BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING:

The Skill Card Programme

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This Independent Study has been completed by the programme authors in conjunction with Vermont School, Southampton Advisory Outreach Service for SEND and Southampton Inclusion Partnership.

This research seeks to identify the impact of the Skill Card Programme on 'Behaviour for Learning' and the factors that affect its successful delivery. It considers how schools can use the programme to establish and embed behaviour for learning for individual pupils and focus groups. The research suggests that using the programme to focus on a small range of skills and using a pupil profile to measure progress, can demonstrate progress across a wide range of behaviour for learning skills. The research identifies some key areas where progress has been achieved for an individual and at whole school level. Furthermore, the research considers how schools can use the programme to support a pedagogy of learning so that pupils can gain generalisation, fluency and mastery over the skills required to become successful learners.

Key words: Behaviour for Learning, Skill Cards, engagement, access, achievement, behaviour, acquisition, fluency, impact, intervention, consistency, pathways

How did the research come about?

The following research arose from our experience as teachers at Vermont School. The school caters for primary aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, resulting in challenging behaviour and difficulties in accessing the curriculum. The school seeks to meet the needs of these pupils by placing emotional literacy and behaviour for learning at the heart of the curriculum. Over time, this emphasis on emotional literacy has led to pupils developing some of the behaviours required to help them successfully manage their anger, frustration, thoughts and feelings. As the school developed this curriculum and ways of managing behaviour became embedded, staff were able to begin to focus the pupils on their academic learning.

However, this shift in focus exposed further limitations in pupils' 'behaviour for learning' and their acceptance of the challenges that come with accessing learning. As a result, we began to explore and analyse the skills and characteristics that were needed to access learning offered within the curriculum. Growing scientific knowledge of brain development and how children learn has driven the pedagogy of the school and its practices. However, the school wanted to consider further how best to develop the emotional resilience of pupils by placing a greater emphasis on nurturing behaviours for learning. Consequently, we put together a list of characteristics or prerequisite skills for learning and developed a programme for teaching these skills and nurturing them within pupils. This has become known as the *Behaviour for Learning Skill Card Programme* (BLSCP) and forms the basis for this action research.

The Behaviour for Learning Skill Card Programme (BLSCP)

The Behaviour for Learning Skill Card Programme (BLSCP) begins by analysing the gaps in children's behaviour for learning skills and sets targets which seek to develop these skills. The process focuses on creating new neurological pathways which allow children to explore and establish new behaviours for learning through a five step model. The programme supports school staff in teaching new skills and reinforcing them through targeted activities, peer observation and recording.

Research on Behaviour for Learning

In a systematic review of how theories explain learning behaviour in school contexts, Powell & Tod (2004, p.3) summarize teachers' perceptions of behaviour management, viewing them

as systems solely concerned with establishing control over disruptive pupils, rather than focusing on the end purpose of behaviour management, to establish effective learning behaviour. The research highlights the need to foster the foundations for effective behaviour management in schools and illustrates the interdependent relationship between learning and behaviour. Furthermore, it outlines the conceptual learning cycle, defining behaviour for learning in terms of three elements:

- Engagement - how pupils see themselves in the classroom
- Participation – how pupils see themselves in a relationship with others
- Access – how pupils see themselves within a relationship with the curriculum.

Research undertaken by Adams (2009, p.105) goes beyond defining behaviour for learning as strategies for managing behaviour and explains the role of positive behaviour in supporting 'a purposeful learning environment.' Adams believes this learning cycle is fundamental to successful behaviour for learning in the classroom and suggests that this approach to behaviour should run alongside a culture of emotional literacy in schools. Indeed, Adams raises the importance of schools focusing on the social and emotional aspects of learning that are crucial to a child's well-being and ultimately to their success.

Behaviour strategies based on the principles of positive reinforcement and punishment to reduce maladaptive behaviours and increase adaptive behaviours, were once a dominant force in education that have since fallen out of favour. Humphrey *et al* (2006, p.305-318) expand on Adam's approach, suggesting that an inclusive school seeking to develop both behaviour for learning and academic learning, should consider a four-pronged approach:

- Presence – not using withdrawal from the classroom to teach individual pupils

- Participation – the quality of pupils' educational experiences

- Acceptance – from both school staff and peers alike

- Achievement – either greater academic progress or better social and emotional skills.

They suggest that such an approach provides a stimulus for teachers to consider behaviour for learning as a continual ongoing process, rather than a mind-set or character that is 'set in stone.' Furthermore, they suggest the techniques that seek to teach new behaviour skills, especially to pupils diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), have a convincing evidence base. Indeed, they cite research by Fiore, Becker and Nero (1993, p.163-173) showing evidence that teaching new skills for behaviour is a more successful approach to establishing behaviours that are conducive to learning.

This viewpoint is mirrored by Tennant (2004, p.51) who also provides an argument for

explicitly teaching aspects of classroom behaviour to pupils. He argues that this approach provides pupils with better access to learning opportunities and greater opportunities for teachers to work with pupils in a proactive, rather than a reactive way. Tennant suggests that pupils spend a lot of time in the classroom often without a clear understanding of what behaviour is expected of them whilst they are there. They do not have a working understanding of the behaviours required to become successful in the classroom and are therefore more likely to engage in low level disruptive behaviours. In this respect, Tennant (1994) argues that an investment of time in making positive learning behaviours explicit to pupils would enhance the classroom experience of all children.

However, it is important to recognise that there are likely to remain some inconsistencies in the management of behaviour, as well as behaviour for learning. Indeed, both teachers and pupils are likely to have different perceptions of what constitutes both acceptable and inappropriate behaviour for learning. Furthermore, behaviour may seem to a pupil to be perfectly reasonable. Such differences lead schools to setting out sanctions in their behaviour policy.

Mortimore (1998, p.324) confirms the approach taken by some behavioural researchers that positive systems of teaching behaviour for learning are more effective in long term behaviour management and modification than short term systems that focus on punishment. Blum (1998, p.125) suggests one of the ways that pupils learn acceptable ways of behaving is by taking behavioural cues from each other as to what constitutes acceptable behaviour. If 'impressionable' pupils are seeing disruption to behaviour for learning taking place on a consistent basis, then they may be inclined to join in. In order to combat this, he suggests that a specialised form of mentoring could work with children in explicitly addressing issues of classroom behaviour and expectations. He argues that such an approach would have a three way impact: an immediate effect on the individual, a longer term impact on the individual and finally an impact on the whole class.

A continuing theme across research into classroom behaviour is consistency. Herrnstein and Murray (1994, p.17) indicate that short term interventions designed to promote behaviour for learning, tend to fade in their impact once they are finished. They suggest that where pupils have access to longer term interventions, the effects are self-reinforcing for pupils and have longer term positive impact. Furthermore, inconsistency inhibits a proactive approach to behaviour for learning and allows poor patterns of behaviour to be reinforced.

Nelson (2007, p.1) emphasises the importance of acquiring behaviour for learning at an early stage, while the brain has plasticity. He explains that the brain is most flexible, or "plastic," early in life to accommodate a wide range of environments and interactions. As the

maturing brain becomes more specialised to assume more complex functions, it is less capable of reorganizing and adapting to new or unexpected challenges. Although the "window" for learning and other skills remains open, these brain circuits become increasingly difficult to alter over time. Early plasticity means it's easier and more effective to influence a child's developing brain architecture than to rewire parts of its circuitry in the adult years.

How behavioural theory has informed the development of the BLSCP

The BLSCP programme is underpinned by behavioural research theory through a five step model of securing behaviour for learning skills.

Firstly, it reflects the conceptual learning cycle outlined by Powell and Tod (2004, p.3), defining behaviour for learning in terms of three elements: i) Engagement, through skill analysis ii) Access, through the modelling of the skill in targeted observations iii) Participation, through the practising and rehearsing of the skill in a number of different learning environments:

Engagement – This refers to how the pupil approaches their learning. These are general behaviour for learning characteristics that require nurture within a pupil in order to engage with the curriculum.
The BLSCP impacts on engagement firstly by analysing the pupil profile and identifying the skill deficit. Secondly, it creates an action plan for nurturing the skills needed to diminish the difference between the deficit skill and the desired new behaviour for learning.

Access – This refers to the relationship between the pupil and the curriculum. After the pupil has developed their behaviour for learning characteristics to engage, the pupil has a greater chance of accessing the curriculum at their level.
The BLSCP impacts on access by analysing the skill, exploring how it relates to the pupil and observing this skill through targeted activities. During this phase the pupil is able to explore what the skill means to them, how it feels to experience the skill and finds examples of the skill in peer behaviour for learning during observations.

Participation – This refers to the relationship the pupil has with others and is closely linked to motivation. Pupils engaging in successful behaviours for learning are intrinsically motivated through their relationships with both adults and peers across the learning environment. Using these newly acquired skills leads to positive affirmation by others, generates a feeling of wellbeing for the pupil and acts as the primary motivator.
The BLSCP impacts on participation by allowing the pupil to practise and rehearse the new skill across the school, ensuring that the skill is transferable and not solely used within a

structured learning environment. This is demonstrated by recording on the skill card when the pupil is participating in the new behaviour for learning and is positively reinforced through verbal praise from staff and the use of a sticker or tick on the card itself. Such recording aids the generalisation and adaptation of a new behaviour for learning skill in different contexts.

In summary, the BLSCP seeks to develop behaviours for learning by nurturing new skills which impact upon the pupil's engagement, access and participation.

Furthermore, the BLSCP is underpinned by the hierarchy of learning developed by Harring et al (1978). This model matches interventions to the pupil's learning stage. The learning stages are defined as:

Acquisition - The pupil has begun to learn how to complete the target skill correctly but is not yet accurate or fluent in the skill. The goal in this phase is to improve accuracy.

Fluency - The pupil is able to complete the target skill accurately but works slowly. The goal of this phase is to increase the pupil's speed of response (fluency).

Generalization - The pupil is accurate and fluent in using the target skill but does not typically use it in different situations or settings. Alternatively the pupil may confuse the target skill with 'similar' skills. The goal of this phase is to encourage the pupil to use the skill in the widest possible range of settings and situations, or to accurately discriminate between the target skill and 'similar' skills.

Adaptation - The pupil is accurate and fluent in using the skill. He or she also uses the skill in many situations or settings. However, the pupil is not yet able to modify or adapt the skill to fit novel task-demands or situations. Here the goal is for the pupil to be able to identify elements of previously learned skills that he or she can adapt to the new demands or situation.

Furthermore, the programme aims to promote emotional literacy and measure progress. The forty skills that the BLSCP seeks to nurture and develop with pupils, draws on the notion of the emotionally literate classroom, as described by Adams (2009). In addition, the programme ensures that a baseline for measuring success is in place through the use of the pupil profile, so that entry and exit data can be compared as evidence of progress (Fiore, Becker and Nero,1993).

Aims of the research

The aim of this research is to explore and compare the impact of implementing the *Behaviour for Learning Skill Card Programme* (BLSCP) intervention on pupils within a mainstream primary school and special primary school. It seeks to answer two key questions regarding the intervention:

1. What is the impact of the intervention on pupils' 'behaviour for learning' skills?
2. What factors affect the successful delivery of the intervention?

Through the analysis of pupil profiles, the research will explore the impact of the intervention on pupil's behaviour for learning and the factors that influence pupil outcomes.

Trial of the programme

Initially, the programme was trialled in a special school setting, managed and delivered by the class teacher. This involved a class of eight children, with two teaching assistants supporting the delivery of the programme under the guidance of the class teacher.

A further trial was carried out in a mainstream setting, this time with the class teacher delivering the programme. In this context, management of the programme was less effective. Therefore it was decided that the programme would be more effective if overseen by one member of staff as the programme was being piloted across a year group rather than one classroom.

Therefore the research seeks to compare two methods of delivery and assess their effectiveness; one programme being overseen and run by the class teacher in a special school and the other overseen by a teaching assistant in a mainstream school.

The schools chosen to host the research pilot were involved in discussions of how the delivery of the programme would best fit in with the current structure of their schools, their level of staffing and how it could be implemented to work alongside other interventions that the schools may be using.

Research Methods

The research approach used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data generated from the pupil profile and staff conferencing.

A bespoke diagnostic analysis of behaviour for learning (Pupil Profile) which was designed and created by Vermont School was used to assess the pupil's strengths and weaknesses in behaviour for learning. The diagnostic tool was developed with the Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) in mind to ensure a holistic view of the pupil. All forty behaviour learning skills were categorised into five areas: Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction, Sensory and Physical, Social Skills and Emotional and Mental Health. The analysis helped to identify the pupil's greatest areas of need, as well as providing a baseline for assessment. The assessment was carried out by adults who knew the pupil best. After the areas of need and development were identified, an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) and action plan were produced.

The IBP and action plan were based on the Behaviour Element Model developed by La Vigna (1989), as cited by the Institute for Applied Behaviour Analysis (1995, p.10) which focuses on three key areas: environmental change, new skills and reinforcement. These plans were written by the programme designers alongside the teaching staff of the school. After the IBP and action plan were agreed, they were distributed along with the resources needed to implement the programme. Once the IBP was created, a five step model (action plan) was developed to enable the pupil to acquire the new behaviour for learning skill. This model was as follows:

Introduce it

The targeted questioning helps to identify where the pupil's strengths and weaknesses lie in relation to the skill. At this stage the pupil's understanding of what this skill will help them to accomplish is checked. A target for the skill to be achieved is not set, as the pupil will progress in their own time based on how much of the skill they already have and consistently use.

Teach it

This part of the process is an active demonstration of putting that skill to use in a small activity, working on the principle that behaviour is 'better caught than taught'. The programme uses a set of activity cards that match the skill deficit that has been identified. During this phase the pupil is able to experience the skill on a practical level.

Observe it

The observation stage of the programme requires the pupil to observe their peers using the skill, with follow up discussion to explore the skills in a different context. The pupil observes

a group of peers across different year groups and in different contexts e.g. PE, lunchtime, assemblies, playground etc. The pupil is then able to experience others demonstrating and rehearsing the skills. This allows the pupil to identify what the skill looks like in others and supports the pupil in better understanding their own knowledge of the skill.

Discuss it

A follow up discussion enables the pupil to process the skills observed in different contexts and discuss how the pupil can apply them to their own behaviour for learning. They discuss with an adult how they can use the classroom environment, resources, displays and adults within the classroom to help them develop the skill.

Apply it

At this stage of the programme the pupil is given the skill card with which they can rehearse and practise the skill in different contexts. The pupil is rewarded with a sticker being placed on their skill card and this reinforces the behaviour for learning skill that is being developed.

This five stage model was shared with the staff of both schools through staff meetings. It was followed up throughout the research pilot, with ongoing coaching and guidance from the programme designers.

After the intervention

After the period of skill acquisition had ended, a new pupil profile was created to allow staff to measure the progress made during the intervention, with the expectation that some of the skills that had been acquired may impact on other areas of the pupil profile. This meant that previously deficit skills would become emerging, working towards or secured skills, leaving staff with a new needs analysis to help them plan further interventions.

Piloting the intervention

Two schools were approached and asked to support action research into BLSCP. One school was a larger than average mainstream primary and the other a special school for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. A cohort of pupils was chosen and parental support and permission were sought. Their anonymised data has been included in this research.

Both schools received training on how to deliver the intervention from the authors of the programme. The special school involved in the research involved all teaching and support staff in the training. The mainstream school released a Teaching Assistant (TA) who was used to support children in receipt of pupil premium funding to carry out the intervention.

This TA received the same training as the special school staff. The TA was released for five hours a week in order to deliver the programme within the setting. All staff involved in trialling the method were provided with bespoke IBP and action plans to support the intervention. In addition, a bank of activities was distributed to support the delivery of the programme.

The mainstream school received initial training in the programme and a support visit halfway through the action research. The special school involved received ongoing training from the authors of the programme due to their connection with the school. The action research was conducted over a seven week period from September to November 2016. Exit data was collated from both schools after the action research was completed and interviews were conducted with pupils and staff to gain opinions and feedback on the programme.

Ethical Considerations

In order to comply with guidelines for ethical research (BERA, 2011) an Ethics Statement was completed. Permission to use the data was gathered from both schools involved in the action research and from parents.

Due to the complex needs of pupil participants in the special school setting, parents gave permission to use the data on behalf of their children. To ensure consistency for the action research, the same approach was used with parents from the mainstream school. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, pupil participants were allocated a reference number for the purposes of data collection. There was no reference to the name of the pupil or their school within any of the written research.

Parents were given a participant information sheet about the programme and permission was gained to use the data for the action research.

Reliability and validity

 It was acknowledged that the nature of the research would inevitably include a level of personal opinion and perception. However, the following measures were taken to increase

both the reliability and validity of the data:

- The action plans and IBPs were created by the authors of the programme using the same baseline data collected before the intervention commenced.
- All staff completed blank pupil profiles for baseline and exit data.
- All staff involved were given training before and throughout the action research in relation to the delivery of the programme.
- Evaluation data was collated from both schools involved in the research in order to ensure that the impact of the intervention was considered from alternative settings.

Findings

The following section presents the findings of the research project as reflected by the pupil profile results before and after the programme. The findings are presented as scores from the pupil profile which are split into five sections, as well as a bar chart showing pre and post data.

<u>Mainstream findings.</u>

The following figures give an insight into the individual data analysed for each pupil before and after the intervention.
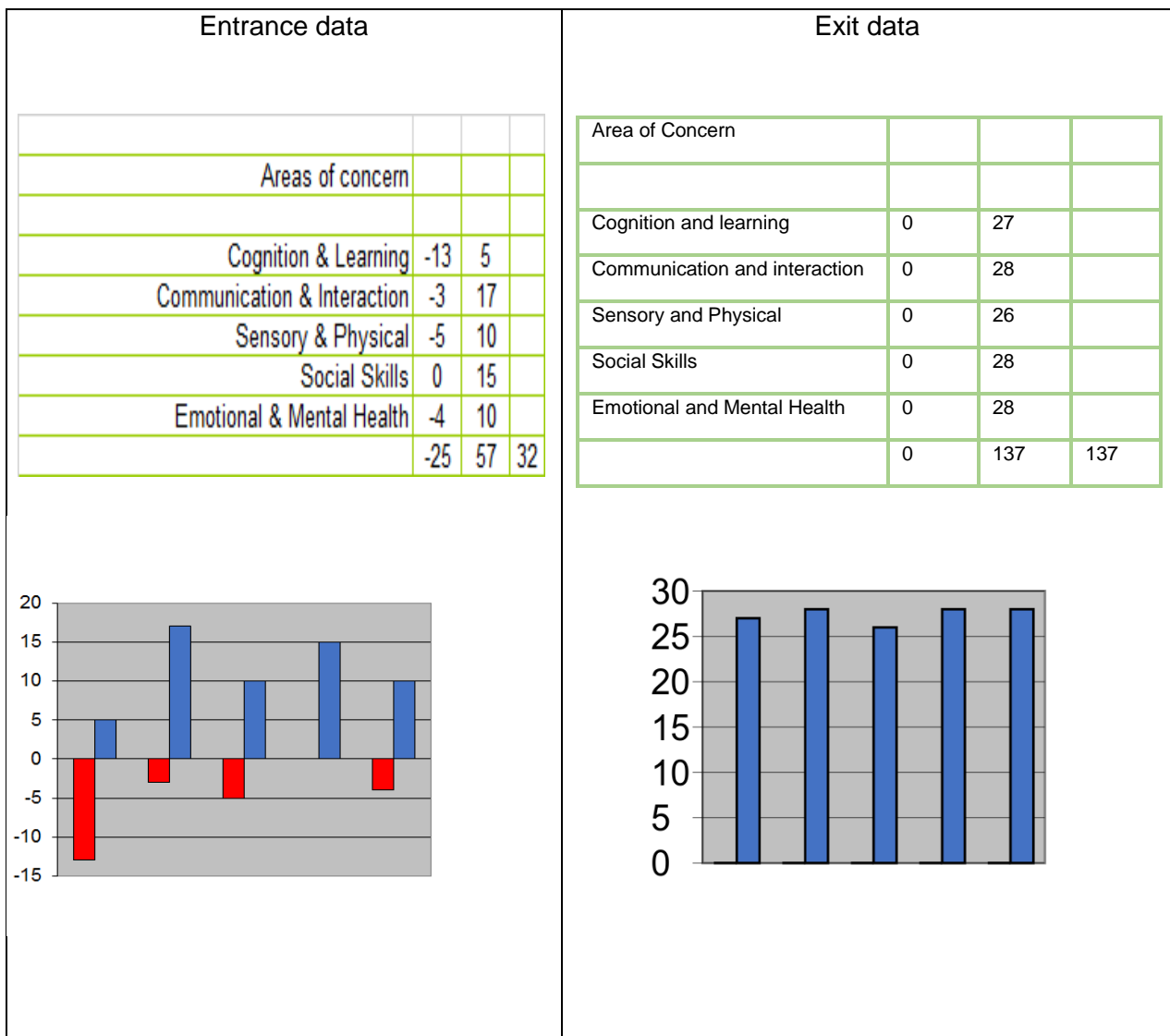
Child B:

Entrance data	Exit data

Entrance data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-13	5	
Communication & Interaction	-3	17	
Sensory & Physical	-5	10	
Social Skills	0	15	
Emotional & Mental Health	-4	10	
	-25	57	32

Exit data

Area of Concern			
Cognition and learning	0	27	
Communication and interaction	0	28	
Sensory and Physical	0	26	
Social Skills	0	28	
Emotional and Mental Health	0	28	
	0	137	137

Figure 2.1: Entrance and exit data for Child B

Child C:

Entrance Data				Exit data			
Areas of concern				Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-21	1		Cognition & Learning	-6	5	
Communication & Interaction	-18	4		Communication & Interaction	-12	2	
Sensory & Physical	-22	0		Sensory & Physical	-10	3	
Social Skills	-28	0		Social Skills	-20	0	
Emotional & Mental Health	-27	0		Emotional & Mental Health	-25	0	
	-116	5	-111		-73	10	-63
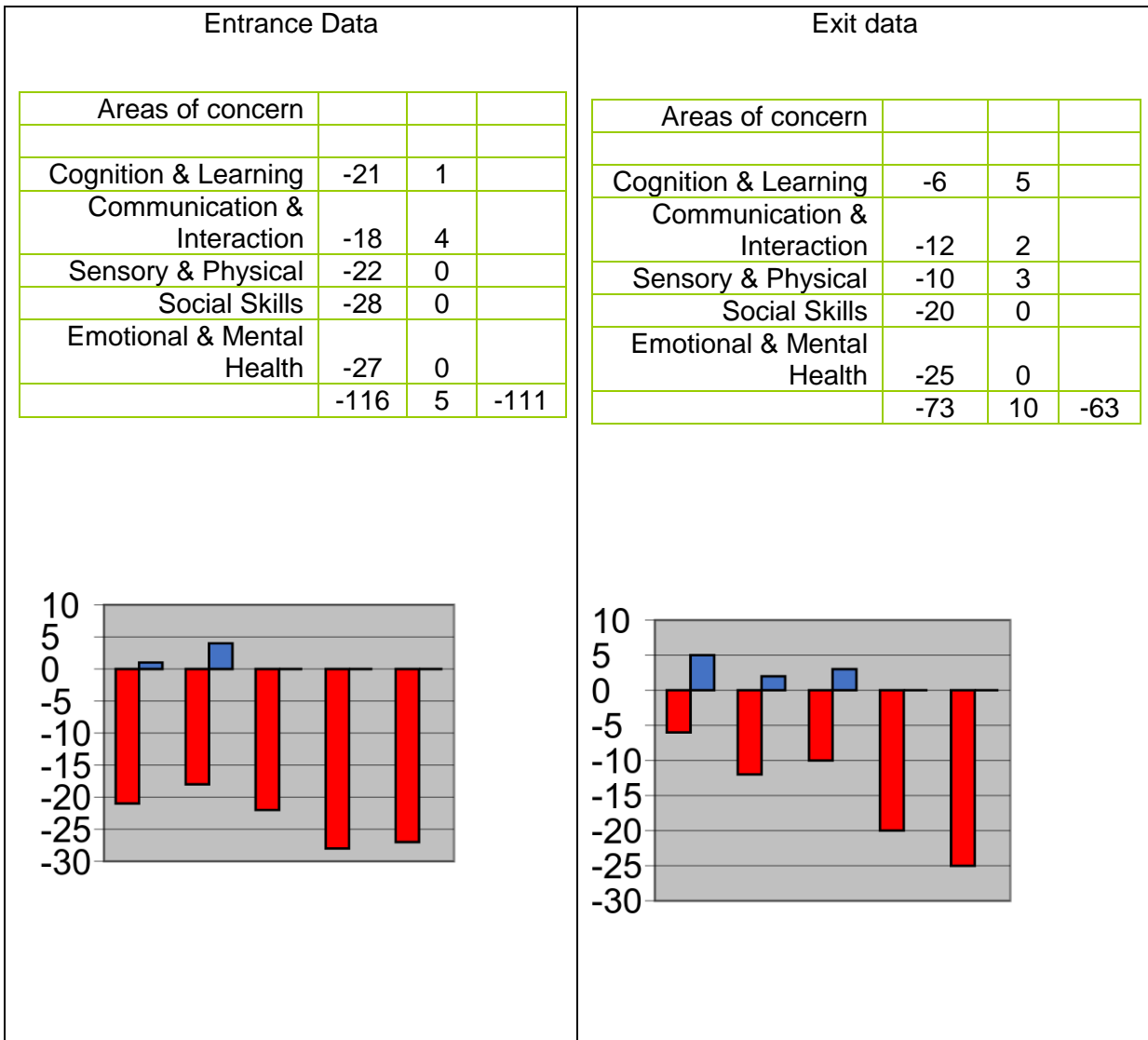
Figure 2.2: Entrance and exit data for Child C

Child F:

Entry data				Exit data			

Areas of concern				Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-16	2		Cognition & Learning	0	11	
Communication & Interaction	-13	2		Communication & Interaction	-2	6	
Sensory & Physical	-13	5		Sensory & Physical	-6	8	
Social Skills	-15	3		Social Skills	0	2	
Emotional & Mental Health	-15	3		Emotional & Mental Health	-9	4	
	-72	15	-57		-17	31	14
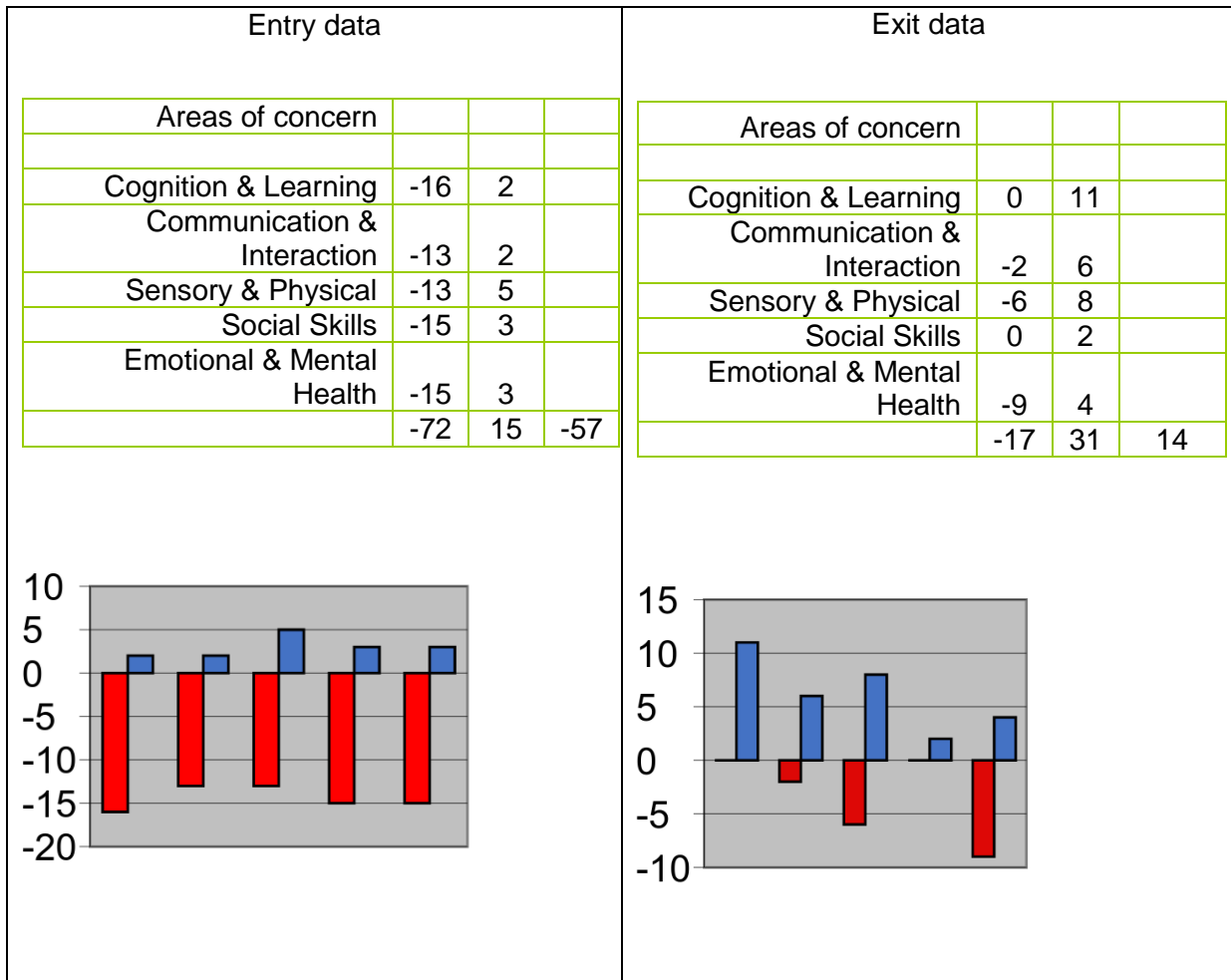
Figure 2.3: Entrance and exit data for Child F

Child I:

Entrance data			
Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-3	14	
Communication & Interaction	-2	19	
Sensory & Physical	-1	23	
Social Skills	-9	18	
Emotional & Mental Health	-9	16	
	-24	90	66

Exit data			
Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	0	18	
Communication & Interaction	0	20	
Sensory & Physical	0	22	
Social Skills	0	17	
Emotional & Mental Health	0	13	
	0	90	90
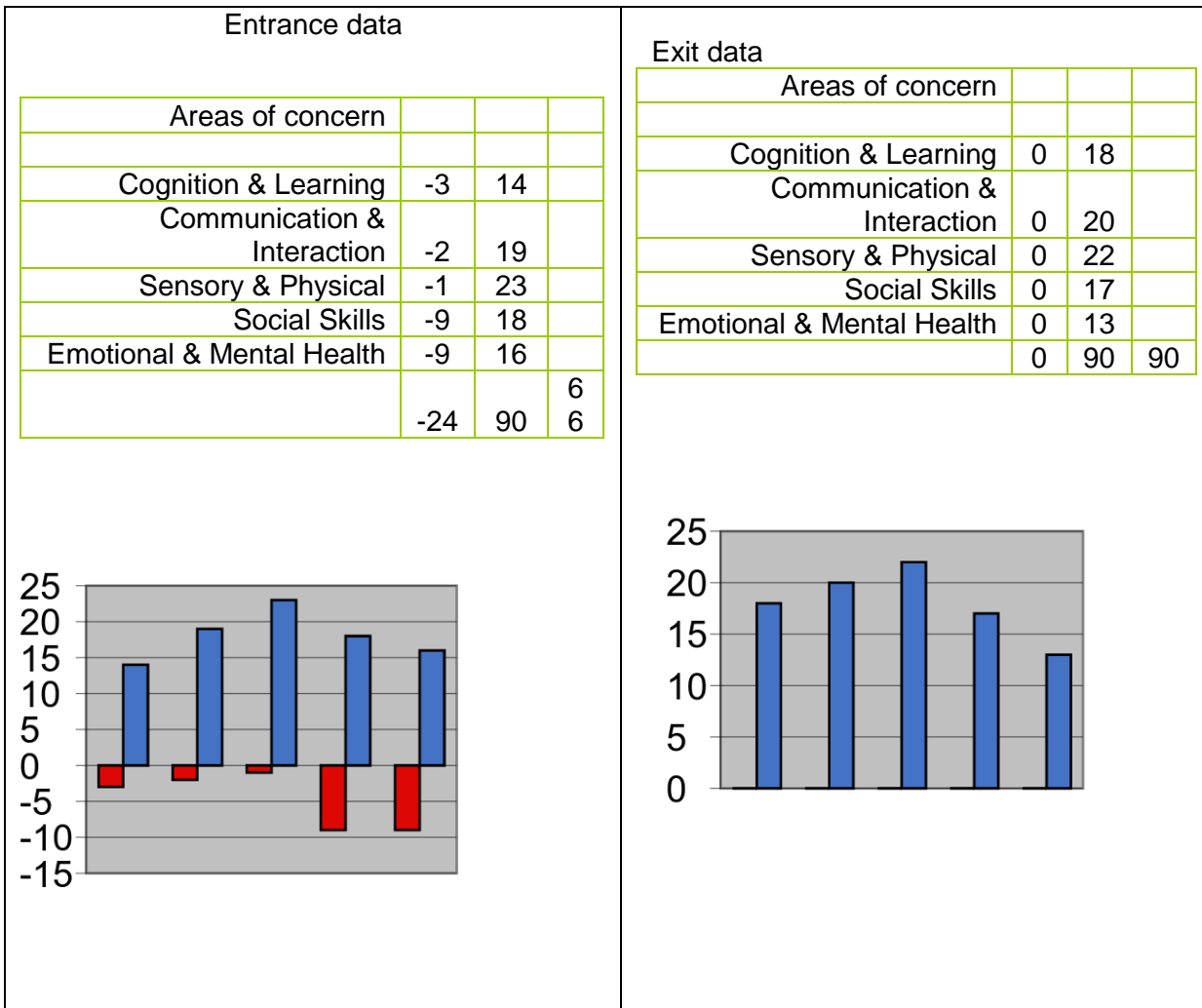
Figure 2.4: Entrance and exit data for Child I

Child G:

Entrance data				Exit data			

Areas of concern				Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-1	10		Cognition & Learning	-9	5	
Communication & Interaction	0	14		Communication & Interaction	-11	3	
Sensory & Physical	-2	12		Sensory & Physical	-6	7	
Social Skills	-2	6		Social Skills	-12	3	
Emotional & Mental Health	-8	1		Emotional & Mental Health	-19	1	
	-13	43	30		-57	19	-38
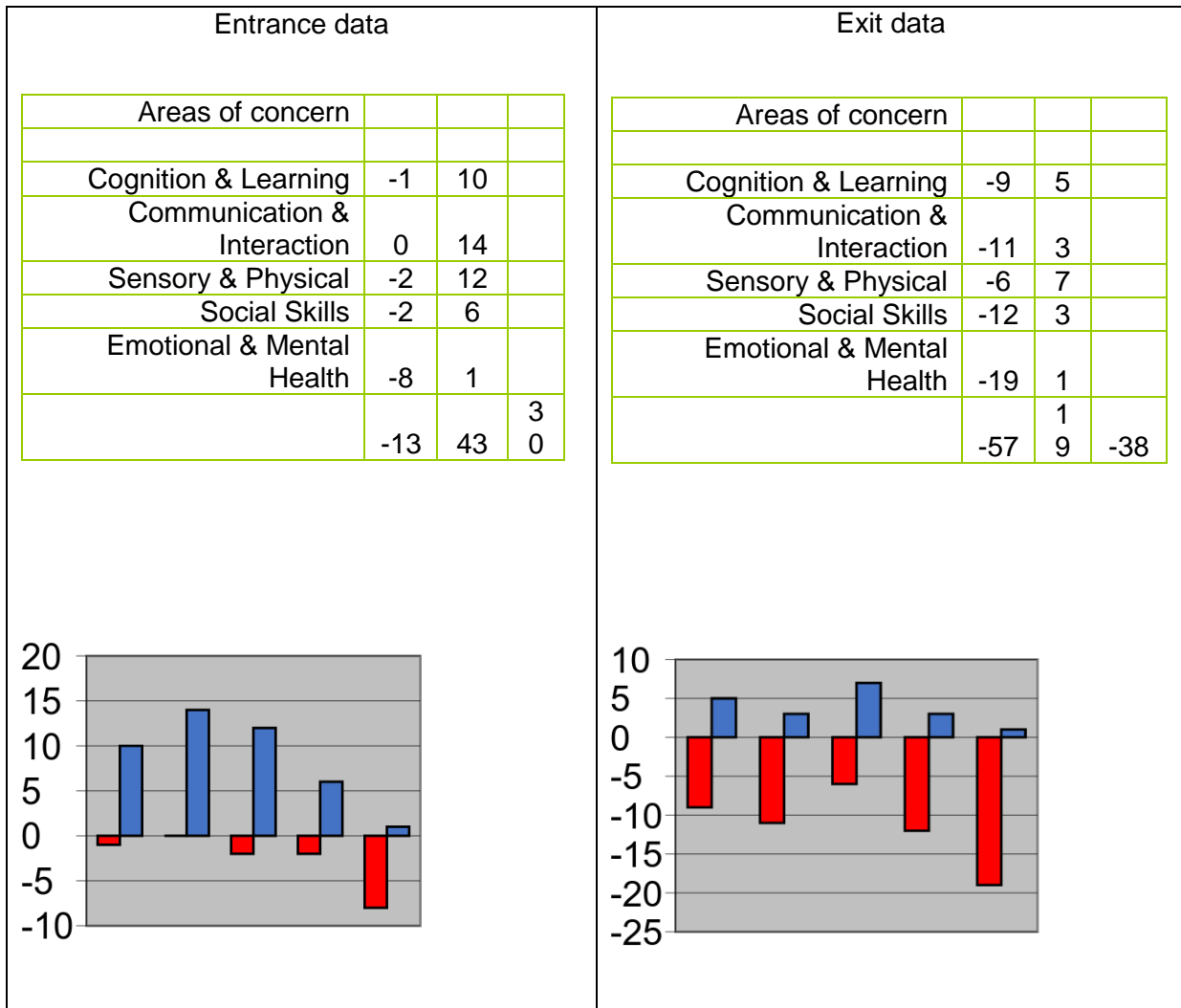
Figure 2.5: Entrance and exit data for Child G

Special School findings

The following figures give an insight into the individual data analysis for each pupil before and after the intervention. The class sizes are considerably smaller than the mainstream school, an average of eight pupils per class, with one teacher and two supporting adults.
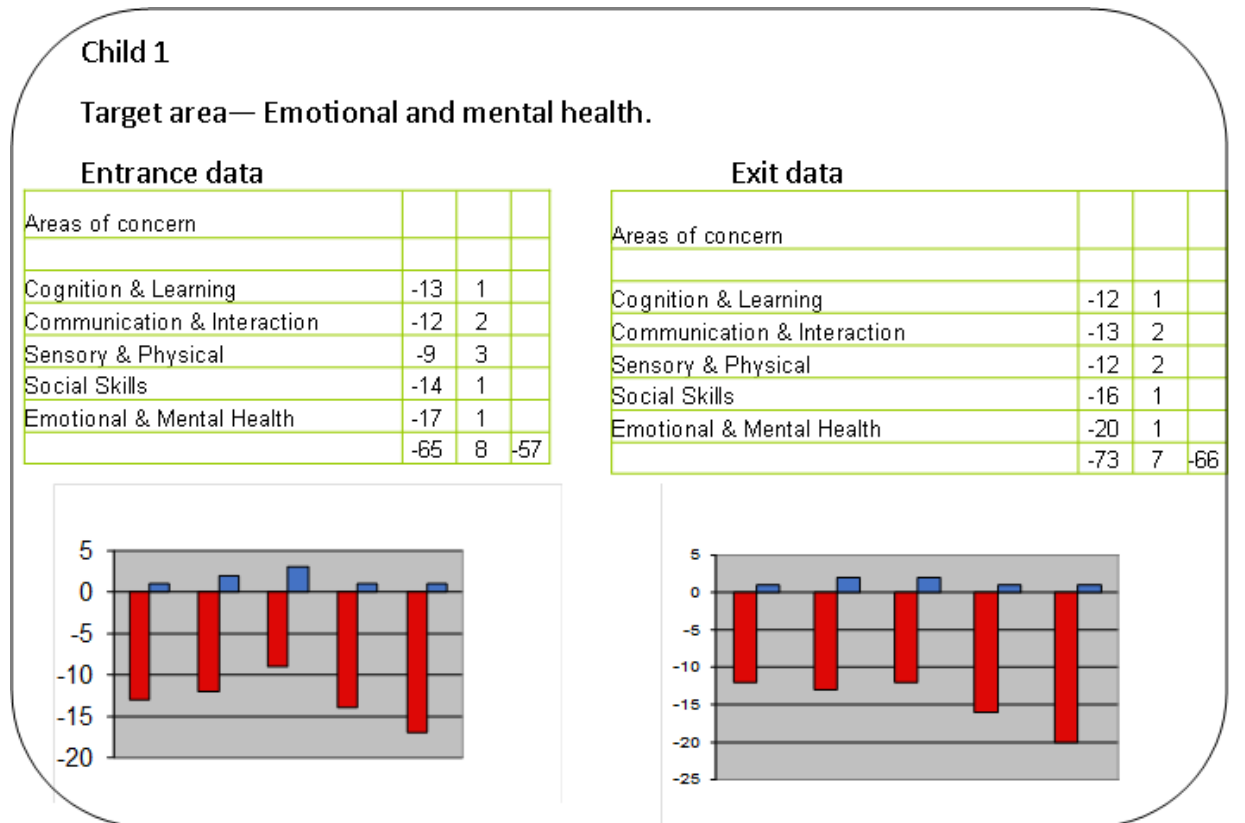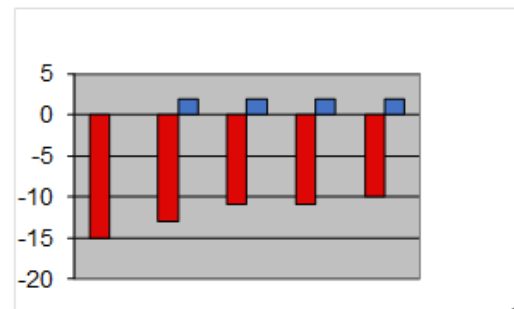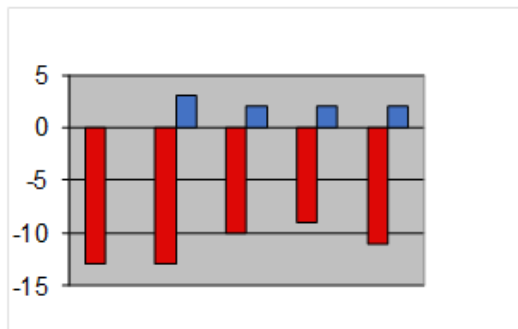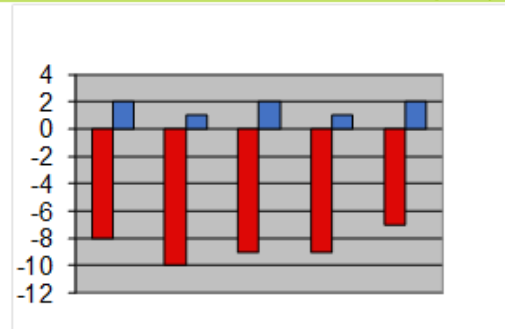

Figure 3.1: Entrance data and exit data for child 1

Child 2

Target area— Cognition and learning,

Entrance data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-13	0	
Communication & Interaction	-13	3	
Sensory & Physical	-10	2	
Social Skills	-9	2	
Emotional & Mental Health	-11	2	
	-56	9	-47

Exit data

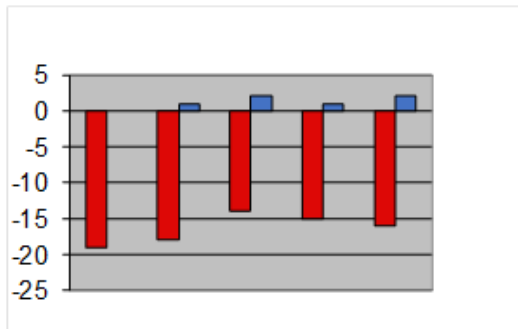| Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-15	0	
Communication & Interaction	-13	2	
Sensory & Physical	-11	2	
Social Skills	-11	2	
Emotional & Mental Health	-10	2	
	-60	8	-52

Figure 3.2: Entrance and exit data for Child 2

Child 3

Target area— Cognition and learning

Entrance data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-19	0	
Communication & Interaction	-18	1	
Sensory & Physical	-14	2	
Social Skills	-15	1	
Emotional & Mental Health	-16	2	
	-82	6	-76

Exit data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-8	2	
Communication & Interaction	-10	1	
Sensory & Physical	-9	2	
Social Skills	-9	1	
Emotional & Mental Health	-7	2	
	-43	8	-35

Figure 3.3: Entrance and exit data for Child 3

Child 4

Target area— Cognition and learning

Entrance data

Areas of concern		
Cognition & Learning	-28	0
Communication & Interaction	-26	0
Sensory & Physical	-21	1
Social Skills	-23	0
Emotional & Mental Health	-21	0
	-119	1

Exit data

Areas of concern		
Cognition & Learning	-28	0
Communication & Interaction	-25	0
Sensory & Physical	-20	1
Social Skills	-20	0
Emotional & Mental Health	-21	0
	-114	1
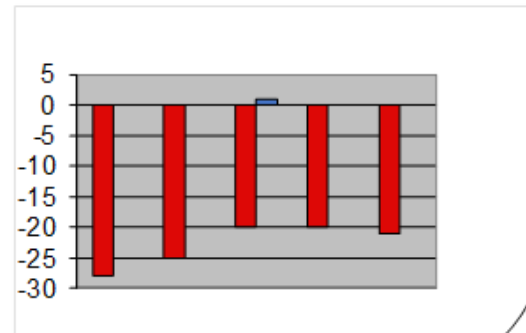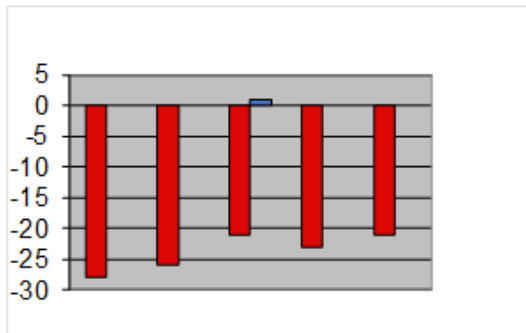
Figure 3.4: Entrance and exit data for Child 4

Child 5

Target area— Social Skills

Entrance data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-13	2	
Communication & Interaction	-7	5	
Sensory & Physical	-5	4	
Social Skills	-14	0	
Emotional & Mental Health	-13	0	
	-52	11	-41

Exit data

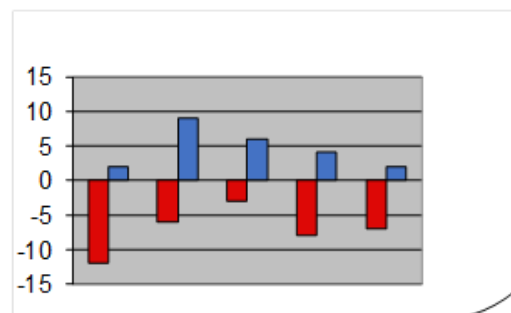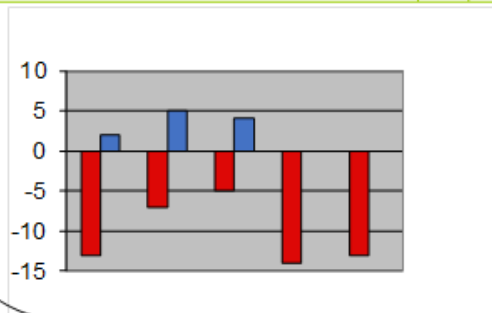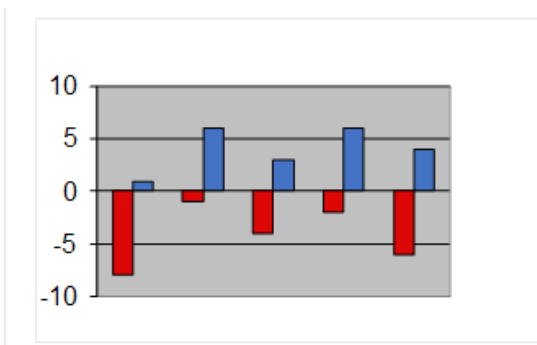| Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-12	2	
Communication & Interaction	-6	9	
Sensory & Physical	-3	6	
Social Skills	-8	4	
Emotional & Mental Health	-7	2	
	-36	23	-13

Figure 3.5: Entrance and exit data for Child 5

Child 6

Target area— Cognition and learning

Entrance data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-7	3	
Communication & Interaction	-1	12	
Sensory & Physical	-4	5	
Social Skills	-1	10	
Emotional & Mental Health	-4	4	
	-17	34	17

Exit data

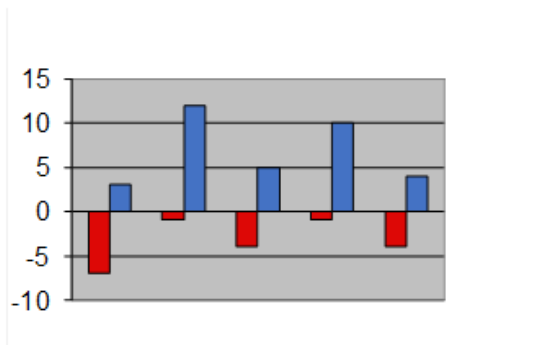| Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-8	1	
Communication & Interaction	-1	6	
Sensory & Physical	-4	3	
Social Skills	-2	6	
Emotional & Mental Health	-6	4	
	-21	20	-1

Figure 3.6: Entrance and exit data for Child 6

Child 7

Target area— Cognition and learning

Entrance data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-14	0	
Communication & Interaction	-13	0	
Sensory & Physical	-9	1	
Social Skills	-7	3	
Emotional & Mental Health	-8	1	
	-51	5	-46

Exit data

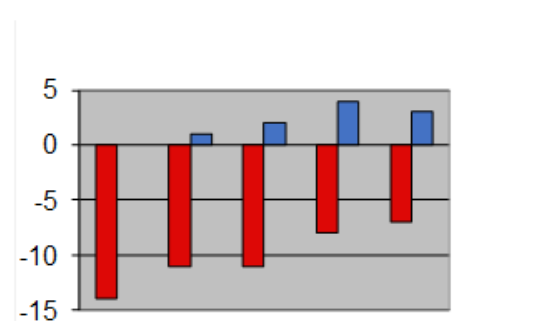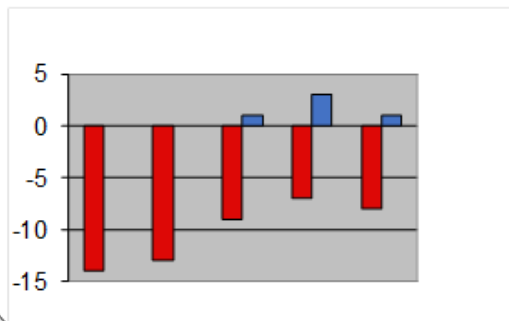| Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-14	0	
Communication & Interaction	-11	1	
Sensory & Physical	-11	2	
Social Skills	-8	4	
Emotional & Mental Health	-7	3	
	-51	10	-41

Figure 3.7: Entrance and exit data for Child 7

Analysis and discussion.

Mainstream setting

The following section will seek to analyse and discuss the findings from the mainstream setting in relation to entry and exit data for the pupils. On average the overall scores increased for all but one pupil in the mainstream setting. Figure 3.1 shows the initial pupil profile points score for the pupil pre and post the intervention. It can be seen from figure 3.1 that the intervention had a positive impact on all pupils in the setting apart from one. The results vary for each pupil, from a marked improvement to a decline in the total score. This section of the report will look closely at two pupils within the group, child F who saw a positive impact, as well as child G who saw no impact.
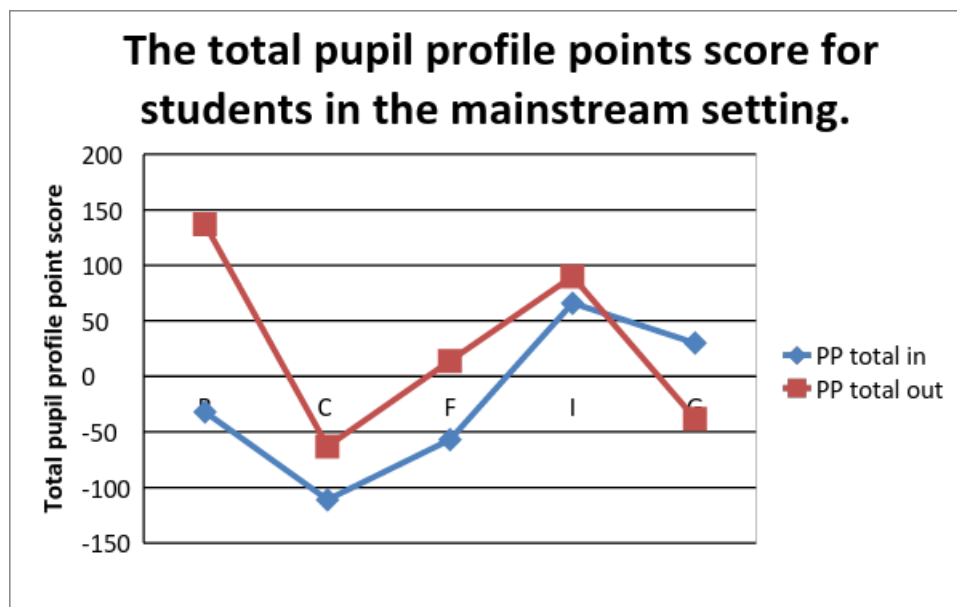

Figure 3.1: A graph showing the total pupil profile score for pre and post intervention within the mainstream setting.

Child G

Child G generated a negative score after the intervention. The initial pupil profile revealed that the primary area of concern was emotional and mental health. The identified target for the pupil was:

To choose to ignore inappropriate behaviour and to think for myself.

The following skills were identified to help reach the target: Thinking for yourself, Self-control, Tolerance, Determination, Judgement and Caution.

Child G was placed in a different class compared to other children within the targeted group. It was identified by the school that the programme had not been given the same emphasis within this class, compared to the other classes. Child G saw no impact compared to those in the other class who saw a significant positive impact on their behaviour. This may begin to explain the differences between both sets of results. When the class teacher was able to engage with the intervention, there was a greater impact on the pupils' behaviour, possibly because they were able to rehearse the skills in a range of contexts. Where engagement with the intervention was not fully maximised, the child had limited time and opportunity to rehearse the skills. A lack of positive awareness of the skill for child G would have limited opportunity to reinforce the behaviour for learning skill being demonstrated. Furthermore, this lack of awareness would have reduced the pupil's opportunity to associate positive praise with the behaviour for learning skill.

Figure 2.5 shows the entry and exit data for Child G, demonstrating that the targeted area of concern did not improve. It also shows an overall negative impact on all other areas of the behaviour for learning. Child G is the only pupil within the group who showed no positive impact in the mainstream setting.
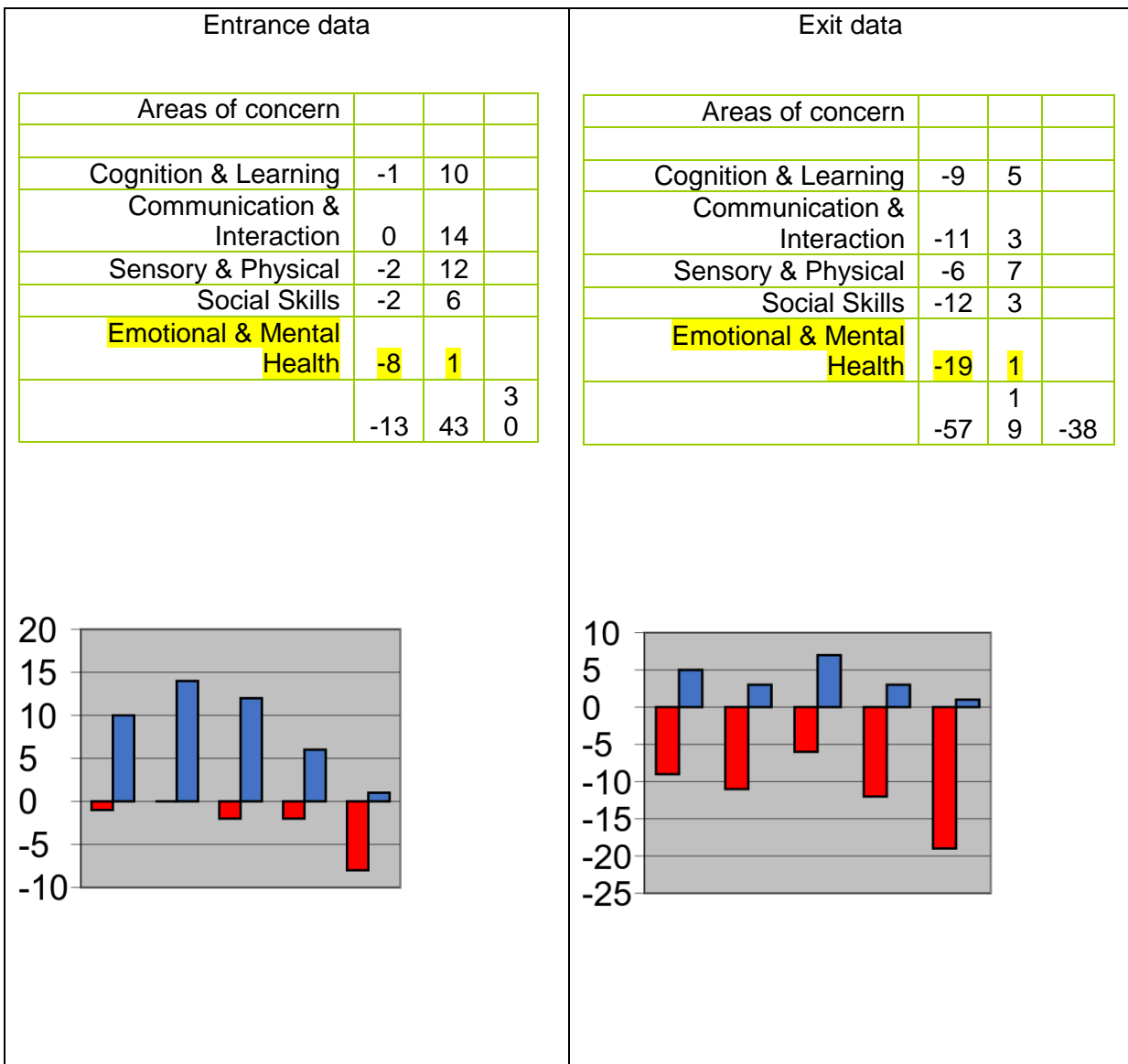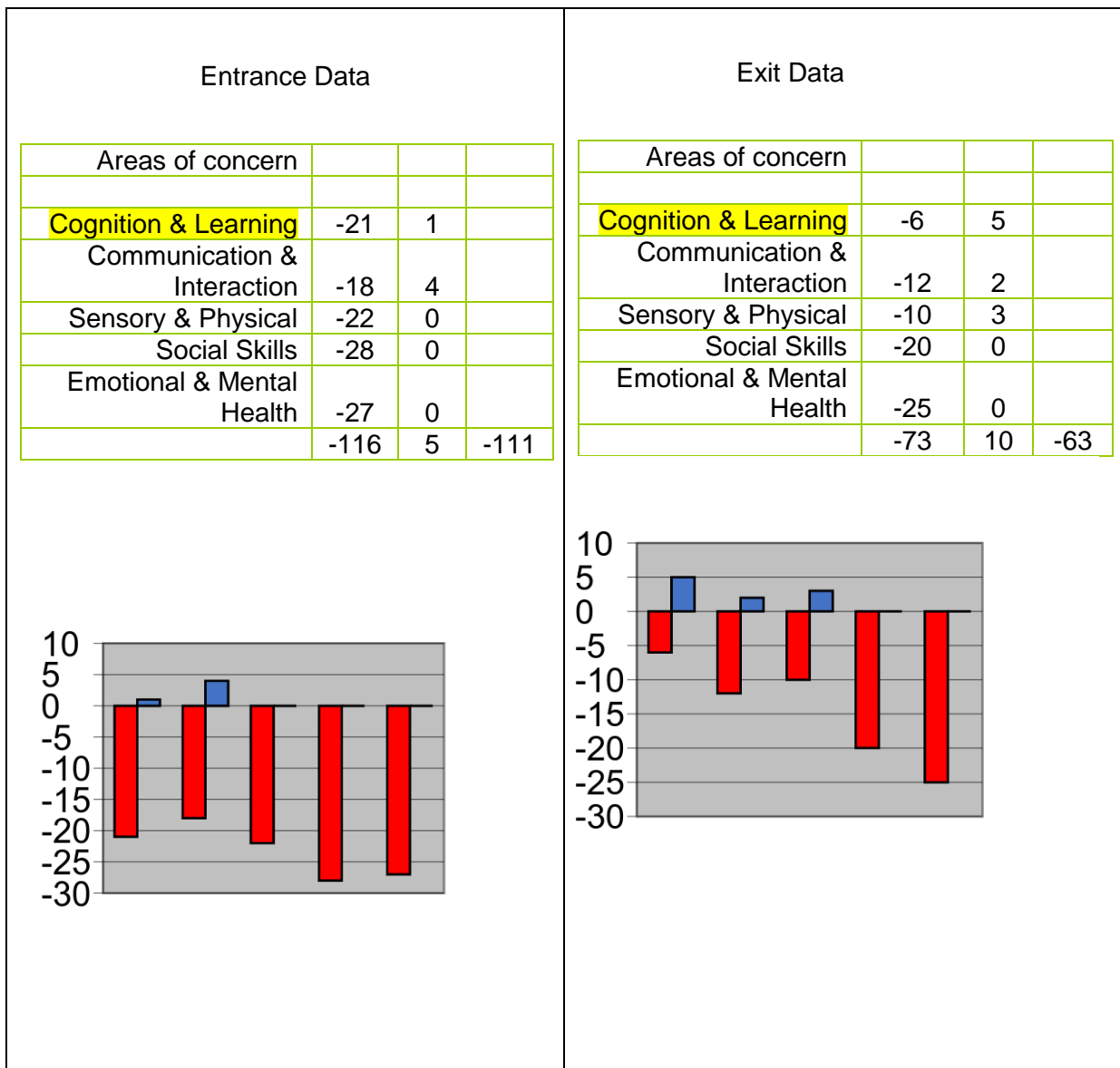
Child G:

Entrance data				Exit data			

Areas of concern				Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-1	10		Cognition & Learning	-9	5	
Communication & Interaction	0	14		Communication & Interaction	-11	3	
Sensory & Physical	-2	12		Sensory & Physical	-6	7	
Social Skills	-2	6		Social Skills	-12	3	
Emotional & Mental Health	-8	1		Emotional & Mental Health	-19	1	
	-13	43	30		-57	19	-38

Figure 3.2 Entrance and exit data for Child G

Child C

Entrance Data					Exit Data			
Areas of concern					Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-21	1			Cognition & Learning	-6	5	
Communication & Interaction	-18	4			Communication & Interaction	-12	2	
Sensory & Physical	-22	0			Sensory & Physical	-10	3	
Social Skills	-28	0			Social Skills	-20	0	
Emotional & Mental Health	-27	0			Emotional & Mental Health	-25	0	
	-116	5	-111			-73	10	-63

Figure 3.3: Entrance and exit data for Child C

Child C showed good progress over the course of the intervention for the target area and a positive ripple effect through the other areas of the pupil's profile. Once the initial pupil profile data was collated, the area of need selected was cognition and learning. The target identified to support the area of need was:

 I can maintain concentration on a given task.

The following skills were identified to support the target: determination, organisation, persistence, thinking for yourself, independence and maintaining attention.

Within the cognition and learning section it was noted that Child C was identified as beginning to sustain concentration in class within the pupil profile. After the intervention it

was noted that Child C had progressed two points from 'beginning to work within' the skill of sustaining concentration. Progress was also noted in the engagement section of the pupil profile in which the child went from a 'pre skill' to emerging in the skill during the intervention. Child C also showed progress on the organisational skill card in which they were identified as pre skill prior to the intervention, to 'emerging in the skill' in being organised for a task. It would suggest that focusing on the skill of determination and persistence enabled the child to make progress in other areas such as challenging themselves in their learning and demonstrating more resilience in tasks. The intervention enabled the child to experience the skill which was supported through positive feedback. This would suggest that the approach supported the child to develop more secure pathways in the brain, resulting in them being able to use the skill in different situations. The focus skills seemed to have a positive impact across all areas of the pupil profile score which improved in every area. This would suggest that the skills were allowed to develop more securely by having an emphasis on one skill per week, allowing the child to explore the skill in a range of situations and environments.

Special School Setting

The following section of the report will seek to analyse and discuss the findings from the special setting in relation to entry and exit data. Compared to the mainstream setting, the total points score varied considerably for each pupil. Figure 3.2 shows that for three of the pupils within the group there was a positive impact, whereas for the remaining pupils there was no impact.

This section of the report will look at two pupils in detail, in particular child three who showed the greatest positive impact, with child six showing the slowest rate of impact.
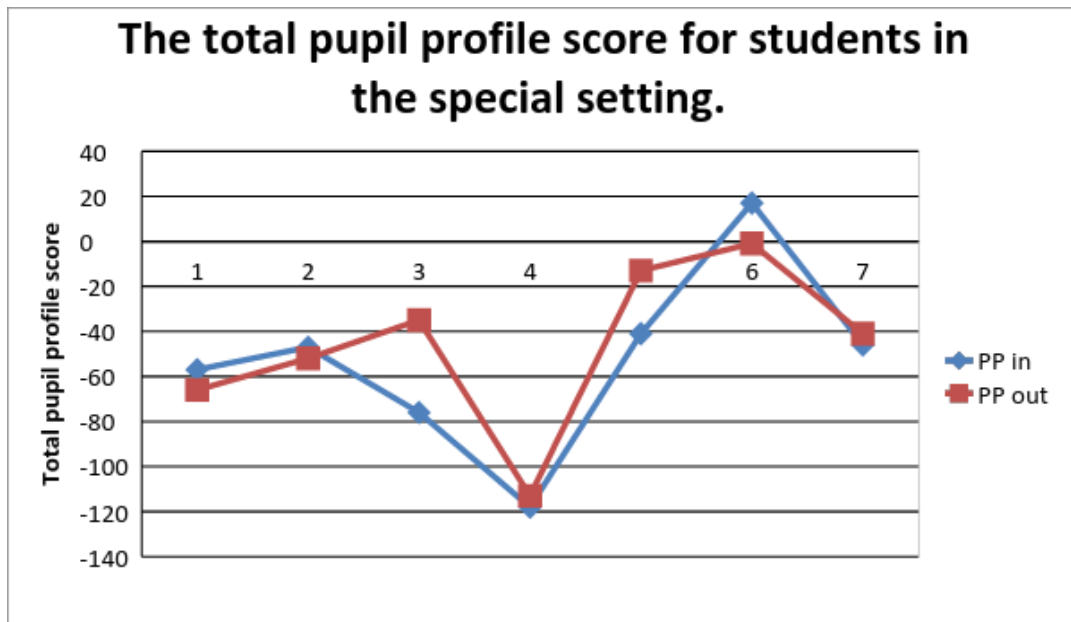
Figure 3.4: A graph showing the total pupil profile score for pre and post intervention within the special setting.
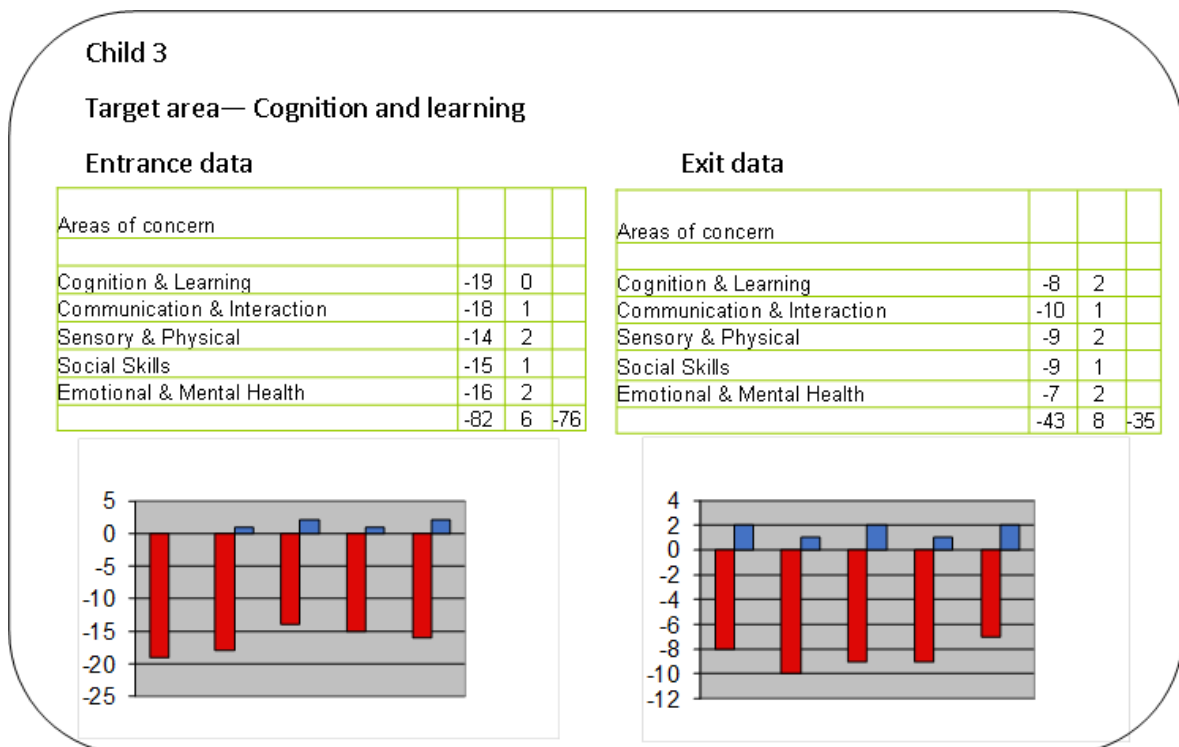
Child 3

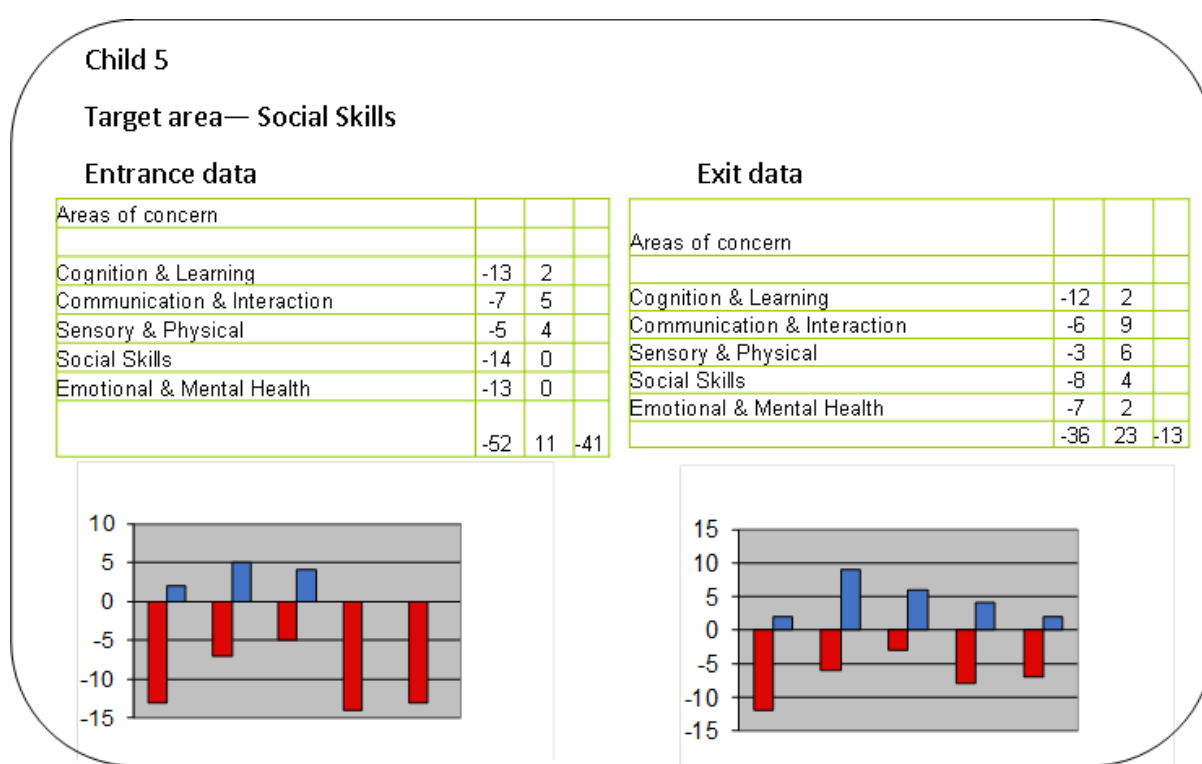*Figure 3.5 Entrance and exit data for child three*

Child three showed progress in the targeted area of cognition and learning, as well as a positive impact across all other areas of the pupil's profile. The initial target set for the child was:

To approach my learning in a positive way.

In order to achieve the target, the focus skills were: persistence, independence, following instructions and collaboration.

This would suggest that by focusing on persistence, it allowed the child to understand what persistence could look like when learning in different contexts. It also enabled the child to create positive pathways when persisting with learning challenges in the classroom, which was reinforced with direct positive praise from the adults.

Child five:

Child 5

Target area— Social Skills

Entrance data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-13	2	
Communication & Interaction	-7	5	
Sensory & Physical	-5	4	
Social Skills	-14	0	
Emotional & Mental Health	-13	0	
	-52	11	-41

Exit data

Areas of concern			
Cognition & Learning	-12	2	
Communication & Interaction	-6	9	
Sensory & Physical	-3	6	
Social Skills	-8	4	
Emotional & Mental Health	-7	2	
	-36	23	-13

Figure 3.6: Entrance and exit data for Child five

Child five had an initial need within the social skills section of the pupil profile and the following target was identified:

I can talk about my problems with an adult

In order to support this target the following skills were recommended: tolerance, forgiveness, collaboration and patience. The intervention showed progress within the target area, as well as a positive impact across all other areas of the pupil profile.

This would suggest that the focus skills enabled the pupil to secure further friendships and communicate more effectively with their peers. This supported the pupil to develop a greater range of social skills in order to interact with peers across the school. The profile also revealed a positive impact in the emotional and mental health section. By exploring and rehearsing the skills, it is likely that the pupil was able to create and secure pathways for these particular skills. The pupil progressed from 'beginning to use' to 'emerging' with the skill in demonstrating patience and tolerance with others. This can be attributed directly to the tolerance and patience skill targeted by the intervention. The pupil also made one point progress in the section which comments on being liked by peers. Child five also worked on the skill of collaboration which enabled them to secure a more positive attitude to working and interacting with their peers.

Conclusions and implications for future practice

The research was initially based on an idea from the programme creators who sought to create a structured system in which to teach, model and nurture new behaviours to pupils who had an Education Health Care Plan within the category of Social, Emotional and Mental Health. The programme creators wanted to measure the impact of the *Skill Card Programme* on pupils 'Behaviour for Learning' skills and looked to find out how best to implement the programme by exploring the factors that affect the successful delivery of the intervention. The research raises a number of implications for future practice in relation to observing behaviours, approaches to intervention delivery and the consistency of adults in affirming newly acquired behaviour for learning skills.

Firstly, the research was carried out in two schools, one a large mainstream primary school and the other a small special school for pupils with behavioural needs. The evidence and makeup of the school suggest that when completing peer observations on pupils, the mainstream school had a much wider group of role models to consider. Therefore, supporting adults were able to make appropriate professional judgements as to which pupils or classes would be more successful in which to observe the behaviours being taught. They also had a greater range of lessons they could observe in, ensuring that the coverage of environments across the school could be used to support the observation of the behaviours.

Data was collected and measured for all pupils who took part in the intervention. It was noted that more progress was made by pupils in the mainstream setting, compared to the special school setting. In some cases the pupils saw accelerated progress in the defined areas of need, as well as an increase in other areas used within the pupil profile. In the

mainstream school the majority of children made progress as a result of the intervention and this was attributed to the consistency of the delivery with which the lead member of staff approached the project. The special school setting saw less progress as a whole. This could be attributed to the more complex learning needs of the children who took longer to adopt and acquire new skills. The programme was implemented as a whole class approach which raised the profile of the intervention for the adults and pupils. However, the programme needed more time to embed itself as a routine for the pupils to benefit from the intervention. Since completing the pilot, the special school have taken the programme on board as part of a whole school approach and have seen a range of benefits since.

Furthermore, the special school had a much smaller cohort of children, all who required a greater degree of adult support in which to be successful in lessons. This meant that the ability to be able to observe appropriate independent behaviours was less frequent. However, this component of the programme still remains pivotal in its ability to showcase these behaviours in a variety of subject lessons and different environments, ensuring that these behaviour for learning skills can be seen as transferable. As the pilot special school built up the programme and kept track of completed skill cards, they were able to build up a 'bank' of pupils who were becoming more fluent in the skill and used these as pupils who would be suitable to observe. A year after fully implementing the programme, a next step would be to take some pupils who have been successful in acquiring and sustaining these skills to a nearby mainstream primary. This will provide an opportunity to show pupils how these skills can be seen in a mainstream setting and support pupils who could now access mainstream education.

A further implication for the future use of the programme would be in approaches to how the programme is delivered. In the mainstream primary, pupils chosen for the research were all in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. This enabled the school to use funding to provide a Higher Level Teaching Assistant to run the intervention, ensuring that each pupil was timetabled to have an active teaching and observation time. As part of their role, the member of staff, collected the weekly data to ensure they monitored and tracked the use of emerging skills. The monitoring also highlighted which staff were more effective in recognising the behaviour and affirming and recording the frequency of the behaviour on the skill cards.

In contrast, the special school established the programme as a whole class, whole school intervention and included the programme in the school's own self-improvement plan. All staff received initial training in the programme including an explanation of its underlying theory based principles. A display board was used in every classroom to display the pupils' completed skills cards. This helped to ensure pupils knew that staff valued their efforts in

behaviour for learning as having equal importance to efforts made in their academic work. This whole class approach enabled class based staff to actively seek the positive behaviours and provide verbal prompts to remind them of the behaviours being targeted. Staff were able to verbally affirm and record the skill during the whole school day in different situations. This whole school approach allowed the programme to be embedded more quickly and to drive changes towards more positive behaviour across the school.

In this respect, it would be useful for future users to consider their approach to use of the programme. Progress in some form was made by a significant amount of pupils who accessed the programme. However, the special school setting saw wider progress across the school as all staff adopted the new vocabulary in their approach to proactively advocate more positive behaviour as a whole team.

Furthermore, the programme doesn't rely on a material reward system to reinforce behaviour and is purposely designed to use simple adult verbal affirmation to intrinsically reward pupils. The approach requires heavy verbal scaffolding and a commitment from staff to be constantly looking to reinforce new skills that are being developed and focusing on these, rather than old behaviours. This ensures pupils' self-esteem is developed by achieving for themselves, rather than relying on tangible rewards as a measure of being successful. The research conducted suggests that school staff who affirmed and reinforced behaviour on a more consistent basis saw more progress than those who didn't.

In the special school, the skill cards programme was taken on for a whole academic year, enabling staff to see the longevity of the programme and recognise the need for commitment. Staff learnt the skills themselves, using set scripts (agreed in class) to reinforce positive messages to pupils and create consistency of approaches amongst the staff. Over time, this behaviour became embedded by staff. After the research programme ended, the school has continued to see the steady progress of pupils and wider progress of behaviour for learning across the school.

The mainstream pilot, overseen by a single member of staff, saw greater consistencies in the way the intervention was managed and all components of the programme completed for all pupils. However, since in this context the intervention was used with a bespoke group of pupils for a limited time, it didn't have the same impact on staff as it did for the special school.

In conclusion, this research set out to identify the impact of the intervention on pupil's behaviour for learning skills and the factors that affect the successful delivery of the intervention. The authors of this research recognise the small scale nature of the research which was limited to two schools. However, it does identify some factors that affected the

delivery of the programme, its strengths and limitations in relation to pupils engaging in successful behaviour for learning and their capacity to acquire and generalise these skills to a level of fluency and mastery.

School leaders would benefit from reviewing their current practice in how behaviour for learning skills are currently taught and nurtured within their classrooms. It would be beneficial to consider how these skills could be taught alongside current teaching in the classroom, rather than taught in isolation, on a one to one basis, away from the classroom environment. The research suggests that this approach could lead to greater pupil autonomy and independence in relation to behaviour for learning. Such an approach could bring about successful engagement, productivity and progress in the classroom, thereby helping to secure positive outcomes for pupils in relation to long term positive behaviour.

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