *PATHS®* lessons as *PATHS®* lessons are included in teachers’ timetables. All pupils will eventually be Pupil of the Day and children love this ‘unconditional’ role.”

“Teachers in school find it is a great way to ensure that PDMU is explored in class sufficiently. Many teachers also comment that there is a greater need than ever for *PATHS®* with an increase in the number of children with social, emotional & behavioural difficulties coming through school.”

## PUPIL FEEDBACK

# 96%

of pupils reported  
that they enjoyed  
**PATHS®** lessons.



# 87%

of pupils believe  
**PATHS®** helps  
all children.

“I enjoy learning about Pupil of the Day and giving each other compliments. **PATHS®** helps me to stay calm and relaxed. I can now solve conflicts in different situations. I shall miss **PATHS®** lessons next year but I know I can use **PATHS®** strategies next year in secondary school.”

“**PATHS®** has made our school a better place!”

“I like learning about how my feelings work. I know it’s ok if I get angry but I know how to calm down.”

“I’ve learnt that I can sit down and talk about my problems with a friend instead of huffing about it.”

“We’ve heard lots of stories which have taught us how to make good choices and decisions.”

“I’ve learnt that I can sit down and talk about my problems with a friend instead of huffing about it.”



## 4. High Levels of Fidelity

Over the course of the 4 years, *PATHS*® Coaches provided regular support to achieve the programme outcomes. The Coaching & Implementation Support Plan enabled Barnardo's to work with schools to develop a whole-school SEL ethos where *The PATHS*® Programme was at the heart of all they do. The *PATHS*® Coaches have reported high levels of implementation quality during classroom visits, and schools in N. Ireland regularly feature on our social media forums with examples of excellent practice.



96%

of teachers report that they use the lesson script effectively and follow objectives closely



85%

of teachers report that they teach the lessons in sequence using the pacing guide, and endeavour to teach 2 lessons per week



85%

of teachers have completed 75% of manual on a yearly basis; while just over 40% consistently deliver 100% of the manual annually

### EXEMPLARY PRACTICE



20 OF THE 40 SCHOOLS HAVE ACHIEVED THE STATUS OF *PATHS*® MODEL SCHOOL

*PATHS*® Education Worldwide also recognise the high level quality of delivery in schools in Northern Ireland, with 20 of the 40 schools having achieved the status of *PATHS*® Model School.

This achievement is awarded only to schools who have demonstrated a high level of delivery and, whole-school systems change. This includes supportive leadership, integrating *The PATHS*® Programme throughout the school day, creating a nurturing school climate, creating positive expectations that both pupils and staff will use *PATHS*® skills, and communicating with parents to use *PATHS*® skills at home. To put this achievement in context, only 19 other schools across the UK have been awarded this status.

## 5. Impact of Barnardo's support

### WHAT DO TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS TELL US ABOUT THE SUPPORT PROVIDED?



96%

of teachers report that the Barnardo's PATHS® 4-year Coaching & Implementation Support Plan has had a positive impact on their teaching of PATHS®.

100%

of principals report that the Coaching & Implementation Support Plan (over the 4 years) has had a positive impact on the delivery of PATHS® in the classroom



“The coaching support has been excellent.”  
(Teacher)

“The training was excellent. Regular visits from the PATHS® Coach also worked really well.” (Teacher)

“Being able to talk through issues that arise in terms of delivery and content is useful.”  
(Teacher)

“This has been one of the most important elements in helping to embed PATHS® as part of the way we do things.” (Principal)

“The positive feedback from the coaches, their demonstrations and training has been excellent in the delivery of the programme. They have a wealth of experience to share with staff.” (Principal)

“The Coaching support over the 4 years has made all the difference in how well embedded PATHS® has become in our school and in the staff's level of enthusiasm for PATHS®. Our two coaches have both been fantastic role models and cheerleaders for the delivery of PATHS® and a great emotional support to the staff.”  
(Principal)

“Having a coaching model ensures that we continue to deliver the programme regularly and that it is an important part of our weekly plans. In the business of the classroom it is easy to concentrate on Literacy and Numeracy and neglect other important areas. Having the model keeps us on our toes!” (Principal)

“Teachers have felt supported and encouraged to work through the programme. The materials provided enable staff to work through the programme in a logical manner with minimum preparation time. The calendar ensures staff stay on track and know what they are expected to do and when.” (Principal)

“Year on year support ensured that good practice was built upon and that it wasn't such a 'one year fix' then teachers are left to continue. Thanks.” (Principal)

“Excellent lesson plans. Very easy for pupils to implement. Excellent support from PATHS® personnel.” (Teacher)

“We had constant support for the 4 years so I never felt overwhelmed by any of it. It was a pleasure to teach.” (Teacher)

“It was great to have support from coach throughout the implementation of the programme. It ensured an effective implementation of the programme and led us to obtaining PATHS® model school status.” (Principal)

“PATHS® is the only intervention which has continued to provide whole school, sustained training over the four year period and this I feel is one of the main factors in its success.” (Principal)

“It is completely different as it has a holistic, developmental approach throughout the school. The materials provided are of a very high quality and are age appropriate. The support has really made a difference to staff as has the training. The parental aspect has been excellent and has enabled us to get the support very quickly from parents towards the programme. The support is timetabled and staff also know that if they have a query or problem our PATHS® coach is at the end of the phone or easily contactable by e-mail. The ongoing nature of the support has been a massive positive for us as issues have arisen and staff are only now at a stage where they are confident in delivering the programme. Had it been 1 year, staff may not be implementing it to the extent it is now.” (Principal)



97%

of principals report that the Coaching & Implementation Support Plan (over the 4 years) has been vital for sustained engagement and implementation of the programme



85%

of teachers rated Barnardo's 4-year Coaching & Implementation Support Plan as *more effective* than other interventions / programmes they've delivered



94%

of principals rated Barnardo's 4-year Coaching & Implementation Support Plan as *more effective* than other interventions / programmes they've delivered



“We have found PATHS® to be extremely effective. It delivers all its promises.”  
(Principal)

“The best PDMU resource pack I have seen in 29 years of teaching. It is structured, progressive through the year groups and a great starting point for feelings, emotions, consequences, both in school and in the playground. Have already recommended this to many other teachers.” (Teacher)

“Training, coaching, whole school support were invaluable prior to starting and throughout to support us on our learning journey. Puppets, manuals, posters are all excellent and ready to use, which saves us all time.” (Teacher)

“The materials are excellent, at an appropriate pitch for the children. Pupils love the stories. As a teacher though I have to say the support from the coaches in class and for training staff has been invaluable.” (Teacher)

“It is the combination of all elements combined that has made the implementation of PATHS® so successful in our school. Without the teaching materials and the training to implement PATHS® it wouldn't have been possible to begin; the ongoing support and coaching helped teachers to build their skills and feel comfortable with the programme ensuring that it continued. A principal and PATHS® coordinator in school who put their whole hearts into developing it as a whole school initiative and staff who were willing to follow their lead was also integral to the success of the programme. Now that we have seen the benefits of it for our children's self-esteem and confidence and see the results in calmer and more mannerly classrooms this success will ensure that we continue the programme into the future.” (Teacher)



97%

of principals  
would recommend  
PATHS® to other  
schools.



95%

of teachers  
would recommend  
PATHS® to other  
schools.

#### FEEDBACK FROM PATHS® COACHING TEAM



“It is with immense pride that we have witnessed the growth of *The PATHS® Programme* in Northern Ireland. We would like to express our gratitude to schools for their enthusiastic participation, which has nurtured a positive working partnership, with fidelity to *The PATHS® Programme* at its core. This in turn has resulted in a large number of schools achieving Model School status in the region. This bodes well for the future of Social and Emotional development in Northern Ireland and we wish all of the schools continued success as they continue to deliver the programme in the future.”

## 6. Whole-school PATHS®

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The involvement of the whole school community ensured the programme was more than just another area of the curriculum. Through wider engagement of the programme outside of the classroom and in the home, the children were able to utilise key concepts in real-life situations.

Teachers and Principals have reported that the combination of three levels of support (PATHS® Materials, PATHS® Training and PATHS® Technical Assistance) was key to the success of the programme.



**LEVEL 1**  
**PATHS® Materials**



**LEVEL 2**  
**PATHS® Training**



**LEVEL 3**  
**PATHS® Technical Assistance**

“ We applied to take part in *The PATHS® Programme* because we felt that it offered a more structured whole-school approach, especially towards dealing with emotions and anger management strategies. We wanted a programme that offered a common language and approach for everyone to use with the children i.e. teachers, non-teaching staff, lunch time supervisors etc. We also felt that the *PATHS®* initiative gave every child the vocabulary and opportunities to express their feelings and provided them with clear strategies to use when they were upset. ”  
(In School Coordinator)

“ The whole school community including all of the staff in the school, and the parents have been fantastic in helping to fully implement the programme, and this collaboration; using the same consistent language/strategies of *PATHS®* have been the **key to its success**. ”  
(In School Coordinator)

“ When our school was first introduced to *The PATHS® Programme*, it was the missing piece of the jigsaw. Our school is a child centred school that has an extremely caring ethos but in the past, staff cared as individuals. *PATHS®* has provided us with a ‘joined –up’ approach and given us the language to talk about our feelings, emotions and how we respond to ‘comfortable’ and ‘uncomfortable’ feelings. ”  
(In School Coordinator)

## FEEDBACK FROM ADDITIONAL STAFF TRAINING

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Lunchtime Supervisors play a crucial role in generalising PATHS® strategies in the playground and allowing for a school wide approach of the common language and strategies of *The PATHS® Programme*. The *Coaching & Implementation Support Plan* offers Additional Staff Training in PATHS® skills for both Classroom Assistants and Lunchtime Supervisors to avail of in supporting the implementation and generalisation of PATHS® skills outside the classroom and into the whole-school practices.

“I did the PATHS® with her, and we did some breathing together’. ‘It was great, I then asked her how she was feeling, and she said sad! Then she ran off, so I think she was validated’. ”  
(Playground supervisor)

“I thoroughly enjoyed the two days training we had with our PATHS® Coach. The information she gave us has helped me talk to the children about their feelings and how to deal with conflict situations as they arise especially in the playground. All of the lunch time supervisors regularly refer to the PATHS® posters which are placed on the wall outside, in an effort to remind the children of ways that they can stop, breathe, and say the problem and how they feel. The younger children can also be seen outside “doing Turtle” and I enjoy talking to the children about how they are feeling and why. It is a fantastic programme and the positive effects of it can be seen within all classes in the school. ”  
(Lunchtime supervisor)

“Classroom Assistants, Dinner Supervisors and PATHS® Pals have reported that there is less negative behaviour in the canteen and playground and that more strategies are in place for pupils to resolve conflicts in the playground themselves and through the PATHS® Pals. ”  
(In School Coordinator)

“We have extended PATHS® beyond just classroom lessons which we felt was essential to achieve our aim. To this end we liaised with lunchtime supervisors re the introduction of PATHS® Rules to the playground. Lunchtime Supervisors have been ‘catching pupils’ using their PATHS® Rules in the Playground and demonstrating excellent role modelling to others. When ‘caught’ they receive a playground voucher which is then given to the teacher by the pupil and results in a class reward therefore linking excellent PATHS® ethos in the classroom and the playground. ”  
(In School Coordinator)

## FEEDBACK FROM PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS

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*The PATHS® Programme* contains home letters, handouts and activities to support communication and generalisation of *PATHS®* strategies at home. The *Coaching & Implementation Support Plan* has also developed information sessions and parent workshops to encourage parental engagement, to enable parents to have a better understanding of *The PATHS® Programme* and to increase parental capacity to support their child in developing SEL skills.

Parents and teachers have reported on the positive impact the programme has had.

“It has benefited both my children and our family, helped us all with understanding and expressing feelings.”  
(Parent)

“These are life skills which all children need for their future to be bright - a great programme!”  
(Parent)

“My son does the Turtle at home and he was able to explain to me why he was doing it. Training helped me understand.”  
(Parent)

“The parents of my children have commented on the difference *PATHS®* has made at home. Children can express their feelings, ‘do the Twiggles’ and they talk about making good decisions.”  
(Teacher)

“A parent has commented on the huge impact *PATHS®* has made to her son. He has developed confidence in himself, he likes to compliment his friends and has developed strong friendships as a result.”  
(Teacher)

“Mammy when I went to bed last night I sat on my bed and I thought about my behaviour and how it made everyone feel. I promise I won’t get angry like that again and I will always take time and think before I act.”  
(Child to parent)



## FEEDBACK ON PATHS® PALS TRAINING

Schools were keen to continue to develop PATHS® outside the classroom and into the playground to problem solve relationships on the football pitch. The *Coaching & Implementation Support Plan* included PATHS® Pals training, a bespoke training programme developed by Barnardo's to train playground leaders to support the generalisation of PATHS® in the playground, and to assist the playground supervisors in their role. Children both love 'being' a PATHS® Pal, and having a PATHS® Pal!

My daughter has flourished since beginning PATHS® Pals- it has given her such confidence, enjoyment and a huge sense of achievement.



“Everyday I feel proud because being a PATHS® Pal makes me feel responsible because you have to look after everyone.”  
(PATHS® Pal)

“I play games with people who are lonely so that they will cheer up. When I see them playing with new friends it makes me feel happy because I helped.”  
(PATHS® Pal)

“My daughter has flourished since beginning PATHS® Pals- it has given her such confidence, enjoyment and a huge sense of achievement.”  
(Parent)

“I like to know they are there. Even though I have friends I am with every day, the PATHS® Pals check everyone is okay and sometimes we do have fights.”  
(Pupil)

“I didn't know anyone when I joined the school and the PATHS® Pals helped me find new friends. They still know my name and say “hi!” when they see me.”  
(Pupil)

“I have a boy in my class who does not like to be beaten in games. When he feels his temper going I see him stand aside and use calming techniques before he resumes with the activity. The other pupils are also more aware of his triggers and are often seen to be helping him and breathing with him. Our playground buddies (PATHS® Pals) have had the most amazing effect on our play times. There are a lot less arguments now as they intervene before arguments grow.”  
(Teacher)



# Conclusion

## 1. IMPROVED OUTCOMES

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Barnardo's NI's vision is that every child and young person can enjoy good mental health and well-being. Our aim is to promote a culture change where mental health and well-being becomes 'everyone's business'. This includes supporting positive SEL cultures within schools and promoting policy and investment to build resilient communities.

We know that many children will have experienced a range of factors in their homes and communities that can lead to poor mental health. Universal social and emotional programmes, like *The PATHS® Programme*, can promote positive outcomes and enhance social and emotional skills, while buffering the effects of exposure to risk factors (Greenberg et. al).

In rigorous, randomised clinical studies (both US and worldwide), *The PATHS® Curriculum* has been shown to *reduce aggressive behaviour, improve self-regulation, improve academic engagement and executive functions, and build social and emotional skills* ([www.pathseducation.com](http://www.pathseducation.com)).

This report highlights that this further implementation of *The PATHS® Programme* has also achieved those outcomes. The data shows positive improvements in behaviour, concentration and social emotional skills, as reported by teachers, and positive improvements in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and decision-making reported by children, teachers and principals.

## 2. SUPPORT

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This report also highlights how Barnardo's *Coaching & Implementation Support Plan* takes a broader approach to SEL than many other programmes. In addition to supporting programme delivery, the Barnardo's model includes structured training and support for generalising *The PATHS® Programme* beyond the classroom and school, and into the home and community.

Principals, school staff and parents highlighted the benefits of additional training and support, and emphasised the impact the coaching support had on implementation. Many agreed that it was the combination of three elements of support which contributed significantly to the success of the programme.

Overall, the results show that *The PATHS® Programme* is well received by teachers and pupils, and has helped enhance children's SEL skills and promote protective factors.

## NEXT STEPS FOR PATHS® IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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During 2018/19, a new cohort of *PATHS®* schools will begin implementing *The PATHS® Programme* in Northern Ireland with support from a Barnardo's Coach.

To find out more:

**T:** 028 90790133

**E:** [paths@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:paths@barnardos.org.uk)

**W:** [www.pathseducation.co.uk](http://www.pathseducation.co.uk)

## Special Thanks to

- » All the children, parents, teachers and schools who participated in *The PATHS® Programme* and completed programme and feedback surveys.



**Indicates**  
*PATHS® Model*  
*School*

 Ardstraw Jubilee Primary School  
 Arvalee School and Resource Centre  
 Ballinamallard Primary School  
 Christ the King Primary School  
 Culmore Primary School  
 Denamona Primary School  
 Ebrington Primary School  
 Enniskillen Integrated Primary School  
 Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh  
 Gortin Primary School  
 Greenhaw Primary School  
 Holy Family Primary School  
 Holy Family Primary School  
 Holy Trinity Primary School  
 Irvinestown Primary School  
 Jones Memorial Primary School  
 Limavady Central Primary School  
 Long Tower Primary School  
 McClintock Primary School  
 Newbuildings Primary School  
 Omagh County Primary School  
 Omagh Integrated Primary School  
 Roscavey Primary School  
 Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary School  
 Sion Mills Primary School  
 St Anne's Primary School  
 St Brigid's Primary School  
 St Canice's Primary School  
 St Catherine's Primary School  
 St Colmcille's Primary School  
 St Mary's Primary School  
 St Patrick's Primary School  
 St Patrick's Primary School  
 St Paul's Primary School  
 St Paul's Primary School  
 St Peter's & St Paul's Primary School  
 St Teresa's Primary School  
 St. Thérèse's Primary School  
 Tempo Primary School  
 Termonacanice Primary School

- » Dr. Mark T. Greenberg, PhD. (Programme Developer) and Dorothy Morelli (CEO, *PATHS®* Education Worldwide).  
 » Elaine Berrena and Sandra Stewart (*PATHS®* Master Trainers)  
 » Atlantic Philanthropies  
 » Channing Bête Company  
 » Paul Scott (Management Information Officer, Barnardo's)

**“ We are grateful to the schools in the Western Region of Northern Ireland (Derry/Londonderry, Strabane/Omagh, Enniskillen/Fermanagh) who have so faithfully implemented and sustained the use of *The PATHS® Programme*. There is nothing more important to the long-term health of our society than improving the well-being of children. We are thankful for the hard work and persistence of these innovative schools in championing the social and emotional development of children! We are also indebted to our brilliant colleagues at Barnardos, NI for their partnership in supporting the development of healthy, caring schools and communities. ”**

(Dr. Mark T. Greenberg, PHD, on behalf of *PATHS®* Education Worldwide)



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542-544 Upper Newtownards Road,  
Belfast BT4 3HE, Tel 028 9067 2366

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