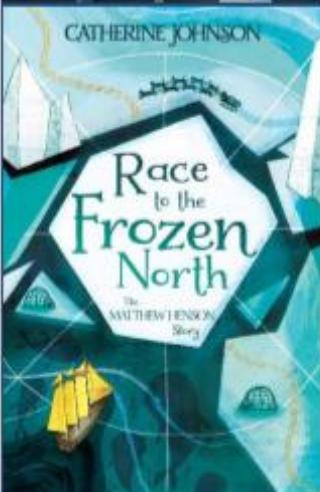
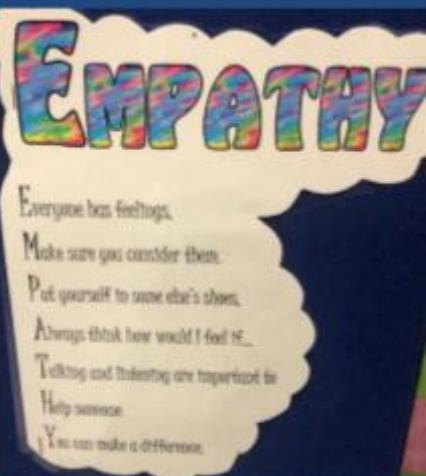




# EmpathyLab

## Report on EmpathyLab's Education Programme in Wales 2019-20



# Report on EmpathyLab's Education Programme in Wales

2019 - 2020

## CONTENTS

### Key Quotations p3

#### 1. Introduction and Background p4-7

- 1.1 About EmpathyLab and the Welsh project
- 1.2 EmpathyLab's generic schools programme
- 1.3 Our theory of change

#### 2. Developing the Schools Programme Further in Wales p8-16

- 2.1 Background and context
- 2.2 Implementation pathway for the cluster
- 2.3 Remodelling the programme in a secondary-school setting
- 2.4 Involving young people
- 2.5 Working with the primary schools
- 2.6 Focus on creating an empathetic transition

#### 3. Evaluation Methodology p17-20

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Project outcomes
- 3.3 Key principles
- 3.4 Methodology

#### 4. Outcomes and Impact p21-36

- 4.1 Impact on pupils' empathy skills and knowledge
- 4.2 Impact on school climate, ethos and strategy
- 4.3 Impact on pupils' enjoyment of reading, through a new empathy emphasis
- 4.4 Impact on pupils' feelings about the transition to secondary school
- 4.5 Other outcomes

#### 5. Conclusions, Reflections and Next Steps p37-41

- 5.1 Conclusions
- 5.2 Reflections
- 5.3 Next Steps

### Acknowledgements & Books p42

### Appendix p43-47

## Key Quotations

*'If everyone used their empathy skills the world would be better because there wouldn't be any more bullies because the bullies would know how people feel when they bully them.'* **Pupil, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'As children, we recognise that attitudes need to change if society is to become safer and happier. The pressures put on us by social media are felt by us all. Some have experienced how nasty and cruel other children can be. We recognise now, through really understanding what it means to be empathetic, how this could change.'*

**Pentrehafod School Year 11 group acting as project advisors**

*'I've been into books all my life and the Family Pack had ideas I'd never have thought of before - so creative.'* **Teacher, Burlais Primary School**

*'I had a lightbulb moment at the first training. I thought, This is everything we want for our school.'* **Assistant Head, Pentrehafod School**

*'Learning about empathy has made me feel happier because I know I can help others.'*

**Pupil, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'Before we learned about empathy, I would just play with my friends on the yard. Now I talk to lots of children and ask if they want to play.'* **Pupil, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'Through EmpathyLab training I now understand how reading can affect the brain for the better. This is very powerful knowledge.'* **Headteacher, Pentrehafod School**

*We've learned about switching from focusing on plot to focusing on character and feelings. It's a massive shift from the understanding of a story to the understanding of people. It makes a huge difference, a culture difference, in our school.'*

**Teacher, Hafod Primary School**

*'We had been looking at the lack of vocabulary and the struggles children have to express themselves. EmpathyLab's approach fits in perfectly with the way we want to move the school forward and develop language and well-being. Being part of the empathy cluster has been a huge asset.'* **Headteacher, Waun Wen Primary School**

*'Teaching assistants are often the ones left to deal with issues on the yard, and they can really see the benefit of the project. They are so pleased to be focusing on something that isn't just academic.'* **Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

## Section 1: Introduction and Background

This evaluation report covers EmpathyLab's work with a cluster of eight schools in Swansea, Wales, from May 2019 to July 2020. The work was funded by Nesta's Future Ready Fund, which seeks to support early-stage, high-potential interventions focused on developing social and emotional skills.

The report explores how EmpathyLab's existing schools programme was adapted both to a secondary school setting and a new Welsh location. Improvements to the organisation's evaluation methodology sought to capture positive impact on:

- Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge
- School strategy, climate and ethos
- Pupils' enjoyment of reading, through a new empathy emphasis
- Pupils' feelings about the transition to secondary school

It is important to note that the year-round, whole-school programme was cut short in March by COVID-19. This meant the loss of nearly five months of teaching, as well as a pivotal staff training and evaluation day.

### 1.1 About EmpathyLab and the Welsh project

Scientific evidence shows that empathy is a learnable skill,<sup>1</sup> and that an immersion in quality literature builds our empathetic understanding of others.<sup>2</sup> When EmpathyLab was founded in 2014, we set out to explore the educational implications of the research, and how to make the most of the connection between reading and empathy.

From 2014-18 the organisation experimented with different interventions and this has led to the development of three which are proving effective in building empathy: a national Empathy Day; an annual Read for Empathy book collection, and an empathy education programme in schools. Our [2016-18 evaluation report](#) outlines the impact of our work with eleven pioneer schools.

Each of these interventions has had substantial interest and impact, and EmpathyLab has now been established as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company with an ambitious three-year development plan. Our vision is to empower the rising generation to drive a new empathy movement, building a more caring world.

In 2019 Nesta announced details of its Future Ready Fund. There were 300 applicants and EmpathyLab was delighted to be one of ten successful organisations chosen for demonstrating '*great potential to expand their work, learn more about how it develops the target social and emotional skills in young people aged 11-18, and achieve long-term, sustainable impact.*' Programme partnership and funding also came from Education through Regional Working (ERW, a regional consortia school-improvement body) and the Books Council for Wales.

<sup>1</sup> Baron-Cohen, S., *Zero Degrees of Empathy*. London: Penguin, 2011

<sup>2</sup> [scientificamerican.com/article/novel-finding-reading-literary-fiction-improves-empathy/](http://scientificamerican.com/article/novel-finding-reading-literary-fiction-improves-empathy/);  
[bbc.com/future/article/20190523-does-reading-fiction-make-us-better-people](http://bbc.com/future/article/20190523-does-reading-fiction-make-us-better-people)

The funding enabled EmpathyLab to further develop its existing year-round schools' programme, rolling out to eight completely new Swansea schools – seven primaries and one secondary school – working with 2,900 young people in the Pentrehafod cluster. EmpathyLab's 2016–18 work had been largely with primary schools, and the Swansea work aimed to develop a strengthened secondary-school intervention.

There was an unprecedented opportunity to test the programme's value and impact in the context of the new Curriculum for Wales 2022. The curriculum<sup>3</sup> mentions empathy explicitly thirty-five times. Subject areas have been merged into six priority Areas of Learning Experience (AoLE), one of which is Health and Well-being. This means that empathy comes into sharp focus, with its role in children's well-being.

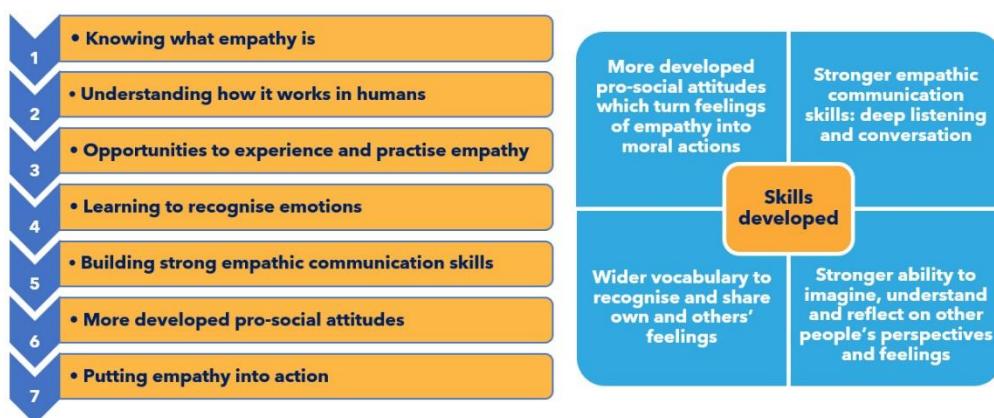
## 1.2 EmpathyLab's generic schools programme

EmpathyLab has developed a generic schools programme – called Empathy Explorers in primary schools and Empathy Activists<sup>4</sup> in secondary schools – which can be adapted to different settings. The next section shows how this was further developed in the Swansea setting.

The programme is a multi-layered intervention aiming for a 'triple-win'.



It uses an immersion in stories and social action to take pupils on an empathy journey, developing four targeted empathy skills.

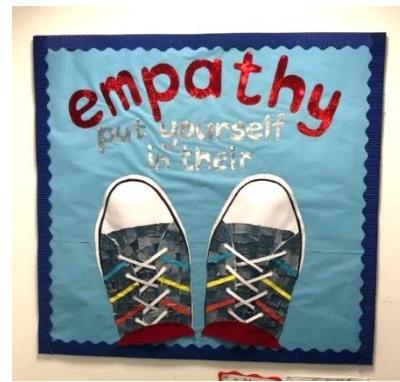


<sup>3</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/afca43eb-5c50-4846-9c2d-0d56fbffba09/curriculum-for-wales-guidance-120320.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> 'Empathy Activists' was adopted following work with a Year 11 advisory group from Pentrehafod School as part of this project.

Stories are used as an empathy-building tool, based on research showing that reading is an effective way to build our understanding of others<sup>5</sup> and gives children a safe way to practise social skills.<sup>6</sup> As one leading researcher says: 'The empathy we feel for book characters wires our brains to have the same sensitivity towards real people.' (Raymond Marr, York University, Toronto).

Senior staff join a learning group using a shared evaluation framework. EmpathyLab provides training, group facilitation, bespoke consultancy and creative resources to support the intervention's integration into School Development Plans. These help Senior Leadership Teams and teachers integrate a much sharper empathy focus into all aspects of the curriculum and school life and develop an empathy-focused pedagogy.



The whole community spends several weeks embedding a common understanding/language around empathy and pupils are taught the science, meaning and importance of empathy (in a sequence of whole school/year-group assemblies/class and tutor time). EmpathyLab teaching tools and approaches are implemented throughout the school, especially into schools' existing literacy and literature work. This overcomes the 'bolt-on' problem which so often bedevils social/emotional learning programmes.

Participants develop empathy skills through:

- Participating in whole-school/year-group sessions that teach empathy's meaning, science and importance.
- Working with teachers who:
  - model empathetic communication skills and relationships.
  - use an empathy pedagogy, for instance using high-quality empathy-building texts and focus book-talk on exploring characters and feelings, more than plot.
- Reading and talking about books, with a focus on book characters and learning to see other perspectives through story-telling.
- Engaging with empathy themes - like refugees - through reading, research, visits and pupil-planned social action<sup>7</sup>.

Research shows the links between empathy and our impulse for social justice,<sup>8</sup> and that participation in decision-making enables children to learn the skills needed to be active citizens.<sup>9</sup> Empathy Explorers has a strong pupil-led focus, encouraging children to put empathy into action.

Finally, EmpathyLab's work in schools has found that a systematic empathy focus helps increase pupils' enjoyment of reading, which multiple research studies have shown is a vital factor in their progress in literacy and their life outcomes. A number of factors come into play.

<sup>5</sup> Baron-Cohen, S., *Zero Degrees of Empathy*. London: Penguin, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Oatley, K., 'Fiction: simulation of social worlds', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8(1), 2016

<sup>7</sup> [theguardian.com/teacher-network/2018/jun/01/build-empathy-classroom-lab-refugees-loneliness](https://theguardian.com/teacher-network/2018/jun/01/build-empathy-classroom-lab-refugees-loneliness)

<sup>8</sup> Decety, J. & Cowell, J., 'Empathy, justice and moral behavior', *AJOB Neuroscience* 6(3), 2015

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, K., *Children's voices: pupil leadership in primary schools*, National College for School Leadership, 2004

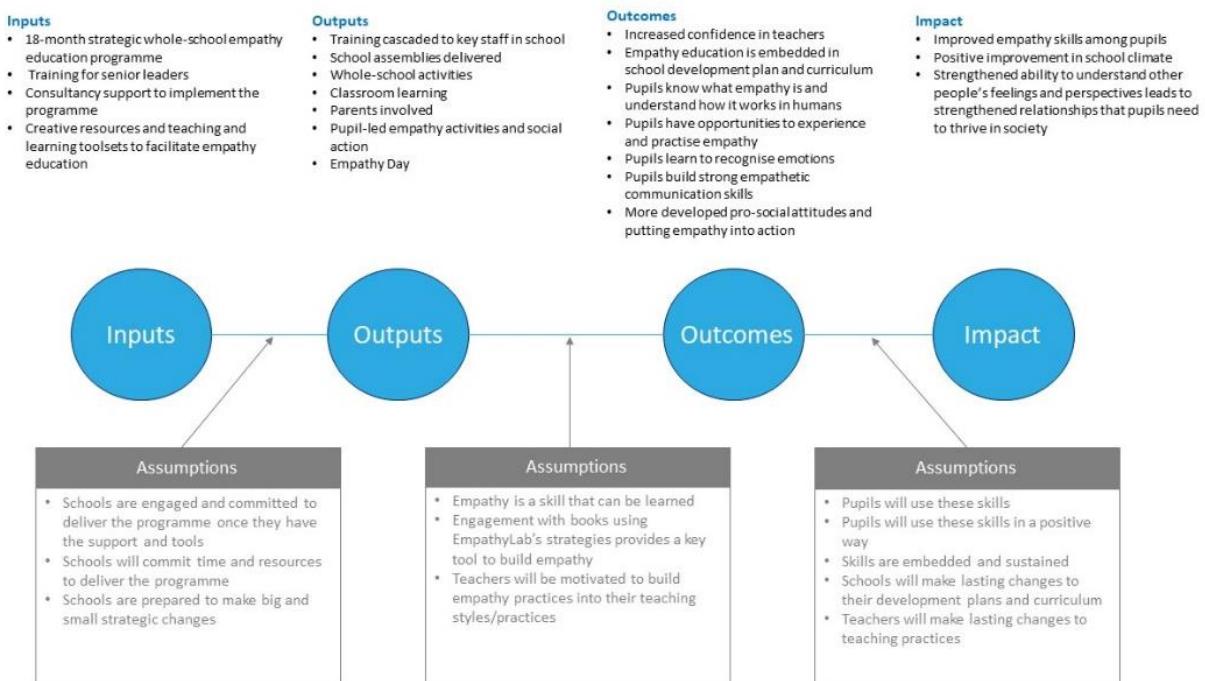
- Emphasis on characters and feelings increases children's emotional connection with the text.
- With empathy in mind, teachers aim to understand children's reading experiences and preferences as part of a wider emphasis on empathy towards the whole child.
- The programme's emphasis on fun, creative activities engages a broad range of pupils.
- A focus on books that inspire child-led social action. Themes such as refugees or empathy for the earth helps children see a purpose to their reading.
- Encouragement for teachers to read aloud regularly and expressively, including at secondary level. This overcomes problems of low literacy and creates opportunities for empathetic communication and insights. Children enjoy being part of a community of readers.
- The use of empathy-rich picture books at all levels, including secondary. Their accessibility and emotional impact increases enjoyment of reading.

## EmpathyLab's criteria for empathy-rich books

Teachers are supported to increase their confidence in choosing suitable books.

- General/overall: high-quality writing/illustrations with expertly crafted characters that readers care about. Books which help explore characters' feelings and motivations.
- Challenge tribal thinking: books explore themes about building understanding between individuals and communities.
- Support development of key empathy skills: perspective-taking (e.g. through different characters' points of view); emotion recognition/vocabulary; active listening; ability to put empathy into action.
- Tackle key empathy issues of the day: e.g. refugees, homelessness, loneliness.
- Provide insight into other challenging life circumstances: e.g. bereavement, mental illness, disability.

## 1.3 Our theory of change



## Section 2: Developing the Schools Programme Further in Wales

### 2.1 Background and context

Nesta's Future Ready Fund supported EmpathyLab to work with a cluster of schools in Swansea's former copper district. The Pentrehafod cluster consists of one secondary and seven primaries serving an Area of Multiple Deprivation. Between 23% and 48% of children in the schools are eligible for free school meals.

School	Number on roll (March 2020)
Pentrehafod School (Secondary)	1035 (419 in Y7 & Y8)
Brynhafod Primary	463
Burlais Primary	550
Clwyd Community Primary	326
Gwyrosydd Primary	437
Hafod Primary	240
Plasmawr Primary	190
Waun Wen Primary	212

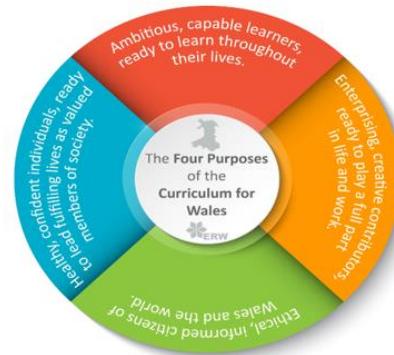
The fund is for work with 11-18 year olds, and EmpathyLab especially targeted pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8. This work was set in the context of a whole-school programme, following research guidance that interventions tackling social and emotional skills need to be approached as a whole-school enterprise.

### Curriculum for Wales 2022

The opportunity to work with the Pentrehafod cluster came at a pivotal point, as the new Welsh curriculum was being implemented. The partnership was built through an introduction from Professor Robin Banerjee, Head of Psychology at the University of Sussex. He is an expert advisor to the Welsh Government and worked with the teachers writing the Health and Wellbeing AoLE. He also advises ERW (the regional school improvement body) and EmpathyLab.

The overarching vision for the new curriculum is driven by Four Purposes,<sup>10</sup> one of which states that '*All our children and young people will be healthy, confident individuals who are building their mental and emotional well being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy*'.

There are six Areas of Learning Experience, one of which is Health and Well-being, and a cross-curricular approach



<sup>10</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/the-four-purposes-of-the-curriculum-for-wales.pdf>

that fits perfectly with EmpathyLab's model of focusing on four empathy skills relevant across all subject areas and exploring what building an empathetic school means for school culture and ethos. The curriculum's emphasis on 'authentic learning contexts' makes it easier for schools to adopt EmpathyLab's social-action approach (e.g. focusing on an issue such as refugees or homelessness).

## Schools' motivation to participate



The Pentrehafod cluster was motivated to participate by both the curriculum developments and concerns about pupils' attitudes, skills and behaviour. This made EmpathyLab's 'triple-win' framework particularly attractive.

The secondary school cited a developing 'corridor culture' that showed a lack of an empathetic mindset. *'The internet and social media are causing a lack of understanding and consideration for others' feelings.'* (Assistant Head), while in the primary schools, there were concerns about children having an egocentric mentality: *'Many pupils are struggling to take responsibility for their*

*actions by deflecting blame onto others. There are often conflicts between pupils which impact on readiness to learn.'* (Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School). Many of the children do not have opportunities to travel, visit the arts or meet people with different life experiences.

EmpathyLab uses books and characters to help children share and understand feelings and learn about other people's experiences and perspectives. This emphasis also fosters reading for pleasure, allowing all pupils to feel more involved, whatever their reading age. The shared activity can lead to a kinder, more inclusive classroom.

The cluster schools wanted to increase reading for pleasure, since research powerfully shows its link to improving literacy skills and life chances. Pentrehafod School's literacy levels on entry are predominantly very weak: Year 7 data indicates 63% of pupils are below chronological age and 38% below functional literacy. While some parents are hugely engaged in supporting their child's reading, there are some issues across the cluster. Teachers are concerned about limited access to literature at home, low parental involvement in children's reading progress and poor modelling of language.

## 2.2 Implementation pathway for the cluster

EmpathyLab's programme consists of six phases.

### Phase 1: Laying Foundations

Several months were taken to ensure the approach was strategically integrated in key school plans, policies, values and even performance-management frameworks. This preparation period also ensured the crucial involvement of governors. Each school appointed an EmpathyLab Lead - in the secondary school this was the Assistant Head; in each primary the lead was the staff member leading the school's literacy work.

Two audits fed into the planning process, one reflecting on whole-school empathy factors, and one on staff listening skills. Each school then integrated the approach into their School Development Plan, many making it a key priority, and the cluster also developed a shared plan. Each school had a bespoke plan with EmpathyLab.

Many sent information about the programme home or incorporated news of it into parents' evenings.

### Phase 2: Bringing the staff and community on board

Once plans were laid, training began to ensure *all* staff understood the approach and the EmpathyLab tools available to achieve change. This was vital for developing a whole-school common empathy language.

Work began in May 2019 with foundation training for the schools' appointed teams, whose job it then was to cascade to all staff. The EmpathyLab Lead in each school planned training using the CPD resources. From the start, there was a strongly positive reaction to the programme and foundation training.

Further EmpathyLab training sessions in September deepened staff knowledge and supported the use of the programme's resources and evaluation framework. Feedback from the secondary school was striking - *all* staff, not just those using literature as part of everyday subject teaching, were starting to see the relevance.

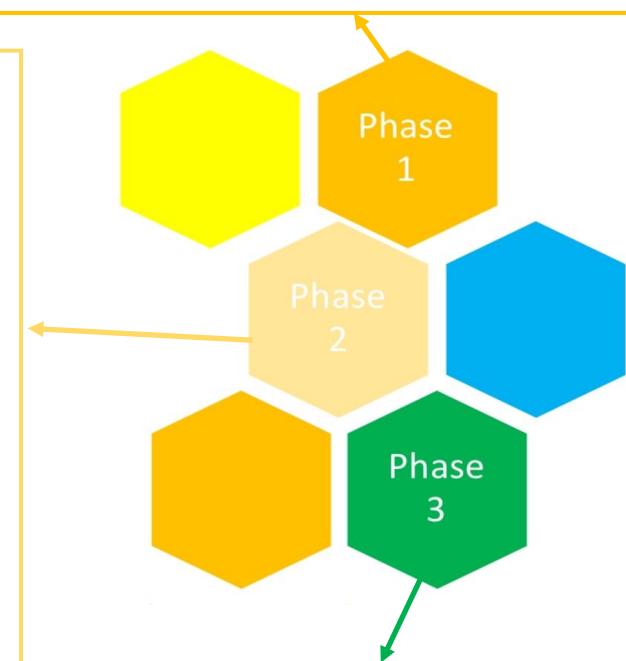
Staff sharing and evidence-collection tools were put in place - e.g. a staffroom borrowing library of empathy books, an 'Empathy Spots' log of useful teaching ideas, experiences and impact evidence.

**"Fantastic day. Inspiring ideas. Loved the science behind it all."**

**"Empathy is the root of social change and revolution."**

**"Powerful explanation of the difference between empathy and sympathy. Being there for someone, not just looking on."**

**"The positivity of the approach is great, and looking at linked books especially useful."**



### Phase 3: Implementation/teaching children

After the baselining of pupils' skills, teaching about empathy could begin. From November 2019 staff used EmpathyLab tools in assemblies about empathy (whole school in primaries and year group in the secondary school). Children learned what it means, how it works in humans, why it is so important and how it differs from sympathy or kindness. Assemblies also offered empathy experiences through literature.

From November to March there were regular workshops/classroom sessions in which children could discuss and explore further. The approach was then integrated into a range of whole-school and classroom contexts, with empathy-rich texts as the springboard.

## Phase 4: Pupil-led work

Wherever possible the work was pupil-led, in big or small ways. Pentrehafod School created a Year 11 group of advisors; children at Clwyd Community Primary School made videos for empathy assemblies. Plasmari Primary School created a group of *Empathy Spotters* who located empathy-rich books around the school, and created a new section in the school library. They also led whole school assemblies, celebrating empathetic behaviour from staff or pupils, and led sessions for parents explaining the school's empathy focus.

The whole cluster focused on creating a more empathetic transition from KS2 to KS3, and to support this brought together Year 6 representatives from each primary student council and from the secondary school parliament. See 2.6 for more detail.

Many of the programme's pupil-led aspects were interrupted by the lockdown - these included Empathy Bookspotters (children identifying and recommending empathy-boosting books to their peers). A limited version of the Empathy Awards scheme was possible however, with children voting online for the most empathetic book characters during the week of Empathy Day (illustrated below).

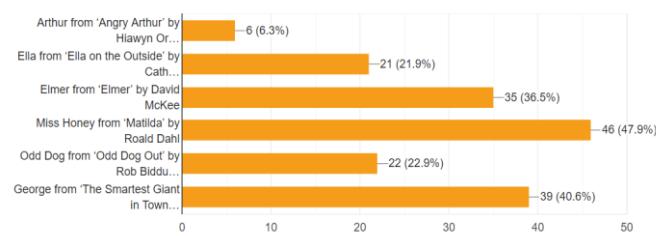


WINNER

1st place

Which characters do you think deserve an Empathy Award? (You can choose up to three)

96 responses



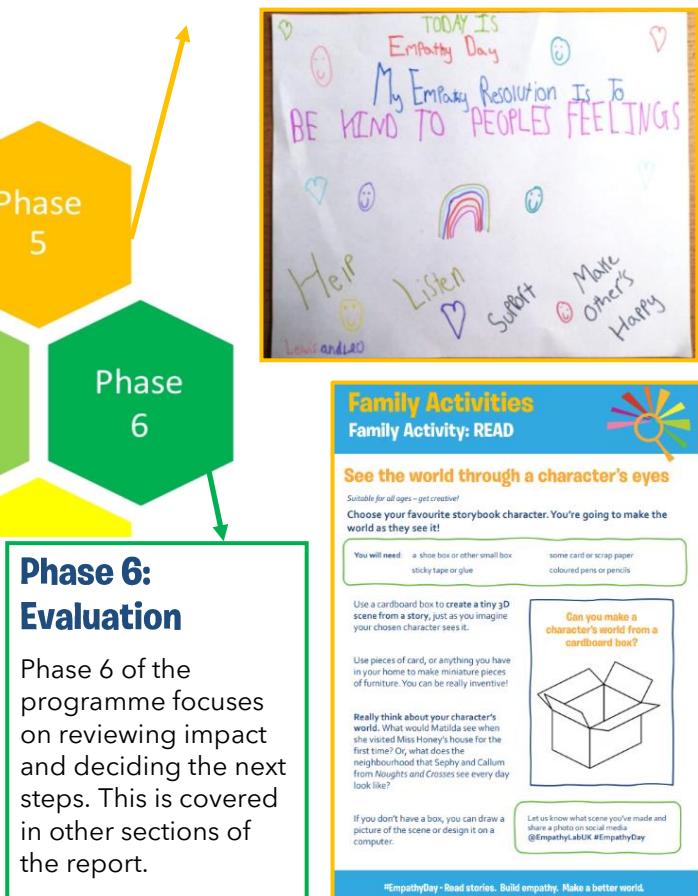
## Phase 5: Putting empathy into action

Elements of Phase 5 were being planned before lockdown, but got cut short. Having learned about empathy, and read books about topics like homelessness and refugees, staff and pupils were motivated by the idea of putting empathy into action. The emphasis here was on deeply empathising with the experiences of those in challenging life circumstances, feeling a sense of solidarity, and basing action on what would really help.

Several primaries used *The Last Chip* to explore homelessness. The secondary school worked extensively with *The Day War Came*, a powerful picture book about the refugee experience. A cluster-wide sleep-out was being planned, with the aim of facilitating an empathy experience.

After lockdown, some limited empathy learning was possible, especially using Empathy Day activities. One of the day's calls to action was for children to make posters with 'Empathy Resolutions', and the cluster rose to the challenge magnificently.

Empathy Day also provided an opportunity to engage families who were at home, using a specially created Family Pack with simple, character-based activities.



Phase 4

Phase 5

Phase 6

Phase 6: Evaluation

**Family Activities**  
Family Activity: READ

See the world through a character's eyes

Choose your favourite storybook character. You're going to make the world as they see it!

You will need: a shoe box or other small box  
sticky tape or glue  
some card or scrap paper  
coloured pens or pencils

Use a cardboard box to create a tiny 3D scene from a story, just as you imagine your chosen character sees it.

Use pieces of card, or anything you have in your home to make miniature pieces of furniture. You can be really inventive!

Really think about your character's world. What would Matilda see when she visited Miss Honey's house for the first time? Or, what does the neighbourhood that Sephy and Callum from *Noughts and Crosses* see every day look like?

If you don't have a box, you can draw a picture of the scene or design it on a computer.

#EmpathyDay - Read stories. Build empathy. Make a better world.

## 2.3 Remodelling the programme in a secondary school setting

A key aspect of EmpathyLab's work was to test the application in a secondary school setting of what, up to 2019, had been a largely primary-focused programme.

### Challenges in remodelling for a secondary school included:

- The greater complexities of a secondary community in which subject boundaries and priorities allow less scope for cross-curriculum work. In primary schools it is easier to take empathy as a theme and treat it in a cross curricular way - this also applies to empathy-focused themes such as refugees.
- Ensuring all staff, whatever their subject, see empathy education as relevant and important.
- How best to follow on from assemblies about empathy with the right timetable space to give children the opportunity to continue work on understanding and experiencing empathy.
- In secondary schools, teachers have far less time with individual pupils and there is less continuity in teacher-pupil relationships. This makes it harder to implement natural, ongoing empathy work and discussion.
- Story-based literature is less in use throughout the curriculum.



### Structures for teaching empathy

To respond to these challenges, Pentrehafod School experimented with a new structure for planning schemes of empathy work, taking English teachers and Year 7 pastoral staff offsite for a training day. The English Scheme of Learning was rewritten to include empathy-rich literature texts.

Tutor group arrangements for Years 7 and 8 were changed, to create reflective time and emotional space for work following up assemblies introducing empathy. English staff became tutor time leaders, to provide extra support for the approach of building empathy through literature.



Overall, the school planned ten weekly interventions for the Years 7 and 8. These included tutor time, library sessions and subject lessons. The central focus for empathy teaching was in Language, Literacy & Communication lessons, with other key subject areas being humanities, expressive arts, health & well-being, plus targeted speech & language lessons.

Ongoing support for staff was planned through a variety of structures, which

included the sharing of good practice through twilight sessions. Each of the school's six Area of Learning Experience leads presented at meetings and started to build authentic cross-curricular links; working together to develop resources.

The teaching of pupils about the nature and importance of empathy started in November. The Assistant Head led a 30-minute assembly for each year group.

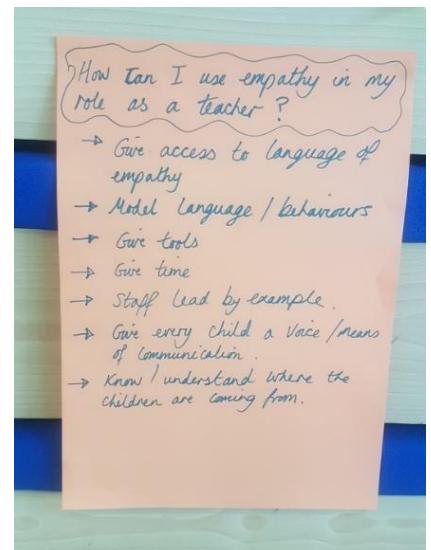
Follow-up tutor-group sessions were developed to build empathy, create better listeners and improve vocabulary. Two texts were used - Nicola Davies's *The Day War Came* and Steven Camden's *Everything All at Once*, a poetry book that includes a wonderful poem about starting secondary school (called 'First Day').

## Changing staff mindset and skills

The relevance of the approach was obvious for subject areas such as English and Humanities. But training days stressed that this concerned everyone, and this started to be reflected in staff responses, resulting in the following commitments:

- *be positive empathy role models ourselves.*
- *change classroom language to be empathy focused.*
- *staff being present, not just disciplining pupils.*
- *need to learn to understand rather than judge.*
- *develop form tutor/pupil relationships.*
- *more opportunities for talk-based interventions.*
- *make more use of reading empathy-rich books.*

But there was some distance to be travelled. Because the approach uses literature to build empathy, some subject teachers felt the work was not relevant to them. To address this, the school formed a cross-curricular working party to increase whole-school engagement in implementing the programme, encouraging every member of staff to see it as their responsibility to model and support the development of empathy skills.



A workshop helped to articulate the working party's remit. A whole-staff mind map was created, identifying issues for staff to work on, including a common language around empathy, and lanyards to prompt staff. It was decided that listening would be a priority, and each teacher could track active listening skills through the school's tracking system. Empathy was added to the school's rewards system.

The school seized a range of opportunities to apply an empathy focus and get staff from key areas of the curriculum working together. Having been approached by the local authority to lead Holocaust Memorial Day, leaders in English, Humanities and Expressive Arts worked together to present an emotional and empathetic service, involving 100 pupils.

## 2.4 Involving young people

*'As children, we recognise the need for attitudes to change if society is to become safer and happier. The pressures put on us by social media are felt by us all. Some have unfortunately experienced how nasty and cruel other children can be. We recognise now, through really understanding what it means to be empathetic, how this could change'* **Year 11 advisory group, presenting at staff training**

EmpathyLab aims to harness the powerful voices of young people to help lead empathy-focused work in schools. Pentrehafod School asked a group of Year 11 students to help guide the work. They presented at an all-staff INSET day and described their vision. They felt the student parliament should focus on changes that could build a more caring and empathetic community. The head girl understood straight away the impact EmpathyLab could have and offered her support, saying she wished it had been happening when she was in Year 7.

The advisory group provided practical consultancy on the programme's look and feel in a secondary school. They looked at the Empathy Explorer designs and chose to rename the programme 'Empathy Activists'.

*'We got involved in the EmpathyLab work in an advisory capacity. We could see that the resources would be brilliant for younger children but that in a comp they would not go down well! Imagine telling a stroppy Year 9 boy to put his Empathy Explorers glasses on and walk round the school . . . We decided the term Empathy Explorers was too young, too much like Dora the Explorer! We decided to use the social-action-and-change aspect of EmpathyLab as our focus and so turned this into Empathy Activists, giving the power and skills to make change in our society.'* **Year 11 advisory team**



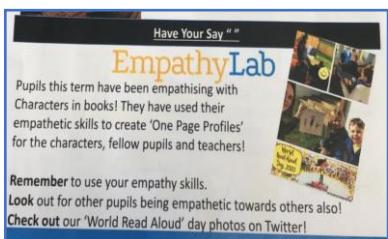
They also suggested changing the name of a key programme element. In primary schools the whole school works over several months on a scheme to present *Empathy Awards* to book characters showing exceptional empathy. Winners are announced on Empathy Day. At secondary level these awards have now been renamed *The Empathys*, to be more like the Oscars, glamorously celebratory.

The young advisors picked up on EmpathyLab's emphasis on exploring feelings and understanding others through book characters. They recommended that more literature be introduced lower down the school, as this would improve vocabulary for emotions and empathetic writing. This led to practical suggestions for resources that EmpathyLab developed to help explore characters and their feelings in greater depth (mind maps, Top Trumps-style cards, etc.) Literature was also integrated into humanities and expressive arts to develop cultural capital and serve as a stimulus for creativity.

## 2.5 Working with the primary schools



### CLWYD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL - AN EMPATHYLAB YEAR IN PICTURES



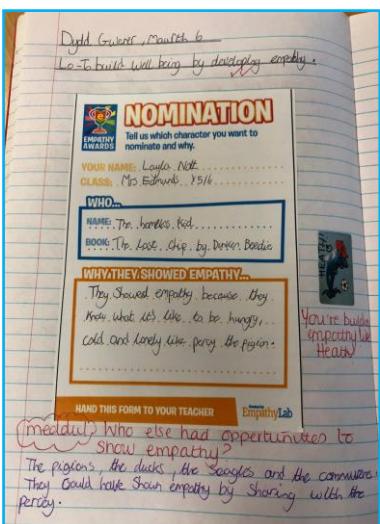
EmpathyLab display materials became commonplace around school, allowing pupils to become familiar with the Explorers programme.



Certificates were awarded each week in assembly as pupils from across school were recognised for showing empathy.

Pupils became Empathy Bookspotters, with Year 6 children taking time in the school day to read with younger pupils.

Parents were kept informed of empathy-boosting activities through the school newsletter.



EmpathyLab kitbag items helped Year 5/6 pupils to complete activities such as 'The Empathy Awards', allowing pupils to engage with empathy-boosting characters in books.



EmpathyLab resources and activities were adapted for pupils to complete with their families at home during lockdown.

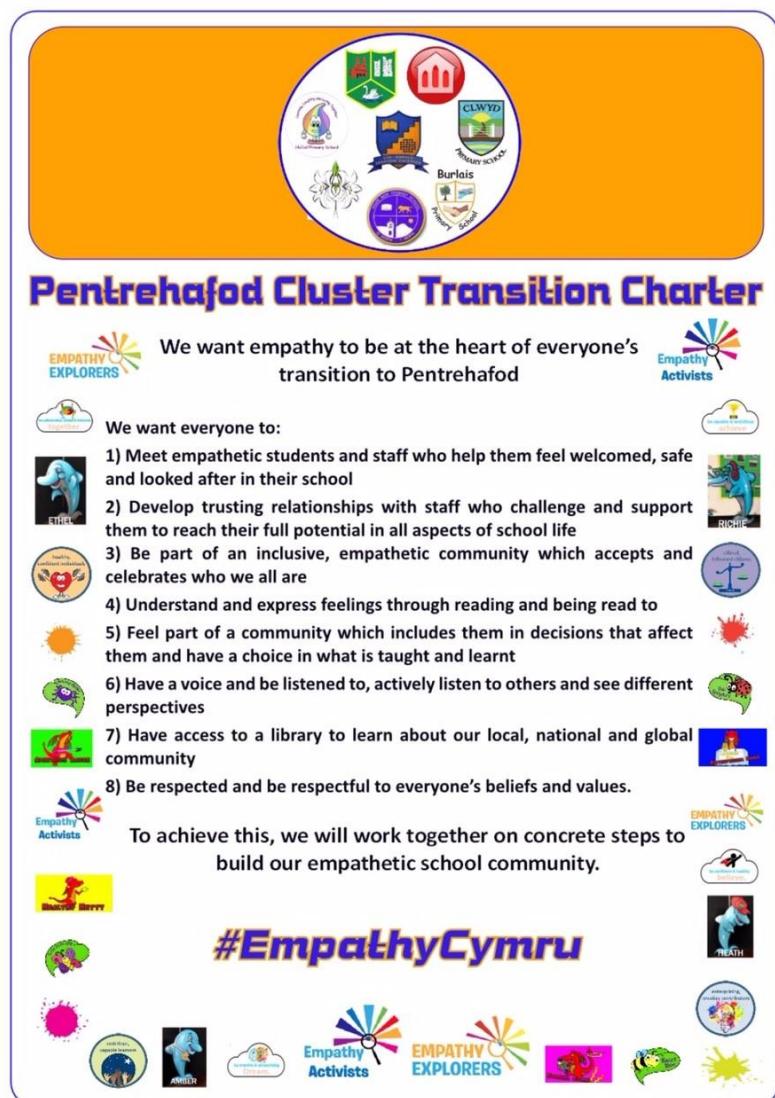
## 2.6 Focus on creating an empathetic transition

The cluster created a new structure for pupil-led work on how an empathy focus could help their peers feel safer about the transition from KS2 to KS3. Year 6 representatives from each primary student council met with the secondary-school parliament (Years 7, 8 and 10) on a monthly basis from November to March.

Pupils shared what they had done as a result of the empathy assemblies, what was changing in their school and what was needed to create a more empathetic transition. To explore feelings about transition more deeply, they opted to use Steven Camden's poem *First Day*, reading it in a meeting and discussing their reactions. The secondary students shared memories of their first day. Follow-up work to be carried out in each school was planned in order to help pupils feel more positive about transition.

This involved sharing the poem as well as books exploring transitions, then creating illustrations to express their feelings. In Pentrehafod expressive arts lessons, older students were going to create artwork and monologues about people's feelings on their first day. The intention - interrupted by the lockdown - was to have a wall display with all their work, and an assembly with the Head of Year 7 reading the poem and sharing the work. This would help them understand others' feelings, realise their own were normal and open discussions with their new form tutors.

To bring clarity and focus, the group decided to build a transition charter. This would be used by staff and pupils in each school to guide their approach to ensuring every child experienced an empathetic transition. Despite COVID-19 interruptions, the charter was produced and launched on Empathy Day.



The graphic features a central circular emblem containing several school logos, including 'CLWYD', 'BURLAIS', and 'PENRHAFOD'. Below the emblem, the text 'Pentrehafod Cluster Transition Charter' is displayed in a stylized font. To the left, the 'EMPATHY EXPLORERS' logo is shown with the tagline 'We want empathy to be at the heart of everyone's transition to Pentrehafod'. To the right, the 'Empathy Activists' logo is shown with the tagline 'We want everyone to:'. A numbered list of 8 steps follows, each accompanied by a small icon: 1) Meet empathetic students and staff who help them feel welcomed, safe and looked after in their school; 2) Develop trusting relationships with staff who challenge and support them to reach their full potential in all aspects of school life; 3) Be part of an inclusive, empathetic community which accepts and celebrates who we all are; 4) Understand and express feelings through reading and being read to; 5) Feel part of a community which includes them in decisions that affect them and have a choice in what is taught and learnt; 6) Have a voice and be listened to, actively listen to others and see different perspectives; 7) Have access to a library to learn about our local, national and global community; 8) Be respected and be respectful to everyone's beliefs and values. Below this, the text 'To achieve this, we will work together on concrete steps to build our empathetic school community.' is present, along with the '#EmpathyCymru' hashtag. The bottom of the graphic is decorated with various small icons representing different schools and themes.

## Section 3: Evaluation Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

Nesta's Future Ready Fund aims to help grantees improve their evidence base and strengthen evaluation processes. It was valuable to work in a cohort of Nesta grantees, so that our empathy focus benefited from a wider focus on developing social and emotional skills. Support was available from programme partners at the University of Sussex's Psychology Department, who acted as critical friends, helping us build a framework with a rich mix of quantitative and qualitative measures. They also helped scrutinise quantitative data and offered secondary analysis.

The funding enabled EmpathyLab to test the application of standardised empathy-skills measurements for the first time and further develop qualitative data and insights. We tested the integration of quantitative and qualitative data into a robust triangulated evaluation framework, and used creative child-focused evaluation techniques. Our long-term ambition is to develop a nationally recognised framework that we can use for further work, and possibly license for others to use.

Our overall aim is to drive a new empathy-education movement by embedding and mainstreaming innovative practices. By using the evaluation process to understand what's working – and what isn't – we can develop our organisation by building on this learning.

### 3.2 Project outcomes

After consulting with our Welsh partners and Nesta, we proposed four target outcomes - positive impact on:

- Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge
- School strategy, climate and ethos
- Pupils' enjoyment of reading, through a new empathy emphasis
- Pupils' feelings about the transition to secondary school

These were formalised as part of the Pentrehafod cluster's plan and agreed by senior leaders from each school. The teacher lead at each school was the main point of contact for delivering the evaluation data, working with EmpathyLab's project manager.

### 3.3 Key principles

In addition to these target outcomes, we used an action-research approach to explore programme developments and improvements, especially how to translate the Empathy Explorers primary programme into a secondary-school setting.

The evaluation work was driven by key principles:

- **Robust practice:** for the first time EmpathyLab would be using internationally recognised standardised measures, endorsed by Nesta's university partner. This would produce robust quantitative data.

- **Context:** the evaluation framework was designed to reflect both the capacity and research capability of the small EmpathyLab team and the teaching staff who would be doing the evaluation work.
- **Sustainability:** it was important that the evaluation tasks could be replicated in future partner schools.
- **Relevance:** we tried to use tools that were genuinely useful for teachers. We rely on our partner schools to gather impact evidence, so for future replication it is important that the evaluation activities fitted into a normal school day as far as possible.

### 3.4 Methodology

The evaluation framework consisted of a comprehensive range of qualitative and quantitative measures, running throughout the duration of the project. This collection of data was supported by phone calls, visits and meetings with key staff throughout the project to keep the evaluation work on track and reflect on its efficacy.

What	Outcomes these measures were expected to test	How
Quantitative measures		
Empathy Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (EmQue-CA): survey of 18 questions testing pupils' affective and cognitive empathy and prosocial motivation (see Appendix) Years 4, 6, 7, 8	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge</li> </ul>	Comparing pupils' reported empathetic feelings at the start and end of the intervention
Reading for Pleasure survey: developed by the Open University to establish children's reading habits motivation (see Appendix) Years 4, 6, 7, 8	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' enjoyment of reading, through a new empathy emphasis</li> </ul>	Comparing pupils' reported enjoyment of reading for pleasure at the start and end of the intervention
Emotion Thermometer: emotional response checklist, charting feelings about transition to secondary school Year 6	Monitoring how an empathy intervention supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 6 pupils feeling safer about the transition to secondary school</li> </ul>	Allowing pupils to safely express emotions about transition, comparing feelings at the start and end of the intervention
SLT/teacher self-report questionnaire: surveying overall responses to programme impact	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge</li> <li>• School strategy, climate and ethos</li> </ul>	Enabling teachers to reflect and consider the differences the programme has made
Qualitative measures		
Whole-class empathy definitions: 'before' and 'after' classroom discussions about pupils' understanding of the concept of empathy	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge</li> </ul>	Comparing the depth of pupils' understanding of empathy at the start and end of the project

Qualitative measures (cont)		
Emotional vocabulary: 'before' and 'after' listing of synonyms pupils can provide for a selection of five emotion words	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge</li> </ul>	Measuring changes in recognition and understanding of emotions - crucial for empathy skills
Empathy conversations: teachers run a small focus group of pupils, discussing understanding of empathy	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge</li> </ul>	Measuring any deepening of pupils' understanding of empathy, across the duration of the project
Change stories: teachers' observations on the empathetic behaviours of selected pupils	Positive change/development in Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge	Short case studies providing exemplification of the programme's impact
Empathy Spots: teachers collect key pieces of pupil empathy-focused work	Positive change/development in Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge	Physical evidence of work showing growing empathetic skills
Focus groups - feedback from staff, pupils and parents	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge</li> </ul> School strategy, climate and ethos	End-of-project discussion groups, teasing out richer evidence of changes
Letter to self - Year Six pupils write letter exploring their feelings about transition, then read/reflect at the end of the year.	Monitoring how an empathy intervention supports Year 6 pupils feeling safer about the transition to secondary school	Providing evidence on whether empathy focus has helped pupils feel more confident about transition
Headteacher and Empathy Lead end-of-project evaluations	Positive change/development in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge</li> <li>School strategy, climate, ethos</li> </ul> Pupils' enjoyment of reading, through a new empathy emphasis	Enabling Headteachers and project leads to reflect and comment on the impact of the programme and identify next steps

## Limitations (before COVID-19)

There were a number of limitations to the research, which EmpathyLab intends to address as the organisation grows and attracts further funding.

- Lack of control group: in future work we aim to assess how pupils who had not participated in the programme would act as a comparison.
- Timing: there were occasions when teacher workload meant that scheduled tasks were delayed because of clashes with busy parts of the school year.
- Primary focus: the evaluation approaches EmpathyLab had used before had been developed with experts at primary level. At secondary level, the different teacher-pupil working relationship made it harder to get rich qualitative pupil feedback.

## The COVID effect

Our plans for delivering and evaluating the programme were profoundly affected by COVID-19. Empathy education with pupils began in the first week of November and

schools were shut on 20 March. This meant we lost almost five months of intense empathy learning, including key programme planks such as whole-school Empathy Awards, a pivotal staff training day and valuable opportunities for evaluation.

The schools found that for many (but not all) pupils, engagement and learning during lockdown was very limited.

From the start of the pandemic we kept in touch with our lead evaluation staff, establishing which evaluative methods would still be possible. The key areas (during the lockdown and the limited school return from June) affecting the evaluation process were:

- The loss of teaching time, affecting the extent to which pupils experienced the interventions.
- Reduced ability to collect end-of-year quantitative data due to reduced school attendance, and limited teacher-pupil contact during the months of lockdown.
- On return to school, staff were often not with their original pupil groupings, and could not meaningfully conduct evaluation processes such as group discussions about the meaning and importance of empathy.
- Barriers to collecting evidence from display materials and classwork as pupils and staff often had no access to their classroom spaces.
- Ethical guidance from our partners the University of Sussex about the need to avoid placing pressure on staff already stretched to the limit by the demands of the pandemic.

In response, we put the following measures in place:

- An emergency working party to consider what we could practically hope to achieve.
- Increased digital interaction (e.g. online focus groups).
- Replacement of any paper-based survey data with digital forms.
- Increased use of photographs and screenshots as evidence.

Frustratingly yet understandably these measures could not in any way deliver the volume and depth of content originally planned for both delivery and evaluation of the programme. However, there is still a substantial body of data from which we can reach at least some conclusions for this report.

## Section 4: Outcomes and Impact

In this section, we present the outcomes and impact seen as a result of the interventions undertaken.

### 4.1 Impact on pupils' empathy skills and knowledge

Qualitative and quantitative data show a substantial impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of empathy, including the four targeted empathy skills.

#### Impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of empathy

The overwhelming majority of teachers (96% at the primary schools and 86% at the secondary school) report that pupils now have a far better understanding of what empathy is, how it works and why it matters.

*'You can now hear pupils using the word empathy in the correct context - both when they are having a conversation with teachers, but also with each other.'* **Teacher, Pentrehafod School**

*'As an English teacher, it is heartening to see a more cross-curricular approach to teaching empathy. This whole-school focus has allowed the exploration of empathy in wider contexts and in form time which, with a Y7 form, was invaluable as a start to the day. My favourite new thing that occurred was when some Y7 students expressed empathy for students in the STF in a way I'd never seen before. It was wonderful. They were also more empathetic to each other and delighted in telling me about each other's empathy and kindness.'* **Teacher, Pentrehafod School**

This was also demonstrated by pupils' responses.

*'If people used their empathy skills there may not be as much violence - there might be a few fights, but not as much. They would feel it when people were hurting . . . If the policeman had felt what George Floyd was feeling, then it wouldn't have happened.'* **Year 6 pupil, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'Empathy means knowing what others are feeling and trying to help them.'* **Year 3 pupil, Plasmari Primary**

*'Empathy is putting yourself in someone else's situation. Sympathy is just pitying them.'* **Year 8 pupil, Pentrehafod School**

## Empathy and stories

**Pupils explain how stories help them learn and practise empathy.**

***'They teach us to understand other people, like new people in our school.'***

***'In Daft Bat [key text in initial teaching about empathy] I learned that even if you look at things differently, you can still learn about what other people mean. You won't understand them unless you try to see their point of view.'***

***'Using books is helpful because it allows us to make our own decisions about situations, rather than having our teacher tell us all the time.'***

### Impact on empathy skills

There were a total of 1100 EmQue-CA surveys taken across the whole age range (Year 4 - Year 8) over three time points: September, when the project was only just beginning in schools (505 pupils); February, when the project had been running in schools for over a term (295 pupils); and July, when schools reopened in Wales (300 pupils). Overall, the quality of the data was good. Children responded reliably and the overall internal consistency of the scale was excellent<sup>11</sup>. The EmQue-CA gives separate scores for total empathy, as well as the three distinct elements: affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and prosocial motivation (empathic concern). This helps us understand which specific aspects of empathy seemed to change over the course of the project.

Detailed analysis focuses on data collected from a matched sample of sixty-six pupils in September and February. Results collected in July need to be treated with more caution due the impact of COVID-19 and are therefore not included here.

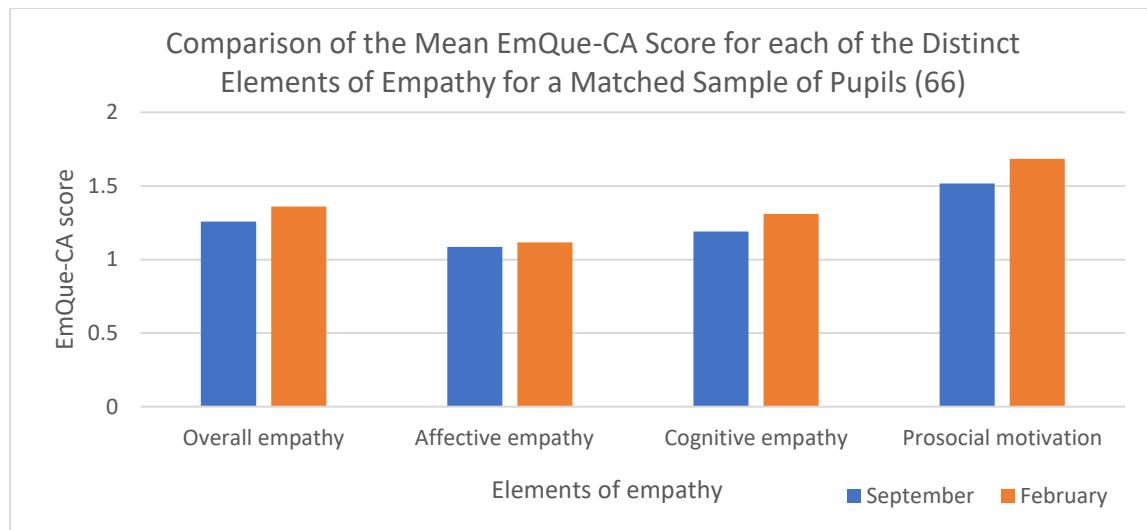
Overall, comparing average scores, the results<sup>12</sup> are promising and encouraging. There were significant improvements<sup>13</sup> for the overall empathy score, as well as for cognitive empathy and prosocial motivation. The overall empathy score rose from an average of 1.26 at the start of the project to 1.36, indicating the comparison was statistically significant with a small to medium effect size. The cognitive empathy score significantly improved from 1.19 at the start of the project to 1.31, and the prosocial motivation score significantly improved from 1.52 to 1.69. These are also both small to medium effect sizes. There was no significant difference for the affective empathy score but there was an improvement in the right direction from 1.09 to 1.11.

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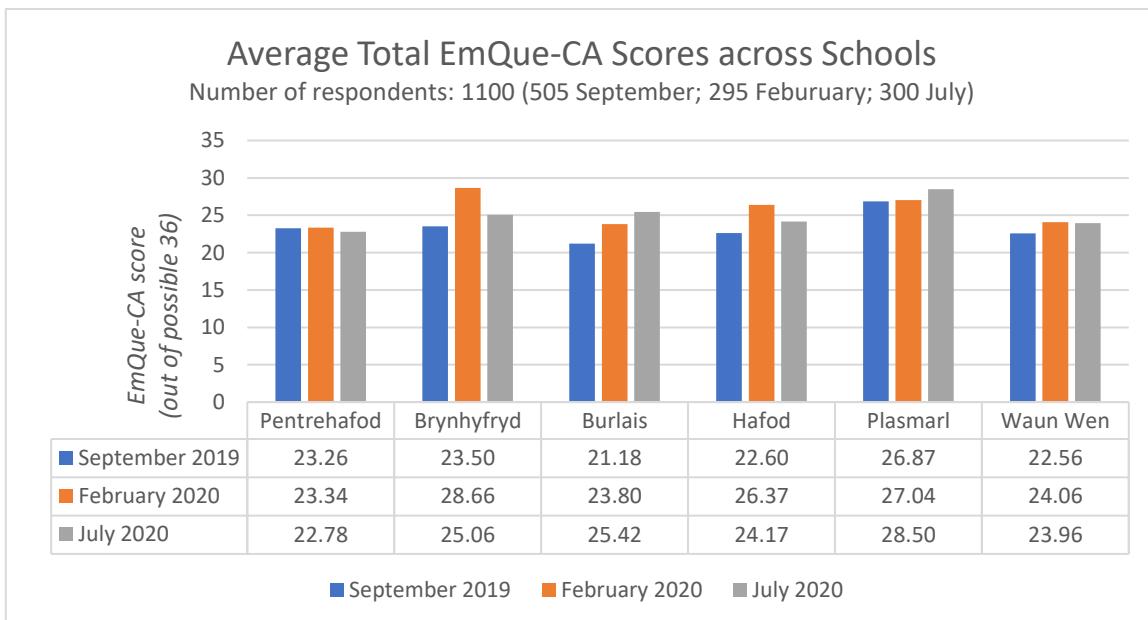
<sup>11</sup> Secondary analysis provided by University of Sussex.

<sup>12</sup> Average scores on the EmQue-CA were compared using paired t-tests. Scores are on a scale of 0-2, in line with the questionnaire (see Appendix).

<sup>13</sup> All results are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , effect sizes [Cohen's d] = .28 (total empathy), .26 (cognitive empathy), and .37 (prosocial concern)



Looking at the EmQue-CA survey results for all pupils, there is a rise in the average total empathy score<sup>14</sup> in all schools from which data was collected<sup>15</sup> between September 2019 and February 2020. Consistent with this, data collected between February and July during the lockdown period, when opportunities for teaching empathy skills were greatly reduced, shows, in most cases, either a stagnation or a slight drop from the February levels. This reinforces the need for the interventions in school. The fact that all the primary schools were still showing higher scores in July than they had in September despite lockdown is testament to the impact there had been through the initial implementation.



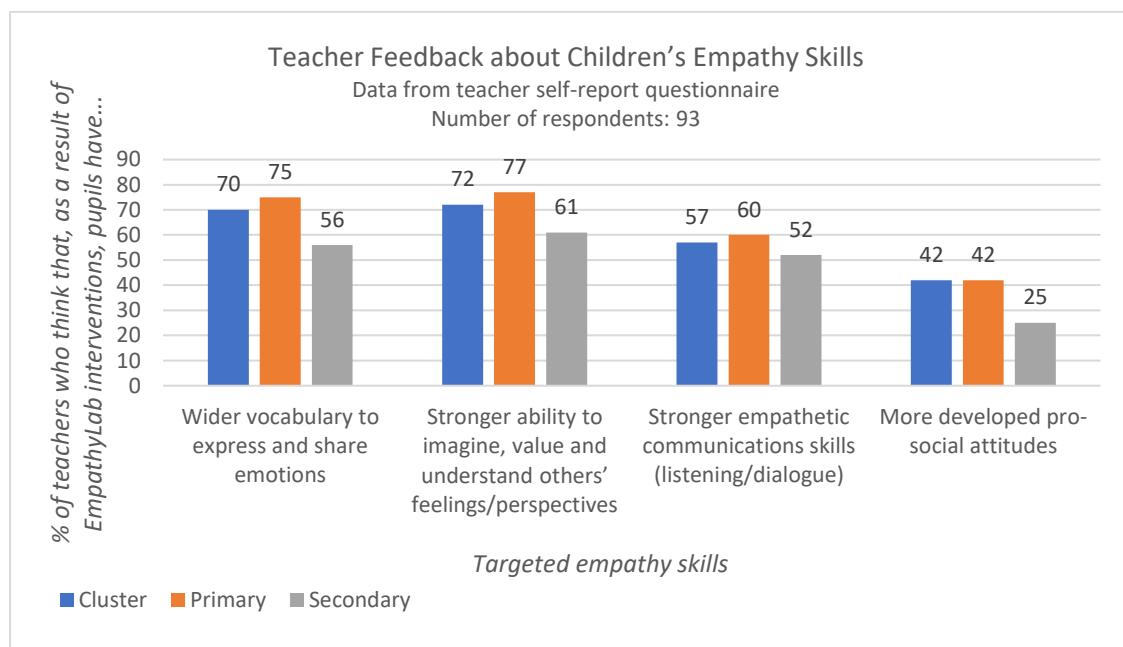
There was less of a marked a change in empathy scores at the secondary school as at the primary schools. Primary schools lend themselves more naturally to pastorally-orientated interventions and the majority of EmpathyLab's work prior to this has been with primary schools where the model is well established; the programme therefore can be applied more easily in new primary schools and pupil outcomes can be affected more quickly. We

<sup>14</sup> Calculated from a total of 18 questions with a possible score of 0-2 for each

<sup>15</sup> Completed in six out of the eight schools in the cluster (five primaries and the secondary school).

identified several challenges to adapting the programme to a secondary school setting, many of which involved more significant changes to school structures and teaching practices (see section 2.3). These were addressed in the initial implementation phases of the programme through work with school leaders and staff and positive changes were seen as a result (see section 4.2). Due to the school closures caused by COVID-19 in March 2020, there was not time for these changes to have the desired impact on pupil outcomes (empathy skills or enjoyment of reading). We anticipate that over time, with pupils back in classrooms, there will be a more marked improvement in empathy scores as a result of the changes made in school strategy, ethos and teaching practices.

As well as overall empathy scores, measured by the EmQue-CA survey, the interventions also targeted the development of four specific empathy skills, measured through teacher feedback. Despite the delivery of the programme being severely disrupted, teachers reported notable improvements in these skills.



## **Wider vocabulary to recognise and share own and others' feelings**

An important impact has been the changes seen in the breadth of vocabulary pupils can use to recognise and share their own and others' feelings. This reflects the structure of the programme which introduces emotional vocabulary skills in the first three phases – this meant there was time before March to develop and embed the skills.

*'Younger children are able to select various words to describe their feelings. One child described how confused they were and anxious. Using vocabulary has really improved.'*

**Headteacher, Waun Wen Primary School**

*'The English department have noticed that some students' extended writing has rich vocabulary and is more expressive in terms of a character's feelings. They believe this is a result of the book talk and empathy activities they have used to support the class reader.'*

**Assistant Head, Pentrehafod School**

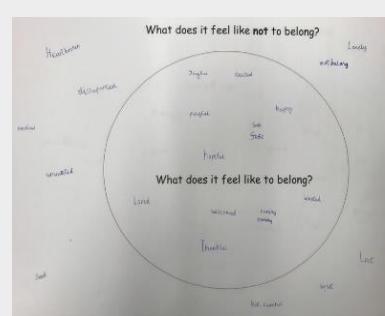
# Developing Emotional Vocabulary

## Teacher report from Brynhyfryd School

Children lacked the ability to recognise how they were feeling, and they tended to release their emotions through anger, frustration, disengagement in the classroom and conflict with their peers. Now that they are starting to identify their own feelings, they are better prepared to acknowledge the emotions felt by others. They are more able to put themselves in their shoes.

## What's happened and how?

- The emotions wheel\* has proven very useful in developing children's emotional vocabulary. They use the wheel to refine the words used to identify the varying types and shades of emotions that humans feel e.g. content vs. overjoyed, disappointed vs. sorrowful, annoyed vs. furious.
- Developing a repertoire of vocabulary that means the same or the opposite of different words and changing our focus when we discuss books. For example, sometimes we ask, 'How was the character feeling?' but at other times we ask, 'Which word in the text told you the character was feeling upset?' hence encouraging them to search for synonyms.
- Most classes are now enjoying a class novel. Teachers have selected these books carefully, so that they are age-appropriate, but also so that they challenge the children's vocabulary. Teachers take time to highlight interesting vocabulary and discuss the meaning and strength of different words.
- Sharing stories in which the characters feel an overwhelming emotion (e.g. *Ruby's Worry* and *Ravi's Roar*) allows you to develop vocabulary surrounding that one emotion. Children will experience the way the characters overcome and learn to control their emotions, which they can apply in their lives.



\*EmpathyLab provided schools with Plutchnik's wheel of emotions

## Stronger ability to imagine, understand and reflect on other people's perspectives and feelings

When asked if the empathy work they'd been doing had changed them, pupils answered as follows:

*'Yes, because before I did empathy work, I didn't know what empathy was. It's made me feel more about other people and their problems.'*

*'Learning about empathy has helped me think about others and how they are feeling. I pay better attention to others and try to understand how they feel.'*

*'Because of empathy, sometimes I feel sad when people say that other children can't play. I like to tell those children that anyone can play, and I like to make sure no one gets left out.'*



Teachers have also noted an improvement in pupils' ability to reflect on others' feelings:

*'Using questions about how a character felt, what made them feel that way and how they've shown empathy in a certain way has been really effective.'* **English teacher, Pentrehafod School**

*'It has helped to show how having empathy for a character can have its place in the real world too. It's made them more aware of the emotions that people are feeling on a day-to-day basis. I think you can hear that now, throughout the school'* **English teacher, Pentrehafod School**

*'[Year 6 pupil] stated he thinks more about how he is feeling and how his actions impact on others as a result of this project. He admits to not considering others' feelings much before but listening to stories and in assembly about empathy has helped him.'* **Teacher, Waun Wen Primary School**

*'The children are more aware of the struggles of people around them and how they could help make a difference.'* **Teacher, Clwyd Community Primary School**

While the skills are interrelated, stronger empathetic communication skills and more developed pro-social attitudes become more of a focus in Phases 4 and 5 of the programme. The delivery of these phases was seriously impeded by pupils not being in their school communities after March 2020. While, therefore, impact was not as great as we had hoped, there were definitely signs of the potential that using the EmpathyLab tools and approaches could have.

## Stronger empathetic communication skills: deep listening and conversation

In the self-report questionnaire, 57% of the 97 teachers who responded reported an improvement in pupils' empathetic communication skills.

*'Many pupils demonstrate empathy for those whose experiences differ from their own. For instance, pupils in Year 7 discuss sensitively the challenges of being a migrant.'*

**Pentrehafod Estyn report, February 2020**

*'The book questions have guided students, enabling them to produce more thoughtful, reflective and empathetic responses.'* **Headteacher, Waun Wen Primary School**

*'The emphasis on discussion and debate in our EmpathyLab work has supported the development of children's speaking and listening skills.'* **Headteacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

## More developed pro-social attitudes which turn feelings of empathy into moral actions

Particularly encouraging was the impact already being seen on pro-social attitudes, despite the programme's curtailment. While average EmQue-CA scores improved for all three elements of empathy (cognitive, affective and pro-social concern), the increase was strongest on the pro-social concern subscale. This provides encouraging evidence that EmpathyLab's emphasis on developing pro-social attitudes and social action is having an effect.

## Teachers' qualitative feedback also recognised the impact on pro-social attitudes.

*'Students were able to link sections of A Christmas Carol with Robert Swindell's Stone Cold. This helped them to see that society is guilty of stereotyping the homeless. The cluster had organised a "sleep-out" to raise awareness of homelessness. This did not happen due to the pandemic but we are hoping to reschedule.'* **Headteacher, Pentrehafod School**

*'Through the assignments they've been set, pupils have talked about showing empathy for their neighbours . . . Something as simple as making their neighbours a cake because they are lonely or don't have any relatives . . . just looking out for each other and trying to make the world a better place.'* **Teacher, Pentrehafod School**

*'The school has become more empathetic in the way we look at characters in stories and issues that are happening around us. This is evident in the children's ideas and planning for supporting friends and family. The children are suggesting their own ideas around supporting community charities. This has been linked to the EmpathyLab novels that we have read in school.'* **Teacher, Clwyd Community Primary School**

*'Empathy skills are no longer limited to just "looking out for your friends", but rather, children are starting to see the positive impact they can have on children from outside their friendship groups and on strangers in our society.'* **Headteacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'In Year 6 we read a story of a dyslexic child - children immediately tuned into the character's feelings and decided to make posters for dyslexia-aware classrooms. I am the SEND coordinator and they made materials for me to use in my class visits.'* **Teacher, Hafod Primary School**

Another exciting finding was that 89% of teachers (from the 97 responding in the self-report questionnaire) think the school has increased its engagement with social action since adopting EmpathyLab's programme. They feel this has filtered down to the children's actions too.

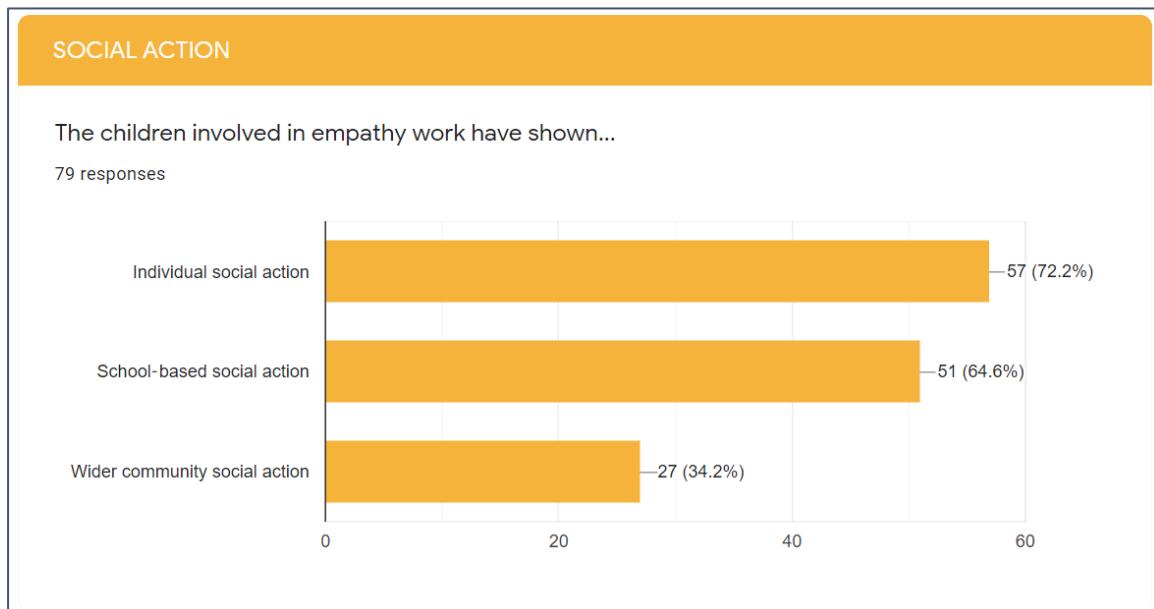


Figure 1. Data from teacher self-report questionnaire

## 4.2 Impact on school climate, ethos and strategy

### Impact on school planning and priorities

*'Being an EmpathyLab school and cluster has been extremely important to me, as our Headteacher. It is a huge part of our vision and ambitions for our school and wider community. An excellent school is about far more than examinations. I want our children to be empathetic and I want them to know how they can change the world for the better.'*

**Headteacher, Pentrehafod School**



### Our Vision

At Pentrehafod, we strive to provide an inclusive, safe, **happy** and **healthy** community where everyone is respected and listened to.

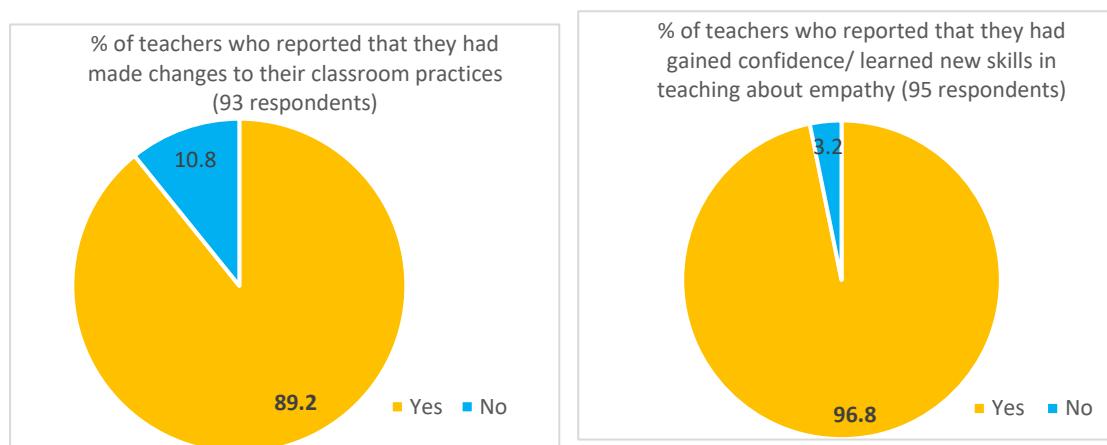
We take pride in ourselves and our achievements, challenging all to become confident, **creative**, **empathetic** and successful lifelong learners.

A necessary foundation for building pupils' empathy skills is the schools' prioritisation of empathy education and the integration of EmpathyLab's strategy. We saw major changes.

- The whole cluster committed to a shared action plan focused on empathy and integrated with the four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales, with a commitment to making it a three-year focus across the cluster. Governors have been brought on board.
- Pentrehafod School rewrote their vision and policies to include empathy explicitly.
- All eight schools integrated empathy into their School Development Plans. 7 schools made empathy teaching part of their performance management framework.

## Impact on pedagogy

In the self-report questionnaire, 97% of teachers reported that they felt more confident and more able to teach empathy skills as a result of their work with EmpathyLab. Critically, 89% (including 83% at the secondary school) said they had changed their teaching practices to incorporate EmpathyLab approaches and better develop pupils' empathy skills.

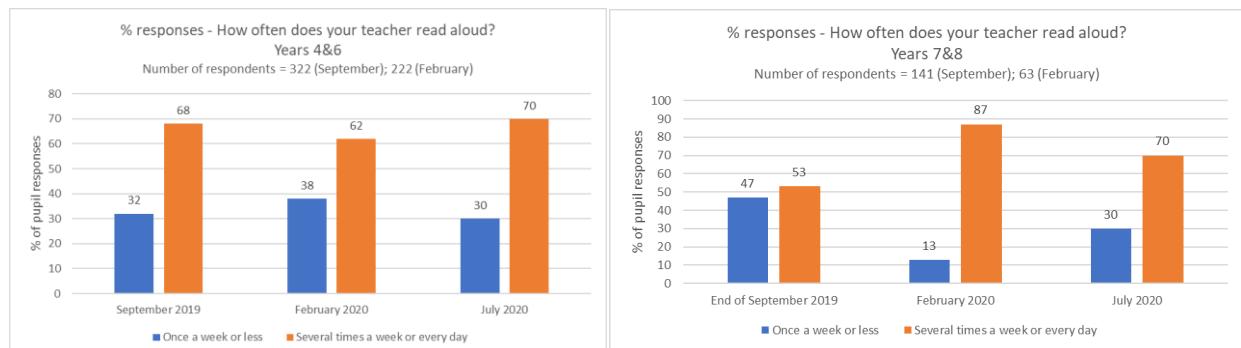


Significant structural changes have been made to both teaching arrangements and school spaces. Some schools created high-status new spaces dedicated to empathy, such as School Empathy Libraries at Hafod and Plasmarl. All schools had prominent whole-school displays to promote their commitment to and work on empathy.



Schools have changed the structure of the school day to allow for more opportunities for reading for pleasure and, in particular, shared reading with an empathy focus. Many schools have returned to the use of a shared class novel, and some have scheduled regular peer and family reading sessions.

Correspondingly, data from the Reading for Pleasure survey shows an increase in the frequency with which teachers are reading to pupils. This change was particularly significant at secondary level, which saw the percentage of pupils being read to several times a week or daily rise from 53% at the end of September<sup>16</sup> to 87% in February and even remain at 70% by July despite lockdown. This was a significant outcome for our work in secondary schools, having identified this change as a stepping stone to other outcomes.



All schools have embedded EmpathyLab's teaching tools, particularly the book-talk questions into regular lessons. *'Using the empathy book-talk questions about how a character felt, what made them feel that way and how they've shown empathy in a certain way has been really effective.'* Head of English, Pentrehafod School.

The secondary school working party's discussions resulted in changed teaching practices, with more emphasis on the human, feelings element of subject matter and more literature included in all subject areas. Teachers from different subjects were given shared planning time for empathy-focused work – this resulted in a Year 7 cross-curricular Holocaust project, covering expressive arts, drama and humanities, reading around the subject to increase emotional understanding. Art teachers described the impact of working with Nicola Davies's book *The Day War Came*, and used the story to inspire self-portraits based on putting themselves in a refugee's shoes.



English staff became Year 7 tutors, and shared reading was introduced into tutor time. Previously English teaching was highly technical; the school increased the number of novels included in English teaching for Years 7 and 8.

**'Students really engaged with the class-reader activities and some have been very positive about their teacher reading more frequently.'** **Assistant Head, Pentrehafod School.**

<sup>16</sup> The survey was administered at the end of September to allow sufficient time for pupils to reflect on regular classroom practice in their new classes.

## Impact on culture and ethos

*'As a staff, we are delighted to be prioritising the more "human" side of teaching. We see the impact of society's empathy deficit, and we hope that by taking a more holistic stance, our children will grow up to be well-rounded individuals successful in their relationships as well as in the world of work. This feeling has been vocalised by teaching assistants in particular, who are often the people left to deal with challenging behaviour and conflict.'* **Headteacher, Clwyd Community Primary School**

The majority of teachers (88% at primary and 89% at secondary) felt that the school ethos and culture had been positively influenced by EmpathyLab's interventions.

*'For me, empathy has made me read and teach differently. I now look at characters and what is making them act in certain ways. I ask the children, "How would you feel if you were them? Why are the children treating that child so badly? What could you do to change that person's life?" It's made me realise that linking the children's existing knowledge and the character, you can broaden their understanding through the eyes of the character . . . When I teach literacy, I am now looking for that inspiration novel to share with the children. Teachers can now let the book do all the talking.'* **Teacher, Clwyd Community Primary School**

*'As a school, we have also been aiming to develop children's entrepreneurial skills, and many teachers chose to incorporate empathy education into this teaching. These classes often used the funds accumulated from their entrepreneurial activities to conduct some form of social action. For example, motivated by their understanding of the feeling of loneliness that can come with growing old, pupils joined a get-together for the elderly in the local park. They selected traditional games and shared them with the seniors.'* **Headteacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'We have seen real change in the school community - we're much less "class central". Children have started keeping an eye out for each other in ways they never did before.'* **Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'A group of Year 6 pupils have expressed interest in leading an Empathy Club during lunchtimes for the younger year groups. They plan to share empathy-boosting stories with children from Years 2-5 and lead activities related to them.'* **Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'The project has allowed the staff and pupils more opportunities to focus on others and think of others whilst developing their literacy skills. These are both key factors within this cluster due to low literacy levels and high deprivation levels.'* **Headteacher, Clwyd Community Primary School**

# Case Study: Pentrehafod Secondary School, March 2020



*'By March, we had begun to hear empathy language around the school. Teachers are using empathetic language when dealing with behaviour incidents. Most staff are confident to choose appropriate texts to build empathy skills and to integrate more of these into their lesson planning. Teachers are motivated to change their teaching styles as they have seen the real benefit to learning from using the empathy building activities. In the beginning I thought the English department would have the best ideas for our empathy work, but actually it's been expressive arts and other subjects who have come up with some really good ways of making their subjects more human. They've then found children have shown more interest in the subjects because they've made it more real.'* **Assistant Head**

*'We looked at Alan Turing, but instead of studying his work from just a technological point of view, we considered things from a human aspect - we used empathy and emotional language to discuss the impact on his personal as well as his professional life. Both of those had an effect on the future that we know today. It was really great to add more depth and richness to the task, and to talk more about the feelings and emotions to understand the person behind the story.'* **Computer science teacher**

## Family Involvement

EmpathyLab sees family involvement as a crucial factor in building a generation of empathy-educated young people. This work was started by schools but cut short in March by COVID-19 measures. While for some schools the pandemic provided new opportunities to connect with families, for others it became even harder. However, one intervention that was particularly effective was the Family Pack designed to bring families together around Empathy Day to explore, understand and practise empathy. As a result, 68% of teachers reported that families had learned new strategies for using stories to build empathy.

**Family Activities**  
Family Activity: READ



**Top Ten Empathy Books**  
The whole family can take part in this activity.  
There are so many books which are brilliant for boosting empathy. Why not develop a list of your Top Ten Empathy Books?

You will need: your book ideas a piece of paper a pen or pencil

Gather everyone in your family together and talk about how reading can create feelings of empathy.

Think about how authors help you understand feelings by making you see things through the eyes of different characters.

Next ask everyone in the family to suggest a book for your list of the best empathy reads.

Any book can be included and you could widen this to your extended family and friends.

Why not draw up your list as a poster? Or you could even record a video counting down the Top Ten and explaining why you picked each book.

We'll be asking for your Top Ten #ReadForEmpathy recommendations on Empathy Day! @EmpathyLabUK

**Family Activities**  
Family Activity: CONNECT



**Using art to talk about feelings**  
This is a group activity for the whole family.  
When we look and listen carefully, we learn so much about other people.

You will need: a listening ear lots of imagination!

Gather a few family members and look at this picture together.

Next, ask each person to tell the group what they think is happening in the picture.

Listen very carefully without interrupting or making any judgements.

Did everyone have the same ideas, or were there different views?

Now ask each family member to imagine they are one of the characters in the painting.

One by-one, tell the group what your life is like and about your hopes and dreams.

You could even write a short conversation between the characters as if it were a play, and then act it out.

You can find out more about the painting [here](#)

**Family Activities**  
Family Activity: ACT



**Empathy Mosaic**  
This is a group activity for the whole family.  
Create a mosaic of empathy, recognising and celebrating empathy when it happens.

You will need: scrap paper coloured pencils or pens sticky tape or tape

Collect up some pieces of scrap paper, or coloured paper if you have it.

Every time someone in your family makes you feel understood, write a short note about it. This could be things like:

*'Anna knew I was sad so she sat next to me'*  
*'Mum could tell I needed time on my own'*  
*'Ali saw I was feeling lonely so he let me join in with his game'*

The only rule is that you have to write about someone else's empathy action, not your own!

Once you've created a few notes, stick them onto a big piece of paper, your fridge or even a wall. Make sure you have a grown-up's permission first!

Keep adding to it every time someone shows empathy. Soon you'll have a beautiful multi-coloured mosaic of empathy!

Share a picture of your mosaic on social media using #EmpathyDay and tagging @EmpathyLabUK

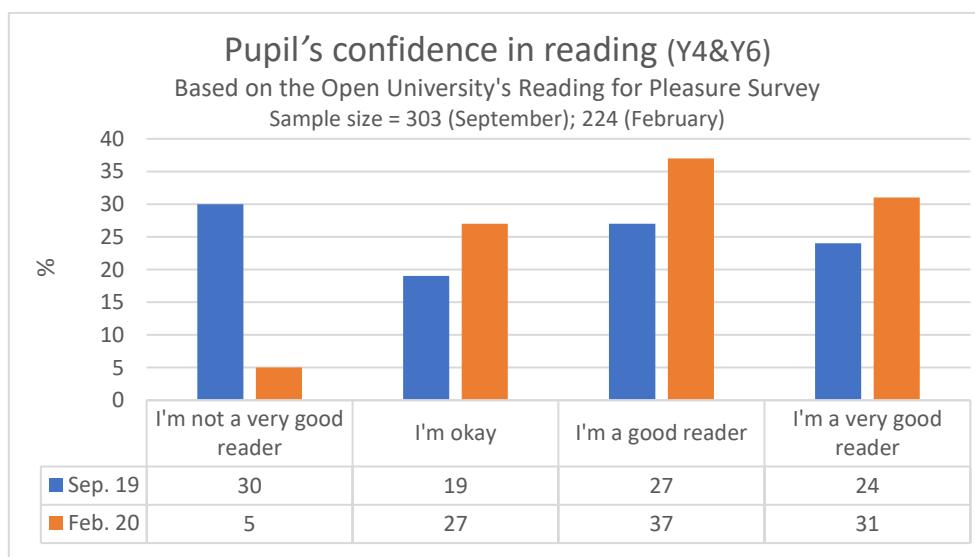
## 4.3 Impact on pupils' enjoyment of reading through a new empathy emphasis

*'As a school, our attitude to reading is changing, as we are making more time for the social and emotional side of it by bringing the class together, presenting the teacher as a reader and discussing the characters' thoughts and feelings. We are now more inclined to highlight suffering and injustice encountered in books, rather than protect children, and this helps them make deeper connections with the characters and find real-life issues affecting our society.'* **Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

An increase in reading for pleasure is one of the project's key target outcomes. Pupils completed the Open University's Reading for Pleasure survey at the end of September 2019 (baselining) and in February and July 2020. Lockdown meant that no substantial empathy-focused teaching was possible from March to July. We therefore focus the reporting on interim February results.

After just four months of reading with an empathy focus, there was a notable improvement in pupils' confidence as readers at the primary level and a slight improvement at the secondary level. These results confirm the findings from our previous work in schools, that a more systematic empathy focus, with an emphasis on character and feelings, makes reading more enjoyable.

At the primary level, the percentage of pupils who felt they were 'not a very good reader' fell from 30% to 5%, with those reporting that they thought they were a 'good' or 'very good' reader rising from 52% to 68%.



At the secondary level, there was a slight increase in the percentage of pupils who felt they were a 'good' or 'very good' reader, from 55% in September to 59% in February.

At the primary level, pupils' love of reading also improved. In September, 77% of primary respondents said reading was okay or that they loved it. By February, that had increased to 86%.

Verbatim pupil feedback also shows an increased enjoyment of reading after learning about empathy.

*'I enjoy reading more because books capture your imagination, so we know how people feel.'* **Year 6 pupil, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

*'It's helped me think deeper about the characters; I've enjoyed all the shared books.'* **Year 6 pupil, Clwyd Community Primary School**

In the self-report questionnaire, 42% of teachers felt that pupils had shown a greater interest in reading for pleasure. While this was lower than we had hoped for, research<sup>17</sup> shows that reading communities are integral to developing positive attitudes to reading and, as such, this was severely affected by the school closures. Nonetheless, several teachers commented on changes they had seen.

*'A number of pupils during lockdown were asking for recommendations for another empathy novel. The children have read empathy novels which they might not have picked before we had access to the EmpathyLab lists.'* **Teacher, Clwyd Community Primary School**

*'Children are now making recommendations to each other of books that include strong empathetic characters. They have produced Book Recommendation postcards and exchanged them with children from other schools within our cluster.'* **Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School.**

#### 4.4 Pupils' feelings about the transition to secondary school

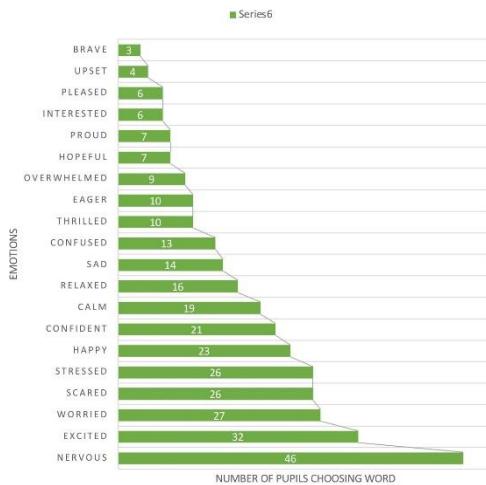
*'As a school, our attitude to reading is changing, as we are making more time for the social and emotional side of it by bringing the class together, presenting the teacher as a reader and discussing the characters' thoughts and feelings. We are now more inclined to highlight suffering and injustice encountered in books, rather than protect children, and this helps them make deeper connections with the characters and find real-life issues affecting our society.'* **Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

One target project outcome was to have a positive impact on pupils' feelings about the transition to secondary school. Much of the work planned to specifically address pupils' feelings about transition (described in section 2.6) could not be carried out due to COVID-19-related school closures. Nonetheless, limited evaluation<sup>18</sup> shows that there had been a positive shift in pupils' feelings about transition, with the number of pupils saying they felt nervous dropping from 46 to 25, stressed dropping from 26 to 10, and excited growing from 32 to 54.

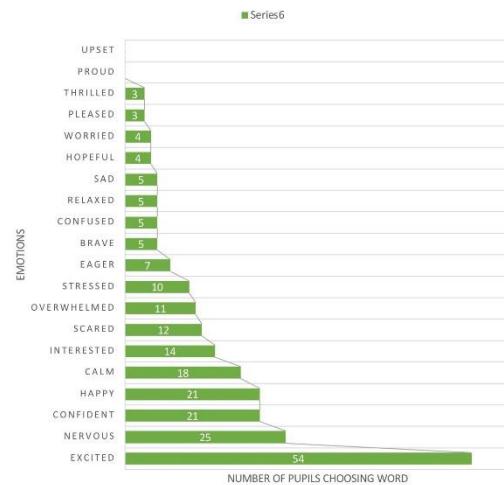
<sup>17</sup>Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Powell, S., Collins, R. and Safford K., *Building Communities of Engaged Readers: Reading for pleasure*. London: Routledge, 2014

<sup>18</sup>Four schools (Clwyd, Brynhyfryd, Plasmari and Burlais Primaries) completed both cycles of an 'emotion thermometer' survey, which asked which three words best described their feelings about moving up to Year 7.

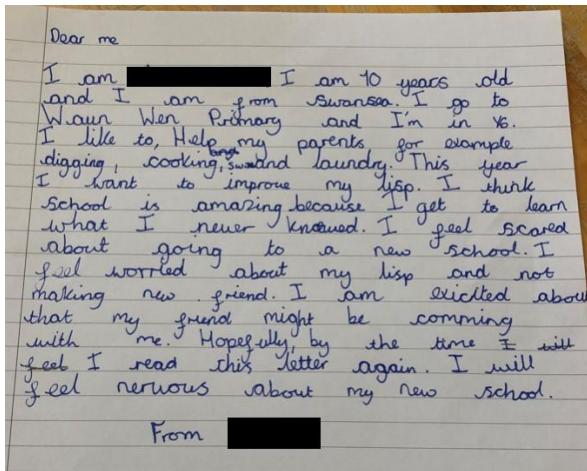
WHICH WORDS BEST DESCRIBE HOW YOU  
FEEL ABOUT MOVING UP TO YEAR 7?  
SEPTEMBER 2019



WHICH WORDS BEST DESCRIBE HOW YOU  
FEEL ABOUT MOVING UP TO YEAR 7?  
JULY 2020



In September, Year 6 pupils were also asked to write themselves a letter about how they felt about moving up to Year 7 – this would be sealed and opened at the end of the year to see if their feelings had changed. Positive evidence from their responses on opening the letter in July show how things had changed for them.



'I felt a bit excited to open up the letter. For some of my worries I feel much better about them.'

'I felt kind of silly about some of the things I wrote because I realised that there was no reason to be worried.'

'Yes I feel slightly calmer now because, reading back, I now realise that comp may not be as bad as I thought.'

Another positive impact of the work done on transition was the effect on the children involved in the transition working group.

'Pupils' voices have shone through in the work on creating an Empathy Charter. They have created a practical charter to guide how transition is handled with important implications for school climate, and they have been empowered to put empathy into action.' **Assistant Head, Pentrehafod School**

## 4.5 Other outcomes

### Levelling the playing field for lower-attaining students

Teachers were often surprised by the responses of lower-attaining students. The focus on emotions and understanding others seems to enable pupils to contribute more and to build more inclusive learning environments.

*'Reading ages within a class may vary from 6 to 16 years - reading for empathy allows all students to become involved.'* **Assistant Head, Pentrehafod School**

*'When learning about empathy, pupils seem to feel like they are on a level playing field with their peers where, regardless of their abilities in other curriculum areas, they can be successful. For instance, one of our Year 2 children, who has English as an Additional Language and is ordinarily very shy, volunteered to share her ideas during a whole-class discussion for the very first time during an empathy lesson.'* **Teacher, Brynhyfryd Primary School**

### Shared cluster work on empathy to build better pupil outcomes

While there was an existing tradition of working together across between the eight schools in the cluster, with regular headteacher meetings, the EmpathyLab programme has created a more strategically focused way of working. The schools often worked on Areas of Learning Experience, and took cross-cutting themes. It has forged stronger working links between staff in primary and secondary, and created new structures to hear pupils' voice and empower them to put empathy into action to create a more empathetic transition.

*'Before this project I would have said we had a strong way of working across the cluster. But our empathy-focused work has really deepened this and changed how the cluster works cross phase 3-16.'* **Assistant Head, Pentrehafod School**

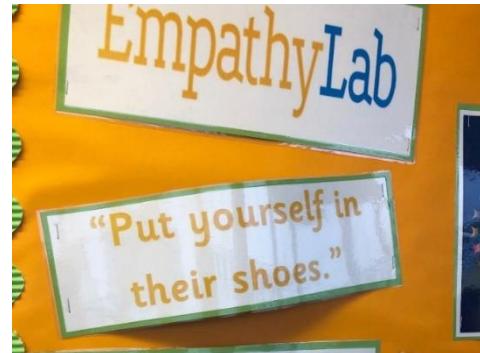


## Section 5: Conclusions, Reflections and Next Steps

### 5.1 Conclusions

It is exciting to see such positive empathy education outcomes. Despite the drastic curtailment of the programme there has been significant impact as a result of EmpathyLab's unique model of interventions.

- The project has shown that the programme, with appropriate remodelling, can work in secondary schools as well as primaries.
- 94% of teachers report that pupils have a much better understanding of what empathy is, its importance and how it can be developed. This has been as effective at a secondary level as primary.
- The EmQue-CA standardised measures show a clear pattern of increased empathy scores. The work was clearly having an impact on pupils while they were in school. This is the first time EmpathyLab has used these standardised empathy scores and it is important that we have been able to demonstrate clear improvements. It has also shown that the use of a standardised measure is an effective way of measuring the impact of EmpathyLab's interventions.
- We are delighted to see the replication of impact in Swansea partner primary schools that we have seen in working with our 11 pioneer English schools. It is especially heartening that in February we were just starting to see empathy scores edging up at the secondary level too. It was particularly frustrating to be interrupted by COVID-19 just as we had found solutions to the adaptations needed at secondary level.
- There were notable improvements in the four key empathy skills at both primary and secondary level. In particular, 70% of teachers reported a widening of pupils' emotional vocabulary and 72% said that pupils are more able to imagine, value and respect other people's perspectives. This correlates with the outcomes targeted before the programme was interrupted by COVID-19.
- 89% of teachers reported a significant impact on school planning, culture and ethos, as well as pedagogy. 97% said that they had gained new confidence and skills in teaching about empathy. 88% of teachers said that the school has increased its engagement with social action.
- After just four months' work, there was a notable impact on pupils' confidence as readers. Across the primary schools, the percentage of children reporting that they felt confident about reading rose from 52% to 68%.
- 89% of teachers reported that they have changed their classroom practices around reading with an empathy focus. This provides an excellent springboard for deeper work on increasing pupils' enjoyment of reading. Altogether, this is very promising for further impact as schools resume this autumn. It has been especially heartening



to see these changes at the secondary school where we had identified several challenges.

- There are early indications that a tailored empathy intervention can positively impact pupils' feelings about transition from Year 6 to Year 7. Programme evidence shows that a greater ability to recognise and discuss feelings, alongside a school commitment to being empathetic, has enabled pupils to feel more positive about transition.

## 5.2 Reflections

### Improvements to programme design

- **Provide strategic support to Empathy**  
**Leads to cascade training** appropriately to all staff. This is particularly relevant for any staff supporting pupils' learning (for example learning support assistants) - they have the opportunity to have the most impact on highest-needs pupils.
- **Emphasise the role of teaching assistants**, who are vital partners in the context of empathy education. Focus particularly on their ability to build a school culture of active listening, and their delivery of playful, creative activities that immerse pupils in characters and feelings.
- **Take steps to strengthen guidance on changing teacher practice** so all teachers know what to do in order to achieve good empathy outcomes as quickly as possible.
- **Identify lead practitioners** within schools or groups of schools to build whole-school capacity to quickly deliver good empathy outcomes. These should be staff who demonstrate excellent empathy teaching practices and pupil outcomes and who can help other staff, through modelling and support, adapt their practice to achieve similarly good outcomes.
- **Take steps early on to identify the reading culture and ethos** in the school and provide clear guidance on how this can affect empathy outcomes. Provide support on improving that as necessary, recommending interventions that bring together strong Reading for Pleasure practices with empathy outcomes. A good example is a shared read-aloud class book, which - handled skilfully - creates an empathetic reading community. We will continue to draw on the guidance of EmpathyLab's Expert Advisor in this area, Professor Teresa Cremin, who leads the Open University's groundbreaking reading for pleasure programme.<sup>19</sup>
- **Build in opportunities for groups of schools to share good practice**. We saw impressive collaboration in the Pentrehafod cluster. In future work, we aim to develop this further, maximising opportunities for schools to support and learn



<sup>19</sup> [researchrichpedagogies.org/](http://researchrichpedagogies.org/)

from each other, and for pupils to share their empathy journey with children in other schools. We can exploit opportunities for older pupils to work with younger ones, for instance devising and delivering empathy lessons on Empathy Day.

- **Integrate a focus on cultural education.** Welsh culture is championed in the new curriculum and provides opportunities for community cohesion that could be a key feature of the programme's social action aspect. There are similarities in some communities in England that could provide interesting empathy opportunities for multi-generational, community-based work.

## Adapting to a secondary school setting

The programme works very naturally in primary schools. From our work this year, we are confident that it can also be successful in a secondary setting, but needs very careful planning. While we had anticipated the need to adapt resources to be age-appropriate, we've learned that further adaptations are needed to factor in significant differences in the leadership and communication structures.



Our learning so far about programme adaptations is:

- **An even greater strategic focus:** the programme's early months need to focus as much on organisational and strategic factors as on the classroom experience and outcomes for pupils. We will introduce new guidance for the early establishment of cross-curricular working parties, stressing that this is about *all* staff driving to create an empathetic school, and about everyone's teaching practice.
- **Take steps early on to understand the school leadership structures** and identify the relevant leaders to work with to drive strategic and organisational change. In secondary schools, middle leaders often play a key role in this. Appropriate training and support need to focus on the right people to drive change in this setting.
- **Being canny about weaving literature in:** schools need to allow shared planning time for teachers from different subject areas to come together to plan work which uses a shared empathy-rich text and theme – our Empathy Storykits will be important in this context. The new Welsh curriculum encourages 'authentic links' and brings a freedom to use literature in this cross-cutting way.
- **Reading for Pleasure practices, as above:** provide guidance on what this could look like in the secondary-school setting and encourage the involvement of the school librarian.
- **Encourage use of contemporary texts:** EmpathyLab works with the publishing industry to create book collections featuring very diverse, contemporary books and we will push harder on the use of these. Older children (and especially

reluctant readers) will be far more engaged with a text they can relate to or which has a topic perceived as edgy or gritty.

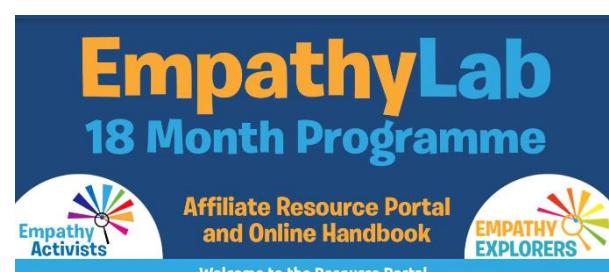
- **Involve young leaders:** the role of students as leaders of a new empathy drive needs more focus – young people can help drive a swifter change of direction. We will build on Pentrehafod School’s model of creating a Year 11 advisory group, and develop the use of school councils, alongside our creative peer-led schemes.

## Evaluation improvements

- **Streamlined and reinforced framework:** the project enabled us to create and test a triangulated evaluation framework containing tools using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures, including EmQue-CA, the standardised empathy scale developed by Leiden University. Working with researchers from the University of Sussex, we will refine this framework to create a core evaluation strategy to be used consistently across our work in schools. To support staff collecting data at a school level, we will: introduce a stand-alone workshop to guide EmpathyLab Leads, backed up by a reinforcing video; produce a data-collection timeline linked to the schools’ handbook; and create a web-based portal to host all relevant evaluation tools.
- **Involving young people:** at secondary level we will build on the opportunity (at class and school-council level) to involve young people more in collecting impact evidence.
- **Standardised measures:** the internationally recognised EmQue-CA framework has been shown to be successful in a schools’ context; Children responded reliably to the questionnaire, and the overall internal consistency of the scale was excellent. We will continue its use, but to avoid asking schools to complete two separate questionnaires, will create a new Reading for Pleasure section incorporating key questions.

## Impact on EmpathyLab as an organisation

The timing of the Swansea work was significant, launching just as EmpathyLab had completed three years of experimentation and evaluation with a group of pioneer schools. We were ready to take our next steps in developing the schools’ programme. The Pentrehafod cluster work has acted a catalyst for the development of the whole organisation. It has helped us examine our organisational systems and structures and build on existing work to develop and test a schematic schools programme



- **Organisational systems and structures:** The project has pushed us as an organisation. We were lucky to work with a Nesta Business Partner, a wonderful consultant who challenged us to examine our structures and manage capacity better. She helped us streamline our offer into four workstreams and plan for future growth and leadership. Project learning has upskilled the whole team in

programme delivery, in particular building a methodology to deliver an integrated offer across a cluster of schools. It has identified gaps in our skills, knowledge and resources, which will inform our development plan, especially how we work with secondary schools. The evaluation plans outlined above will form an important part of our future development.

- **A schematic schools programme:** In this project we deployed the creative techniques and principles upon which EmpathyLab was built – book-focused; character-based; using empathetic communication and placing pupil voice centrally. We were able to further test these to understand their impact and shape them into a schematic schools programme. This will form a central plank of our business plan as we roll out to more schools.

### 5.3 Next Steps

We are delighted that the Pentrehafod cluster is committed to a long-term approach to empathy education, and to have confirmed plans for EmpathyLab to work with the cluster's eight schools on deepening and developing the work during 2020/21. A small Postcode Lottery grant will support an increased social-action focus, with an emphasis on empathising with and reaching out to lonely people in the locality.

A significant development is the extension of the programme to another cluster of schools, supported by a follow-on grant from Nesta's Future Ready Fund. Up to December 2021 we will be working in Pembrokeshire with the Pembroke Dock cluster of seven primaries and one secondary school, joined by an additional secondary, Milford Haven School.

Because of the emphasis on empathy in the Curriculum for Wales 2022, we are experiencing further demand for our work. We have had our first commission to work with a local authority targeting all their schools. Early in 2021 we will train Ceredigion's forty-three schools, many of which are Welsh-medium.

We hope to develop further our partnership with ERW, delivering further training to schools pioneering the new curriculum. And with the Books Council of Wales, who offer such excellent expertise in Welsh-language books and reading promotion.

There is a growing recognition of the need for empathy-educated young people, and EmpathyLab is now well-placed to meet that need. We look forward to working with more and more schools to foster a generation of young people whose strong empathy skills will make the world a fairer and kinder place.



## Acknowledgements

EmpathyLab would like to thank the following for all their support in delivering the EmpathyLab programme:

### **EmpathyLab Lead Teachers**

Jenny Ford, Lisa Carroll, Vikki Hibbs, Zanna Slim, Karen Davies, Pentrehafod School; Richard Hall, Hafod Primary School; Sarah Higgs, Brynhyfryd Primary School; Liz Jenkins, Gwyrosydd Primary School; Mandy Jenkins, Burlais Primary School; Jayne Lewis, Waun Wen Primary School; Julia Minney, Clwyd Primary School; Nicola Morgan, Plasmarl Primary School

### **Academic Advisors**

Professor Robin Banerjee and Lucy Roberts, University of Sussex; Professor Teresa Cremin, The Open University, Dr Helen Demetriou; University of Cambridge

### **Libraries**

Swansea Library Service: Carole Billingham; Jodi Jones; Sarah Williams

### **Additional Advisors**

Meeta Thareja, MetaValue; Mari Bowen, ERW; Angharad Sinclair, The Books Council of Wales

### **External speakers at our training sessions**

Jo Cotterill, author; Claire Williams, Kenilworth Primary School; Amy Willoughby, Beck Primary School; Jon Biddle, Moorlands Primary School

## Books

Books from the Read for Empathy Collection referenced in this report:

- Beedle, D., *The Last Chip*. London: Templar Publishing, 2018
- Davies, N. & Cobb, R., *The Day War Came*. London: Walker Books, 2018
- Cambden, S, *Everything All At Once*. London: Macmillan Children's Books, 2018

# Appendix

## **Empathy and Reading for Pleasure questionnaire - completed by sample groups from Year 4,6,7 & 8 across the cluster**

**Name** **Class/Tutor Group**

## Part 1 – About our emotions and feelings (EmQue-CA)

Below you will find 18 short sentences. Every sentence is a statement about how you can react to other people's feelings. You can mark each sentence if this is *often true, sometimes true or not true for you*. Choose the answer that best fits you. You can only mark one answer. Please remember that there are no wrong or right answers.

1. If my parents/carers are happy, I also feel happy.

*Tick one box*

Not True      Sometimes True      Often True

2. I understand that a friend is ashamed when he/she has done something wrong.

*Tick one box*

Not True      Sometimes True      Often True

3. If a friend is sad, I like to comfort him or her.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. I feel awful when two people quarrel.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. When a friend is angry, I tend to know why.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 6. I would like to help when a friend gets angry.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If a friend is sad, I also feel sad.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. I understand that a friend is proud when he/she has done something good.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. If a friend has an argument, I try to help.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. If a friend is laughing, I also laugh.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. If a friend is sad, I understand mostly why.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. I want everyone to feel good.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. When a friend cries, I cry myself.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. If a friend cries, I often understand what has happened.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. If a friend is sad, I want to do something to make it better.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. If someone in my family is sad, I feel really bad.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. I enjoy giving a friend a gift.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. When a friend is upset, I feel upset too.

*Tick one box*

Not True	Sometimes True	Often True
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Part 2 – About our reading

1. Do you like reading?

*Tick one box*

I love reading	It's okay	I'm not bothered	I don't like reading
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why do you think this is?

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2. Are you a good reader?

*Tick one box*

I'm a very good reader	I'm a good reader	I'm okay	I'm not a very good reader
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why do you think this is?

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3. Where do you prefer reading?

*Tick one box*

At home	At school	Somewhere else (say where it is)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why do you think this is?

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4. Do you read with anyone at home?

*Tick one box*

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you ticked 'Yes',  
Who do you read with? \_\_\_\_\_

What sort of things do you read? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Which 2 of these do you enjoy reading most? *Tick two boxes*

- Jokes
- Magazines
- Comics
- Story books
- Poetry
- Non-fiction
- Picture books

6. Which 2 of these do you enjoy reading most? (Tick two boxes)

- Book apps
- e-books
- Blogs
- Websites
- Social media
- Online games

7. What are you reading in school? (that you chose)

-----  
8. Who is your favourite author?

-----  
9. What is your favourite book ever?

-----  
10. Do you ever talk about what you're reading?

*Tick all that apply*

- With friends
- With mum
- With dad
- With grandparents
- With sister/brother
- With anyone else? (say who)

-----  
11. Does your teacher?

*Tick one box*

Love reading	Think it's okay	Is not bothered	Doesn't like it
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Does your teacher read aloud to the class?

*Tick one box*

Every day      Several times a week      Once a week      Less than once a week

13. What is your teacher reading aloud to you?

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14. Do you like it when your teacher reads aloud?

I love it      It's okay      I'm not bothered      I don't like it

Why do you think this is?

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