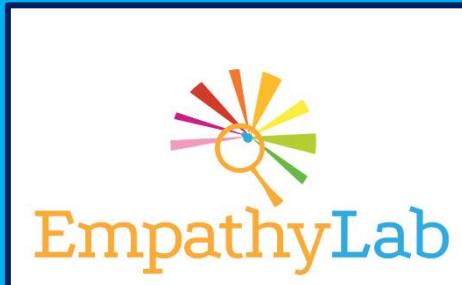


# Report on EmpathyLab's Education Programme in Wales 2020 - 2021



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## Key Quotations

*Our empathy work has helped us when talking to our friends. We have learned how to express how we feel. **Year 7 pupil, Henry Tudor School***

*I think more about what I say and how it makes someone in class feel. **Year 3 pupil, Monkton Priory Primary School***

*I enjoy reading more now we've been reading about what it's like to be in someone else's shoes. **Year 5 pupil, Golden Grove Community School***

*This EmpathyLab work has contributed to the shaping of the school's ethos that will remain with us forever more. **Headteacher, Pembroke Dock Community School***

*The whole staff have taken it on board and they've gone with it and that doesn't happen with many initiatives. **Empathy Lead, Golden Grove Community School***

*Empathy features much more explicitly in what we teach and how we talk about things. This is helping pupils expand their horizons and perspectives - they are much more open to trying to understand life beyond Milford Haven. **Deputy Head, Milford Haven School***

*Pupils are more engaged in putting their empathy into action. They 'want to do something about it' having learned about the plight of refugees. **Assistant Headteacher, Henry Tudor School***

*It's deepened our relationships - by sharing books and having reflective time the relationship with the children has improved. You've got to know their fears, what they're proud of and what they're interested in. **Deputy Head, Lamphey Primary School***

*It has helped build stronger relationships between teacher and pupils. My class is a lot more open in the way they talk about feelings; it's breaking down the barriers between us. Our children have become much kinder and more empathetic - I've been blown away. **Deputy Head, Pennar Community School***

*Pupils are seeking out injustices and using empathy to resolve differences in the classroom and playground. There have been fewer incidences of racism since we began our empathy journey. **Headteacher, Pembroke Dock Community School***

*EmpathyLab's mixed methods of engagement have kept things moving: listening to expert speakers live; sharing successful case studies; the amazing book collections; practical activities like the Listening Switch. The wealth of resources on the portal makes me feel extremely well supported and part of a network. **Empathy Lead, Cosheston VC***

*The empathy emphasis has completely changed the atmosphere around reading - there has been a cultural shift in staff's own reading, and in the way pupils are engaging with reading - so much more positive. **Deputy Head, Milford Haven School***

## Section 1: Background

This report covers EmpathyLab's work with a cluster of nine schools in Pembrokeshire, Wales from September 2020 to December 2021.

The schools were using our empathy education programme, a multi-layered intervention running over 18 months and aiming for a 'triple-win'.



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



The report needs to be read with an understanding of the challenges posed by Covid to implementation. This was a time of extreme disruption and pressure – lockdown from January to March 2021; children at home, often in challenging family situations, with isolation affecting the development of social and emotional skills. On the return to school, many children and staff were often absent, and teaching took place in unusual groupings.

While some schools were able to integrate some empathy teaching into their online provision, for others it meant delaying the launch of their empathy teaching by three

months. Despite all this, we are delighted to be able to report very positive outcomes thanks to the efforts of many very determined, dedicated teachers.

*'The cluster undertook the programme at a very difficult time, but it was also just the right time. Empathy was never needed more, and the pandemic was making us think about the whole purpose of education, what really matters. Raising empathetic children should be an educational priority.'* **Cluster Lead, Headteacher, Golden Grove Community School**

*'ALL children should have the chance to be involved in this work. Every school in Wales should be using EmpathyLab's programmes and resources - it has helped us hugely in preparing for the new curriculum and in preparing children for the world they live in.'* **Deputy Head, Pennar Community School**

## 1.1 EmpathyLab's strategy

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> and gives children a safe way to practise social skills<sup>3</sup>. EmpathyLab's strategy is grounded in this research. Our mission is to raise an empathy-educated generation, inspired to build a more caring and less divided world. In five years' time we aim to be reaching a million children a year.

Since 2014 the organisation has developed interventions making the most of the connection between reading and empathy - a national Empathy Day; an annual *Read for Empathy* book collection, and an empathy education programme in schools.

This report focuses just on our schools programme which has evolved powerfully since early work with eleven pioneer schools, outlined in a 2016-18 evaluation report<sup>4</sup>. Since 2019, our in-depth schools' work has been in Wales, where Curriculum for Wales 2022<sup>5</sup> features empathy 35 times. This explicit and very welcome highlighting of empathy has driven great interest in Wales.

In 2019 EmpathyLab was given a grant from Nesta, whose Future Ready Fund<sup>6</sup> focused on innovation in social and emotional learning. The funding was focused on adapting our schools programme to a secondary setting. Our 2019-2020 evaluation report<sup>7</sup> shares heartening results of work with the Pentrehafod cluster in Swansea, reaching 2900 young people. In 2020 we were awarded further Nesta funding to consolidate and roll out our programme further, to a cluster of two secondary and seven primary schools in Pembroke Dock and Milford Haven, reaching 3,900 young people.

<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)

<sup>3</sup> Oatley, K., 'Fiction: simulation of social worlds', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8(1), 2016

<sup>4</sup> <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/b2f3fbc2/files/uploaded/EmpathyLab%20Report%2C%20schools%20trial%2016-18.pdf>

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

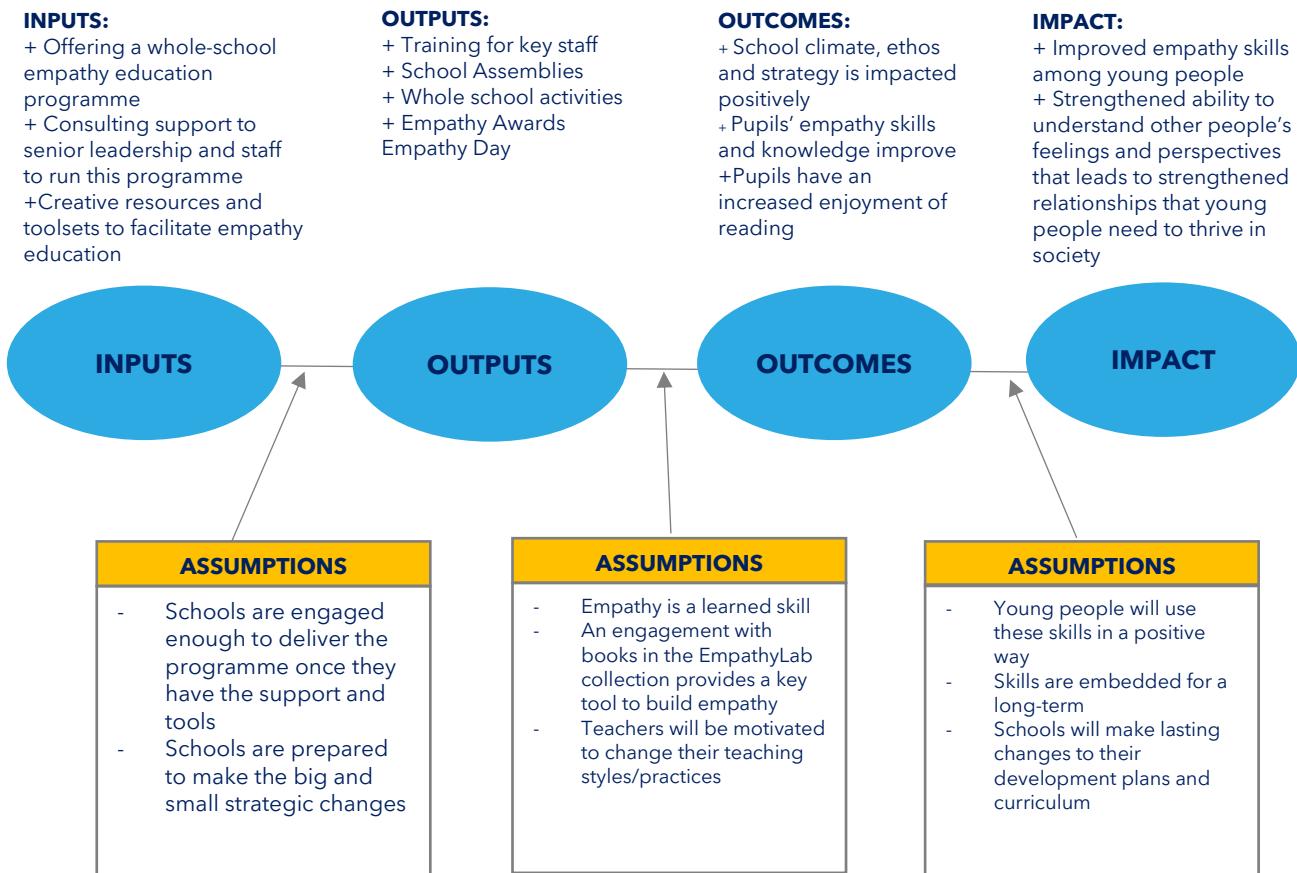
<sup>6</sup> Nesta's Future Ready Fund seeks to support early-stage, high-potential interventions focused on developing social and emotional skills

<sup>7</sup> Report on EmpathyLab's Programme in Wales 2019-20 [https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/b2f3fbc2/files/uploaded/Report%20on%20Empathy%20Lab%27s%20Programme%20in%20Wales%202019-20\\_AzG08RrQCaxzMN8XKz9j.pdf](https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/b2f3fbc2/files/uploaded/Report%20on%20Empathy%20Lab%27s%20Programme%20in%20Wales%202019-20_AzG08RrQCaxzMN8XKz9j.pdf)

The fund is for work with 11-18 year olds, and we focused especially on outcomes for pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8. However, this work was set in the context of a whole cluster and whole school programme, following research guidance that interventions tackling social and emotional skills are best approached as a whole-school enterprise.

## 1.2 Theory of change and target outcomes

EmpathyLab's 18-month education programme is underpinned by the organisation's **Theory of Change**.



## Target outcomes

### School climate, ethos and strategy is impacted positively

- Increased confidence in teachers to teach about empathy and build pupils' empathy skills
- Empathy education is embedded in school development plan and curriculum

### Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge improve so that they:

- know what empathy is and understand its importance
- have opportunities to experience and practise empathy
- strengthen their perspective-taking ability
- learn to recognise emotions
- build stronger empathic communication skills
- have more developed pro-social attitudes; put empathy into action

### Reading with an empathy focus increases pupils' enjoyment of reading

### 1.3 The schools and their motivation to participate

The participating schools were from the Pembroke Dock cluster - seven primary and one secondary school (Henry Tudor School). Milford Haven School, an additional nearby secondary school, was included.

School	Number on roll
Milford Haven School (Secondary)	1061
Henry Tudor School (Secondary)	1167
Pembroke Dock Community School	598
Lamphey Primary School	233
Pennar Community School	267
Penrhyn Church in Wales VC School	203
Golden Grove Community School	358
Monkton Priory Community Primary School	207
Cosheston VC School	57

They saw how EmpathyLab's strategy could help them respond to the requirements of the new Curriculum for Wales 2022. They were attracted to the prospect of embedding a whole-school approach to developing empathy skills, improving enjoyment of reading, supporting wellbeing and positive relationships and developing social action.

Many schools wanted to see a change in pupil behaviour. One described young people's attitudes as very '*self centered, me me me; they didn't have the ability to think about other people's feelings*'. Both secondary schools felt pupil behaviour towards others needed improving. Henry Tudor felt young people showed a lack of kindness or respect towards others and Milford Haven wanted to address '*corridor culture and the way in which pupils spoke to each other*'.

Another driver was the desire to broaden their pupils' understanding of the world and the important issues of their time in, and beyond, their own communities. Milford Haven spoke about the need for pupils to '*develop their understanding of communities beyond their own limited experience*'.

All the schools were attracted to EmpathyLab's methodology of developing empathy skills through an immersion in stories and linked creative activities. This offers learning experiences that develop the child as a whole person and enable them to better contribute to society. They learn to engage with contemporary issues as ethically informed citizens based on values developed through the sharing of reading.

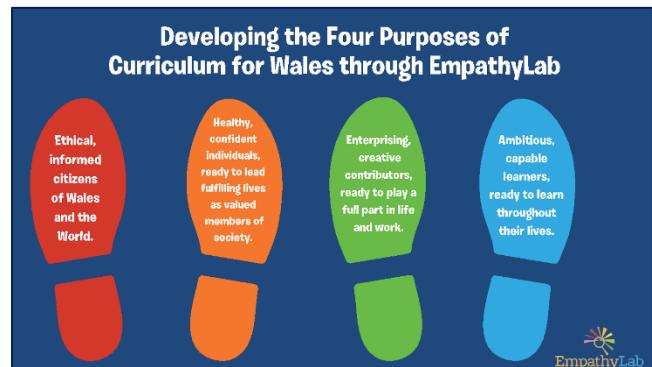
All the cluster schools also saw the benefits of sharing a common approach and ethos so that young people moving from primary to secondary would experience a sense of continuity and opportunities for pupil leadership would flourish.

## 1.4 Curriculum for Wales

The schools saw the obvious relevance of EmpathyLab's programme to the new Curriculum for Wales. Its vision is driven by Four Purposes,<sup>8</sup> one of which states, *'All our...young people will be healthy, confident individuals who are building their mental and emotional wellbeing by developing confidence, resilience and empathy.'*

The curriculum is organised into six Areas of Learning Experience (AoLE). Empathy is referenced in five of these. Particularly relevant is the statement: *'literature has significant potential to support learners' empathy, mental health and emotional well-being'*.

The curriculum's cross-cutting theme of diversity highlights *'being aware of the characteristics of others and treating others with compassion, empathy, understanding and equity, regardless of those characteristics'*<sup>10</sup>.



## 1.5 Evaluation methodology

Our evaluation framework is structured to assess impact against our priority outcomes . It is underpinned by the following key principles:

- **Robust practice:** trialling a standardised measure to produce quantitative data, alongside a range of qualitative data
- **Context:** 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:** replicable across all partner schools
- **Relevance:** tools that are genuinely useful for teachers. We rely on our partner schools to gather impact evidence, so it is important that the evaluation activities fit into a normal school day as far as possible

The framework brings together qualitative and quantitative measures which assess impact by measuring and comparing changes in target learning, skills and behaviour at several points across the project year.

Examples include pupil, teacher and parent questionnaires; pupil case studies; outcomes questionnaire for Headteachers; listening and whole school empathy audits. The full framework is in the Appendix.

<sup>8</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/the-four-purposes-of-the-curriculum-for-wales.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Curriculum for Wales guidance document 2020 <https://hwb.gov.wales/storage/afca43eb-5c50-4846-9c2d-0d56fbffba09/curriculum-for-wales-guidance-120320.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> As above

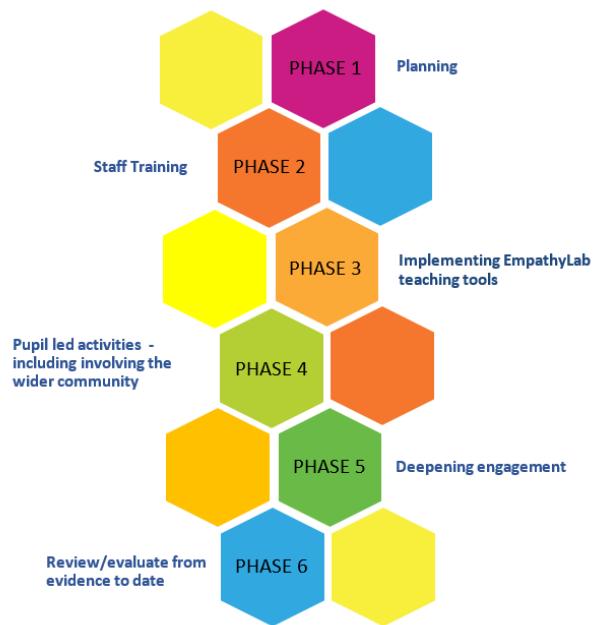
## Section 2: Programme implementation

### 2.1 Background and context

EmpathyLab's programme consists of six phases. We provide training, group facilitation, bespoke consultancy and creative resources. This helps 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 language around empathy. Pupils are then taught the science, meaning and importance of empathy in a sequence of whole school/year-group assemblies, followed up in 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:

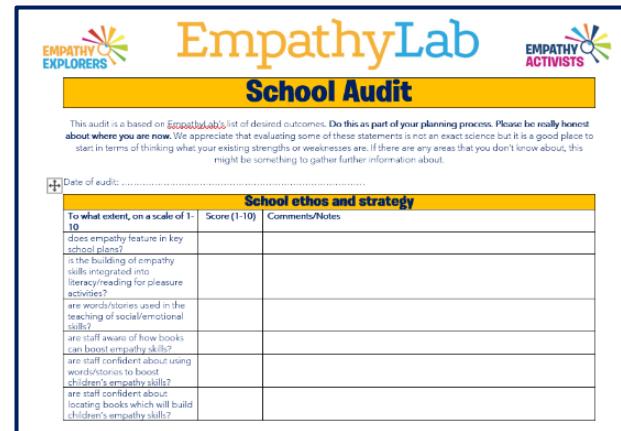
- Participating in whole-school/year-group sessions that teach empathy's meaning, science and importance
- Working with teachers who model empathetic communication skills and are using an empathy pedagogy. This uses empathy-building texts and focuses book-talk less on plot and more on exploring characters and feelings
- Reading and talking about books, with a focus on learning to see other perspectives
- Engaging with empathy themes – like refugees – through reading, research, pupil-planned social action

The programme has a strong pupil-led focus and encourages children to put empathy into action

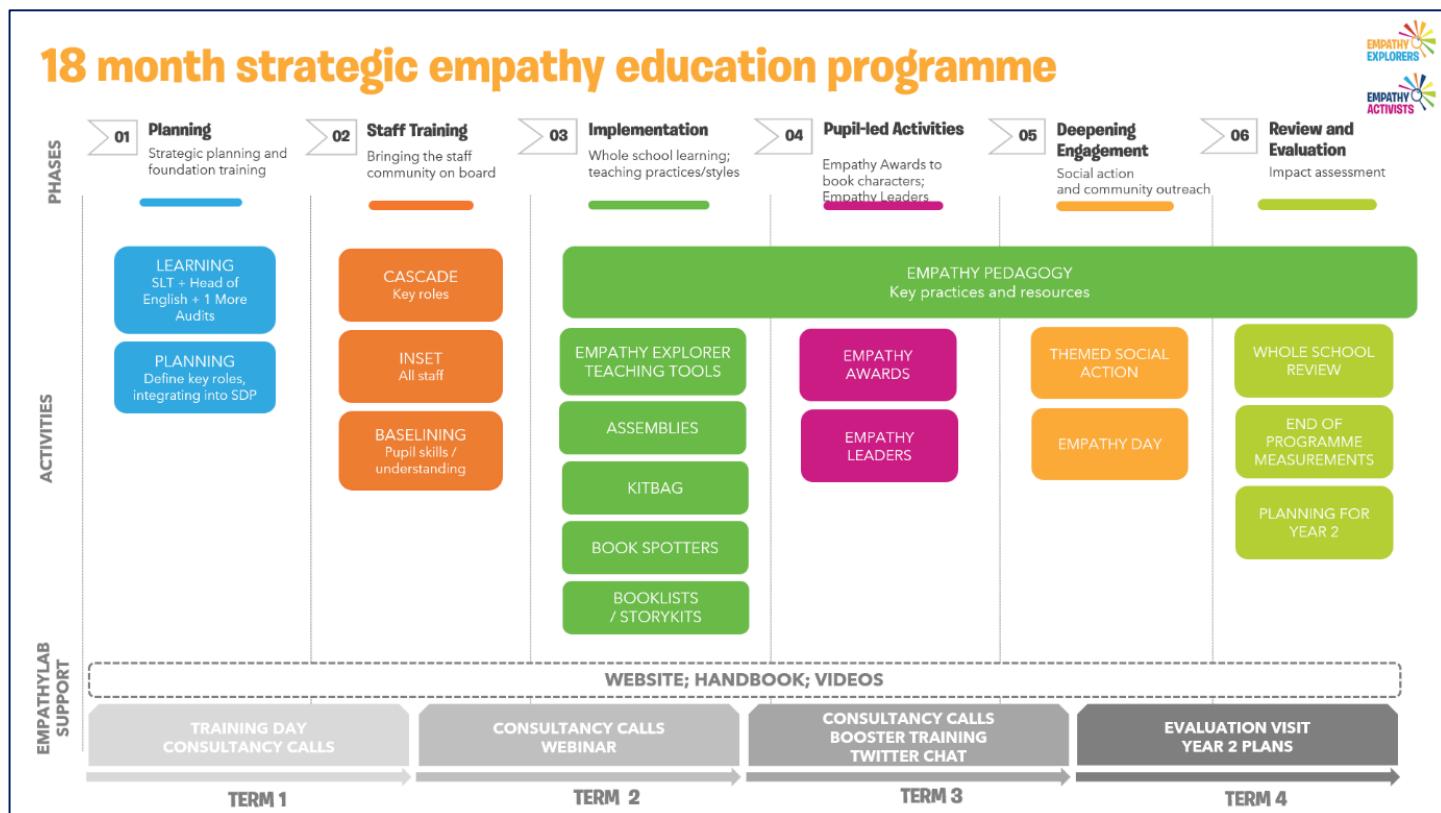
## 2.2 Implementation pathway for the cluster

### Phase 1: Planning

- Training and consultancy for senior leaders supporting the strategic integration of empathy
- EmpathyLab Leads appointed in each school - staff with existing leadership roles, in the Senior Leadership Team or areas such as Literacy and Health and Wellbeing
- Further training for the secondary schools - sharing best practice on adapting the programme at secondary level. Included creating a multi-disciplinary working party to ensure whole-school involvement
- Whole-school empathy audit and a listening audit fed into the planning process
- Each school integrated the empathy focus into key school plans, policies, values and sometimes performance management frameworks
- Governors were involved and many schools introduced the plan to families



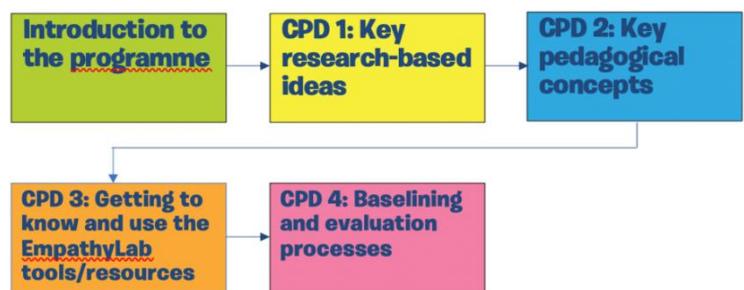
The image shows a screenshot of the EmpathyLab School Audit form. The form is titled 'School Audit' and includes sections for 'School ethos and strategy' and 'Comments/Notes'. It features a table with 10 rows, each containing a statement about empathy in school plans and activities, followed by a 'Score (1-10)' column and a 'Comments/Notes' column. The statements include questions like 'does empathy feature in key school plans?' and 'are words/stories used in the teaching of social/emotional skills?'. The 'Comments/Notes' column is empty in all rows.



## Phase 2: Staff Training

- Training to ensure all staff understood the aims, approach and tools available to achieve change
- Each Empathy Lead planned how to cascade training using the CPD resources
- In many schools, staff knowledge was developed through a staff library of empathy books, an “Empathy Spots” log of teaching experiences and examples of impact evidence.

### The EmpathyLab training

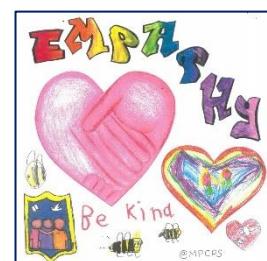


## Phase 3: Implementing teaching tools and resources

- Teachers used programme tools to teach all about empathy - what it is, how it works in humans, why it is so important, how it is different from sympathy or kindness and the role of reading in developing empathy
- Pupils began their empathy journey, developing key empathy skills through the reading and sharing of high-quality literature and other key empathy experiences
- Planned to start in January 2021, this phase was disrupted by COVID-19. For most pupils teaching was online rather than in school - difficult for an empathy programme. The extent to which schools were able to integrate empathy teaching and activities into home learning varied from school to school



**Pembroke Dock Community School focussed on a whole-school topic they named 'Don't hate, educate'**



**Monkton Priory held a competition to design a new empathy logo for their school**



**Pennar Primary School used their World Book Day celebrations to develop their empathy work across the school**

### Super Duper You!

Our younger pupils celebrated WBD in school and based their week's learning around the text from the 2020 Empathy collection 'Super Duper You'. They took part in an empathy walk, designed shoes and spoke about being unique and individual.

## Phase 4: Pupil-led activities

- Wherever possible work was pupil-led
- Schools used existing pupil voice mechanisms to identify issues of interest and linked texts. Pupils became Empathy Bookspotters, identifying and recommending empathy-boosting books to each other
- Pupils took part in Empathy Awards to highlight characters in books with exceptional empathy

**YEAR 7 NOMINATIONS**

Which character did you empathise with the most?

- The new pupil In *First Day* by Steven Camden
- Con In *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell
- Zero In *Holes* by Louis Sachar **WINNER**
- Shiv In *Boy 87* by Ele Fountain

Which character showed the most empathy?

- Stanley In *Holes* by Louis Sachar **WINNER**
- Fred In *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell
- Shewit In *Boy 87* by Ele Fountain

**Henry Tudor school library delivered the 'Empathys' programme to Year 7 and 8, announcing the results on a new empathy section on their website**

**Pupil Voice in leading Empathy**

The outgoing Empathy ambassadors and the current Empathy ambassadors, along with the senior Empathy Team, have constructed their own designs for an Empathy Garden.

**Pupil Empathy Ambassadors at Lamphey School designed and built an Empathy Garden in the foyer to display books and highlight acts of empathy**

## Phase 5: Deepening engagement

- Schools focused on ways to put empathy skills into action, planning ways to get involved in social action in their local communities and beyond
- Pupils read books about identity, homelessness, racism, refugees etc. The emphasis was on deeply empathising with those in challenging life circumstances, feeling a sense of solidarity, and basing action on what would really help
- Families were engaged through a special Family Pack with simple, character-based activities
- Around Empathy Day, many schools used Empathy Walks to connect their empathy work with their local communities, explore issues close to home and decide what action to take
- On Empathy Day itself, young people interviewed authors and made posters with Empathy Resolutions



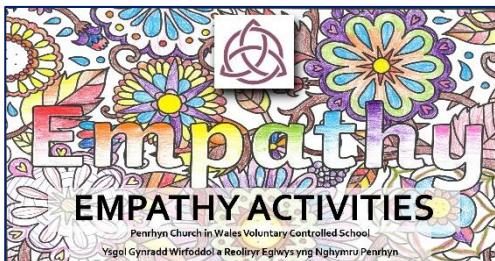
**Pupils from Pembroke Dock, Milford Haven, Henry Tudor and Pennar Primary interviewed author Kwame Alexander**



**Pupils from Golden Grove School with their Empathy Resolutions on 10 June 2021, Empathy Day.**

## Phase 6: Review and evaluation

Schools used a range of tools to evaluate the impact of their empathy work and inform planning for future work. These are covered elsewhere in the report.



**Example of evaluation: EmpathyLab Lead Teachers checked in termly with the project management team and produced Powerpoint presentations on each term's progress - such as these from Penrhyn & Cosheston schools.**

## 2.3 Developing the programme in a secondary setting

Our previous work in Swansea had developed our existing schools programme - until then largely primary-focused - in a secondary school setting. The two secondary schools in the Pembroke Dock cluster built on the lessons learned and focused on:

### Developing a greater strategic focus

- Secondary-specific training helped schools establish cross-curricular working parties to drive a whole school focus on becoming an empathic school
- Strategically-positioned staff were identified to form the working parties and drive change
- The emphasis was on *all* staff providing the experiences needed to create an empathic culture

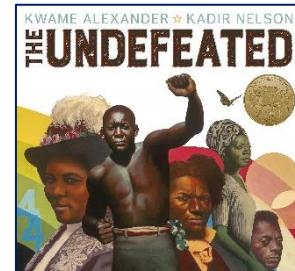
### Developing a working group and getting all staff involved

- Milford Haven ran a training event for staff from all the Areas of Learning Experience. Teachers had support to create resources and all subjects got involved. In Science and DT they looked at how empathy skills were relevant to the achievements of creators and inventors. In Maths they did a starter activity exploring how feedback was delivered, and how empathy skills could improve this.

### Using diverse and contemporary texts in a cross-cutting way

*'This worked really well, and made the pupils aware of the holistic nature of empathy in the school community.' **Empathy Lead, Milford Haven School***

- Both schools focused on using diverse and contemporary texts to embed empathy teaching across the curriculum. This helped them draw on the authentic contexts encouraged in Curriculum for Wales and increase engagement by exploring issues which really resonate with young people
- Milford Haven developed empathy-focused schemes of learning alongside their English curriculum texts. The



Read for Empathy collection texts have also become an important part of the Year 7 & 8 Health and Wellbeing curriculum. Daily time is allocated to reading and discussing key texts, using EmpathyLab's book talk-questions

- In Years 7 and 8 at Henry Tudor Humanities, Languages, Literacy and Communication; Health and Wellbeing and Expressive Arts all have 'core' empathy texts as part of their enquiries. Other Areas of Learning Experience have empathy-focused reading lists linking to core lines of enquiry. This is giving pupils exposure to a huge variety of empathy-boosting books

*'We are taking a whole-school approach to our empathy journey as we develop learning experiences for the new Curriculum for Wales. So no matter which subjects students are taking, they will find an increased focus on empathy in their learning. Our faculties, in conjunction with our librarian, have developed packs highlighting empathy-rich resources relating to their subjects.'* **From Henry Tudor School's**

## Developing the reading culture

Both secondary schools introduced key empathy-focused reading for pleasure practices:

- Developing teachers' knowledge of high-quality, empathy-boosting literature
- Investing in and promoting empathy-rich literature in school/classroom libraries
- Allocating daily time for teachers to read aloud to Year 7 and 8 pupils
- Creating inviting, accessible reading spaces
- Raising the profile of the books, through school displays, school websites<sup>11</sup> and school library facilities

### 'READ FOR EMPATHY' BOOKFLIX IN OUR LIBRARY



⚠ Don't forget to check out the full range of empathy-friendly reads in our library: [Key Stage 3](#) | [Key Stage 4](#) | [Sixth Form](#)

## Involving young leaders

- Milford Haven pupils were asked what social issues they would like to understand better. Their responses have informed text selection across the curriculum and for shared Years 7 and 8 \*reads. At Henry Tudor pupils have helped review their new school vision, and have emphasised empathy's importance
- Both schools plan to appoint Empathy Leaders or Activists within their existing School Council and House structures. They will help lead empathy work, including ways to take social action in the community.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Tudor School's dedicated empathy page on their school website: <https://www.ysgolharritudur.cymru/empathy.php>

## Section 3: Impact on school strategy & culture

### 3.1 School planning and priorities

The programme supports schools in their prioritisation of empathy education. Phase 1 is dedicated to this and we saw fundamental changes across the cluster. All schools made empathy an explicit focus in their school improvement planning. Many also integrated it into their programmes of professional learning. At Henry Tudor this includes training on diversity and supporting learners with mental health issues.

Schools have integrated empathy training into other priorities and made thoughtful links to pre-existing initiatives. Some changed vision statements or behaviour policies.

*'Staff, pupils and community stakeholders have been consulted about the school's vision for the new curriculum. Empathy has emerged as a key value. We have established structures to ensure that EmpathyLab's programme is not just a 'once and done' project, but something that will increasingly contribute to a more positive school ethos.'*

**Assistant Headteacher, Henry Tudor School**

One of the programme's stand-out impacts has been the extent to which schools have used recommended empathy texts to drive their curriculum design. They have used EmpathyLab's *Read for Empathy* collections and book selection criteria to support design that creates meaningful contexts for learning right across the curriculum. The books have provided authentic contexts to engage learners with issues that matter to them and their communities. This creates learning opportunities that build towards the skills and characteristics in the new curriculum's Four Purposes.

*'EmpathyLab's approach of using high-quality, empathy-boosting texts to drive and focus learning has really supported us to develop new curriculum plans with a much stronger focus on authentic learning.'*

**Assistant Headteacher, Henry Tudor School**

*'Using novels from the empathy reading list has given us a way to teach trickier issues such as racism, refugees and diversity. We used Onjali Rauf's novels - these (and others) became an anchor for pupils' learning and provided numerous opportunities for discussion and collaboration, writing and making authentic links within their community, Wales and the wider world.'*

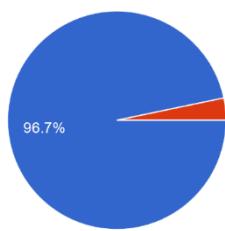
**Teacher, Pembroke Dock Community**

This also led to excellent opportunities for working across the cluster. The primary and secondary schools worked together to share their knowledge of texts which could be used as the basis for meaningful learning opportunities.

### 3.2 Pedagogy & curriculum

96.7% of teachers reported that they felt more confident and more able to teach empathy skills. Critically, 92% (98% of primary and 88% of secondary teachers) said they had changed their teaching practices to incorporate EmpathyLab approaches.

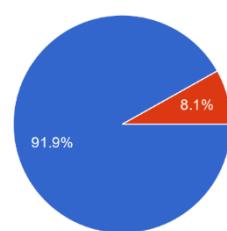
122 responses



Over the last 18 months I have gained confidence or learned new skills in teaching about empathy.

123 responses

Yes  
No



Over the last 18 months I have changed my classroom practice to incorporate the EmpathyLab approach.

Yes  
No

*'We're delving deeper into texts than we ever have before and it's led to conversations that we didn't have before. We're looking at such a diverse range of texts exploring topics we haven't dealt with before. It's really helping us teach in a very cross-curricular way and pull together different elements like literacy and health and wellbeing.'*

**Empathy Lead, Pembroke Dock Community School**

*'I've always been afraid of opening a can of worms about difficult feelings. With everything these children have been through, we've taken the time to use books to really explore the themes and taken the time to talk.'* **Deputy Head, Lamphey Primary School**

Significant structural changes have been made to teaching arrangements and school spaces. Many schools created high-status displays and spaces dedicated to empathy, including empathy book collections and spaces, empathy steps, a school empathy logo and mascot, empathy book-inspired outdoor learning areas and an Empathy Garden. Part of the pedagogical changes made in all schools has been around the teaching of reading, driven by a focus on reading being a vehicle for building relationships, understanding and perspective-taking.

Many, including both secondary schools, have changed the structure of the school day to create more opportunities for shared reading for pleasure with an empathy focus, including the use of a shared class novel.



*'We felt children weren't enjoying reading and standards weren't at the levels we wanted. We weren't really delving deep into characters' feelings and how those feelings change... we've benefited from the EmpathyLab approach and texts because they're so rich and vibrant. It's helping us to really talk about the issues and characters and make meaningful connections.'* **Teacher, Pembroke Dock Community School**

Henry Tudor has changed the Year 8 curriculum to include an extra fortnightly English lesson that is a dedicated 'empathy reading lesson' while Milford Haven have implemented use of the EmpathyLab book-talk questions in their form-time sessions.



*'I have noticed an increased positivity and excitement about our empathy book and fortnightly library empathy lesson. Every lesson with my Year 8 groups, they ask if we're going to the library and this is a massive attitudinal shift from the previous negativity about reading. Pupils are enjoying getting to know the intricacies of the characters.'* **Teacher, Henry Tudor School**

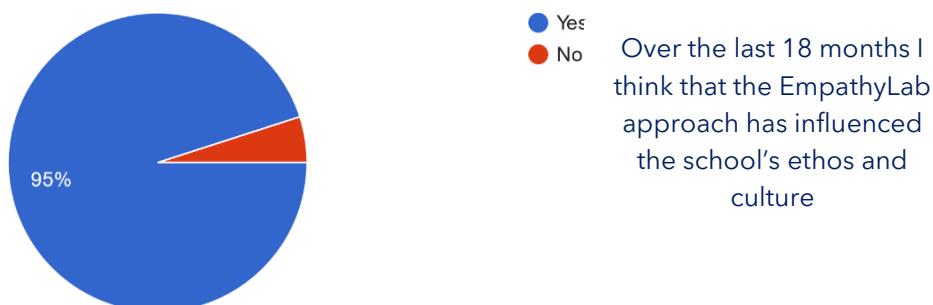
*'EmpathyLab teaching tools are being widely used to support the development of empathy skills. Introducing the book-talk questions to form time has had a really positive impact. They are able to engage so much more with the themes in the books. And the story toolkits are a great support for form tutors too.'* **Empathy Lead, Milford Haven School.**

### 3.3 School culture and ethos

Another important factor emerging from teacher feedback was the impact on their confidence to address themes that previously they may have considered too sensitive, controversial or even taboo. This is particularly significant in the context of the Four Purposes at the heart of Curriculum for Wales.

95% of teachers surveyed said that the EmpathyLab approach had positively influenced the school's ethos and culture.

121 responses



Many teachers commented on the programme's impact on teacher-pupil relationships.

*'We are really beginning to have a shift in attitudes with pupils and also staff. We are now focusing on spreading the empathy message within our community. Empathy isn't an add on - we are creating a climate where it runs through everything and is part of our ethos. Staff and pupils agree that our empathy journey has definitely been school-changing and is potentially both life and world-changing.'* **Empathy Lead, Pembroke Dock Community School**

*'The conversations that we have with the children have enabled stronger relationships to be built and there has been greater tolerance and acceptance of others. A positive culture is certainly developing and we want to build on that.'* **Headteacher, Golden Grove Community School**

*'Having empathy at the forefront of our teaching, discussing it openly with the children, reading books and just becoming more aware of how other people react has made the children more aware of other people's behaviours and why they respond in certain ways. As a result those playground squabbles were minimized; they just seemed to start to understand each other.'* **Teacher, Pembroke Dock Community Primary School**

Many schools used our recommended empathy texts to support pupils on their return to school after lockdown and said that their empathy work supported pupil wellbeing, specifying improved relationships, ability to share feelings, improved perspective-taking and understanding of others. Henry Tudor uses *Empathy Dilemmas* during mentor time to address any wellbeing concerns.

*'I feel much more confident in discussing big issues like bereavement, food poverty, refugees.'* **Teacher, Pennar Community School**

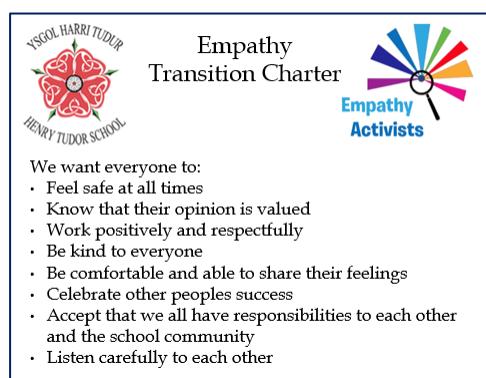
*'I thoroughly enjoy the empathy elements to my teaching. It has allowed me to develop classroom discussion and pupil understanding of social needs in a safe and meaningful environment.'* **Teacher, Henry Tudor School**

### 3.4 Cluster working

Many schools found that having a shared empathy focus across the whole cluster - with a shared language and common approach - is reaping real benefits. Children and staff have a tangible sense of being part of something bigger, with a sense of community and belonging which in turn contributes to individual and collective wellbeing.

The cluster developed an Empathy Charter to support the transition from primary to secondary school. Representatives from each primary school and a team of Year 7 Henry Tudor pupils worked together on how to address pupils' concerns.

Immediate benefits have been seen. Children arriving in Year 7 are already familiar with at least one part of the school culture, a continuation of how things were done at their primary school. They recognise familiar elements such as empathy displays and book collections. This all provides a sense of continuity and reassurance.



Over time, as children are immersed in empathy-focused approaches from Foundation Phase through secondary school, teachers feel confident that this long-term approach will have an impact on the empathy skills and other outcomes on which we have reported.

*'As a Head, it's been incredibly positive that our cluster of schools has come together so strongly with this shared aim, in particular to aid the children on their transition to and through secondary school.'* **Headteacher, Golden Grove Community School**

*'Working relationships have definitely improved across the cluster.'* **Empathy Lead, Pennar Community School**

### **Addressing cross-cutting themes, particularly relationships and sexuality education (RSE)**

Schools describe how well the *Read for Empathy* collections and recommended teaching approaches support curriculum design that creates authentic and meaningful contexts for learning and easily address the new curriculum's cross-cutting themes. In particular, several schools have found strong links to the teaching of relationships and sexuality education (RSE) which is a mandatory element of the new curriculum.

*'The EmpathyLab books have been a huge benefit in constructing our RSE programme, and used as a discussion stimulus for topics such as relationships, violence, safety, rights and equity - all key RSE themes. We mapped our books against the six RSE themes to see if any were not addressed. EmpathyLab suggested books linked to missing themes. These now fit in well to our class libraries and children access them as class reads or when reading for pleasure. Staff use the audit when looking to teach a particular RSE theme, helped by knowing that colleagues have already recommended the texts and deemed them developmentally appropriate for their class.'* **Head of Upper KS2, Pembroke Dock Community School**

### **3.5 Family involvement**

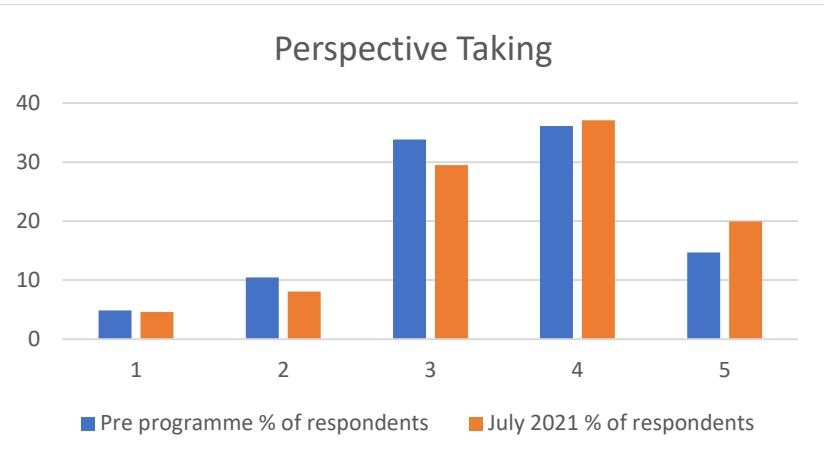
EmpathyLab sees family involvement as a crucial factor in building a generation of empathy-educated young people. The pandemic complicated this area of work, but one intervention that was particularly effective was a Family Pack, designed to bring families together around Empathy Day to explore, understand and practise empathy.

81% of teachers reported that families had learned new strategies for using stories to build empathy.

The evaluation framework included pre and post-programme questionnaires for parents, asking them about changes in children's empathy skills and their attitudes towards reading. Although results vary between schools, overall parents report a noticeable change in three key empathy skills - perspective taking, naming and recognising emotions and pro-social motivation.

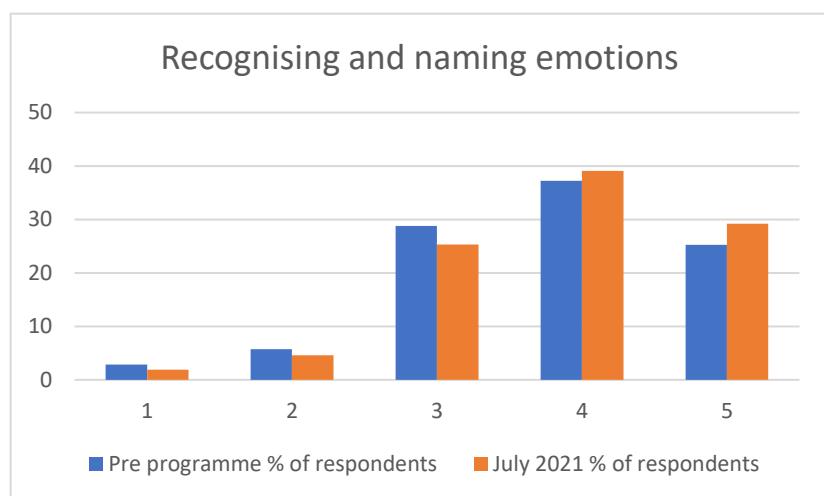
By the end of the programme a greater percentage of parents felt that their children were able to put themselves in someone else's shoes 'extremely well' - an increase of 5%

**On a scale of 1-5 how well do you feel your children are able to put themselves in someone else's shoes and understand someone else's feelings (where 1 is not well and 5 is extremely well)?**



There was also a positive change in the scores for children's ability to recognise emotions. An increase of just under 5% of parents scored their child as being able to name and recognise emotions 'extremely well' by the end of programme.

**On a scale of 1-5 how well would you say your children are able to recognise and name their own emotions and the emotions of others (where 1 is not well and 5 is extremely well)?**

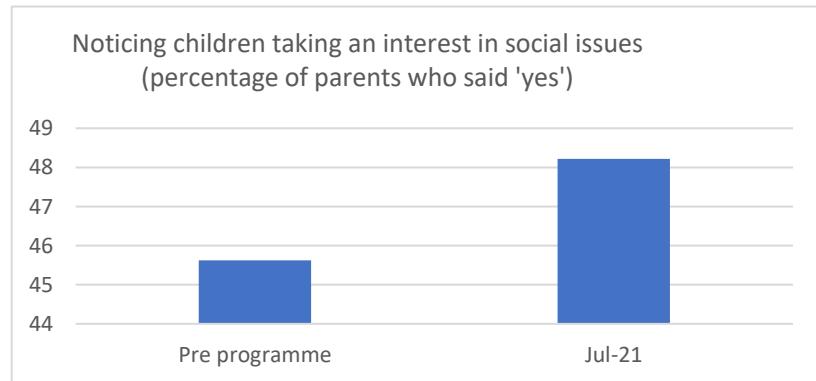


There was also a slight increase (2.5%) in the percentage of parents noticing their children expressing an interest in social issues by the end of the programme.

*'Has taken an interest in Pride Week and been discussing it.'*  
*'Becoming interested in politics and party strategies to help minority groups.'*  
*'Buys Big Issue and takes an interest in helping the homeless.'*

**Parent responses**

**Have you noticed your child taking an interest in social issues and wanting to take action?**

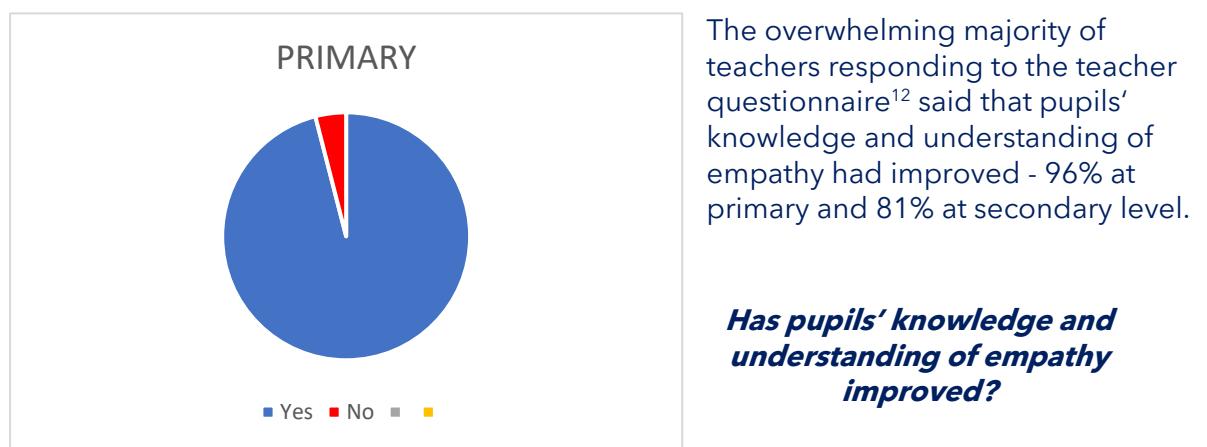


## Section 4: Impact on pupils' understanding of empathy

Evaluation data shows a substantial impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of empathy, including the four targeted empathy skills.

As in previous work, we found that implementing our schools' programme had a powerful impact on young people's knowledge and understanding of what empathy is, why it matters and how it can be developed.

Qualitative data - both from teacher responses and assessment of pupils' work in class - shows a substantial impact on the development of empathy skills. Staff report a sea-change in pupil behaviour and an increase in pupil's empathetic activity. This tallies with the findings of our 2019-20 work with Swansea schools.



*'As I walked around the school during Empathy Day the buzz and excitement was electric. Every child we spoke to from our youngest to our oldest could explain to us what empathy was and why it is important to empathise with others. I thought that was so powerful that we are able to do that.'* **Empathy Lead, Pembroke Dock Primary School**

*'Pupils now understand that it is not just about feeling sorry for someone but rather trying to imagine what another person may be experiencing.'* **Empathy Lead, Golden Grove**

*'What we've been doing makes me feel more empathic and I know how to show empathy.'* **Year 7 pupil, Henry Tudor School**

Feedback from teachers in Henry Tudor's Year 7 Transition Curriculum team is particularly encouraging. In September 2021 they reported '*a notable improvement in Year 7 pupils' knowledge, understanding and application of empathy*'. These are pupils who the previous year had been part of the programme in their primary schools.

<sup>12</sup> 114 teachers from across eight (six primary and both secondary) schools in the cluster responded to the teacher survey, giving a broad representation of teacher feedback from a range of age groups and school contexts.

## Pupils' reflections on their reading

You can feel it through reading stories, even if you haven't experienced it yourself.

Empathy is about feelings and actions.

Reading is about different people, who might have different personalities from yourself, helps us to become more empathetic.

Empathy is different to sympathy, and means to feel what someone else is feeling.

Stories give us different viewpoints.

Stories show us different settings and environments and open our eyes to them.

It's important to be an empathetic school as it would make the school nicer; there'd be nobody being mean and we'd try to understand what people think and feel.

Stories are powerful tools to experience emotions...used to create new worlds so you can experience and empathise with things you wouldn't normally experience.

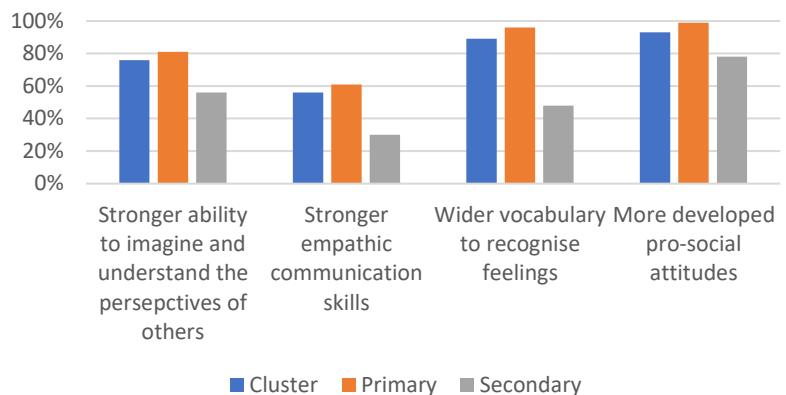
I felt for Sami in *Boy Everywhere* by A.M. Dassu when he was in the boat, feeling sick and scared. I could understand the feeling, even though I haven't been in the same situation.

## Section 5: Impact on four target empathy skills

The programme targets the development of four specific empathy skills, measured through a teacher questionnaire. Teachers report notable improvements in these skills.



Percentage of teachers reporting a positive change in the four key EmpathyLab skills



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

One of the biggest reported impacts has been the pupils' ability to recognise, name and share their own and others' feelings. This reflects the structure of the programme which emphasises this in the initial phases because it underpins the development of other empathy skills.

89% of teachers in the cluster reported seeing an improvement in the vocabulary pupils were using to describe feelings. Young people such as the quote on the right from a Year 5 Golden Grove pupil also reported changes in being able to name, discuss and share feelings.

**Learning more about empathy makes me feel more like I can understand how people feel.**

*'They can share their emotions and also put names to their emotions now, which before they found difficult... We have found using empathy texts as a stimulus for new topics has built their perspective-taking ability and also improved their language for emotions. Pupils are more able to discuss their feelings freely and put names to emotions which they found difficult previously. **Empathy Lead, Pembroke Dock**'*

## Pupil case study: developing the vocabulary to share feelings

### Pembroke Dock Community School

'We had a child who found expressing their own emotions and identifying emotions in others particularly difficult. Due to the amount of time spent discussing empathy and characters' emotions, for instance in 'Boy at the back of the class', 'Ghost' and 'The Ickabog', we noticed a change in this pupil. They began to use phrases such as, 'I know he's upset and I should leave him alone' - not only recognising emotions, but knowing how to act in a situation, which they would not have been able to do previously. As they became more confident in recognising their own emotions, it enabled them to self-regulate without an adult prompting them.'

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

Another stand-out result has been the impact of the work on pupils' ability to imagine, understand and reflect on other people's perspectives and feelings. This is reflected in feedback from both teachers and pupils.

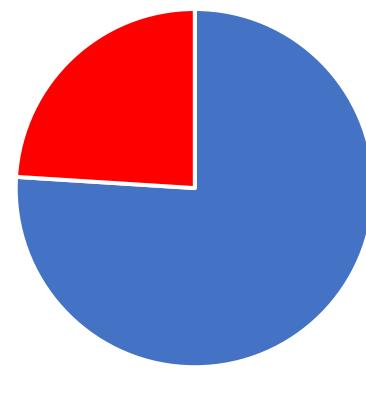
76% of teachers reported an improvement in pupils' ability to take the perspective of others. The



Empathy Walks, new to the programme this year, were a particularly brilliant tool for developing perspective-taking within schools' local communities.

**Has pupils' knowledge and understanding of empathy improved?**

### PERSPECTIVE TAKING



■ YES ■ NO ■ ■

*'Pupils are more able to see things from a different perspective other than just their own. They also understand that it is not just about feeling sorry for someone but rather trying to imagine what another person may be experiencing.'* **Empathy Lead, Golden Grove**

*'It's helped us to explore and challenge any judgmental mindsets, within the safety of the book. Sometimes they're in bubbles of stereotypical attitudes and books can gently change mindsets.'* **Empathy Lead, Pennar Community School**

*'I've found I can empathise with my friend who is in a large family and has to share everything. I feel lucky I don't have that same struggle.'* **Year 7 pupil, Henry Tudor School**

Year 6 pupils at Monkton Primary School said their empathy reading had helped them develop their perspective-taking skills:

**If you haven't been through it, the empathy books help you to understand what it must be like for someone.**

**I am reading this book about a girl - her father is in prison. Sometimes people end up in prison. This book has helped me to understand just how hard this must be.**

### **Stronger empathetic communication skills**

As pupils develop their emotional vocabulary and their ability to understand and reflect on other people's perspectives and feelings, their empathic communication skills also improve.

*'Since reading the books and talking about empathy, I always think before I speak.'*  
**Year 6 pupil, Monkton Primary School**

*'Some pupils seem different around their friends now - they share and express how they feel more.'* **Year 7 pupil - Henry Tudor School**

In the teacher survey, just over half the teachers said they'd seen an improvement in pupils' empathetic communication skills - deep listening and discussion. This emerged strongly from other data collection.

Teachers have noticed that pupils have become more comfortable discussing and sharing feelings. While many felt that there was more progress to be made, they said that a fundamental shift had begun.

*'Pupils are wanting to have discussions about their emotions. They're a lot more expressive in what they want and how we can help them. That's been one of the greatest things that's come from the programme.'* **Empathy Lead, Milford Haven School**

*'Before, when talking about things linked to Relationships and Sex Education there were things you felt awkward to talk about ...now there's so much more open talking to the teachers...the girls are talking quite openly about how many have started their periods and worries about growing up and their mental health. It's created a shift.'* **Empathy Lead, Pembroke Dock Community Primary School**

*'The picture books are a really good way in to talk about some difficult issues - it just helps us to talk and for the children to connect; with a text, they find it easier to talk about it.'* **Empathy Lead, Golden Grove**

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

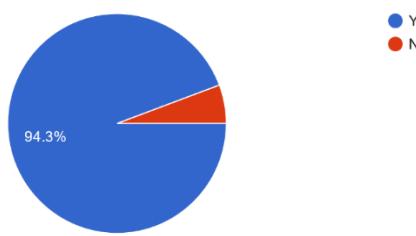
While all the empathy skills are inter-related, developing more pro-social attitudes and taking action tend to grow from the development of the other empathy skills. This is reflected in the structure of the programme, in which pro-social attitudes and social action is a focus in Phases 4 and 5. With the impact of the pandemic, most schools had not yet begun these phases at the time of this evaluation. Nonetheless, there were encouraging signs of what might be achieved as schools continue on this journey.

Pupils say their empathy work is affecting how they think and the actions they take.

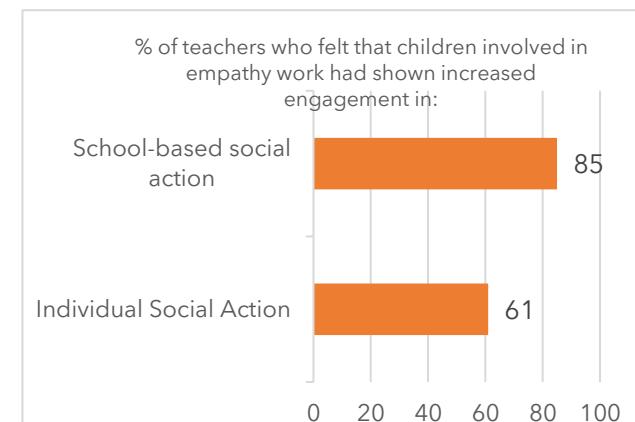
*'The Arrival' is one of the most meaningful books I have ever read. It made me realise how lucky I am to be born into this culture, and my bad days are probably fairly good days for most refugees. We need to be a welcoming community for refugees - they are prepared to die just to live in my sort of country.'* **Year 7 pupil, Henry Tudor School**

Many teachers said that the programme had helped them focus on how their school and pupils engage in social action and what else they could do.

123 responses



Over the last 18 months I think that the school has increased its engagement in social action



*'There has been a noticeable difference in how pupils respond to racist incidents - they don't allow themselves to be bystanders, instead telling other pupils what is acceptable. Children call out what they think is unacceptable before issues are even raised with staff.'* **Headteacher, Pembroke Dock Community Primary School**

*'I've noticed the children becoming more considerate of one another and realising that their actions and words can have an impact on their friends.'* **Teacher, Golden Grove**

Several schools have seen pupils inspired to take action after reading an empathy text. The Empathy Walks were also an excellent catalyst for changing attitudes and inspiring social action. Pupils and families identified local issues they wanted to do something about and created empathy resolutions.

In **Pennar Community School**, the school council developed a list of actions they wanted to take as a result of their empathy walks. This led to their '100 challenges project', a week in which children completed a range of challenges to raise awareness and support a number of charities.



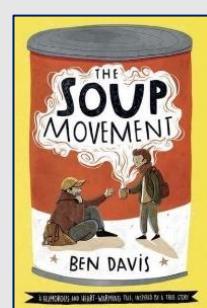
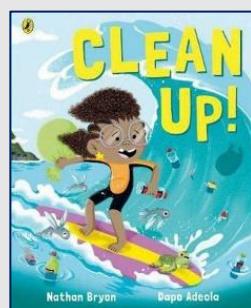
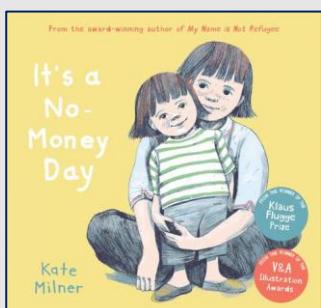
*'The empathy walks were one of the highlights. From these the children could develop actions focused on how to improve their local community.'* **Teacher, Pennar Community School**

### Case study: books that helped develop social action

*'A pupil in my class noticed how much litter there was on her walk and made an empathy resolution to always pick up her litter. She said it was causing damage to our planet and felt empathy for people having to live in this environment and also who have to pick up the litter. In class we shared the book 'Clean Up' which really resonated with her.'* **Year 1 Teacher, Pembroke Dock Community School**

*'For years children have brought in tins for harvest which we give to a local foodbank. It turns out they had no idea where it went or what it was for, or even what a foodbank was. We used Kate Milner's 'It's a No Money Day' to explore the issues including the concept of home in relation to refugees - we have a local refugee camp but have never explored their understanding of this. This led to the children wanting to take action and they raised money to buy gifts for people at the camp.'* **Empathy Lead, Pennar Community School**

*'After reading Ben Davis' 'Soup Movement', the school collected hygiene products, nappies and health products from staff and parents. These were delivered to Pembroke Dock School who act as a hub for Homeless Pembrokeshire.'* **From Henry Tudor School's website**



## Section 6: Impact on reading for pleasure and writing

EmpathyLab's previous work has found that a systematic empathy focus helps increase pupils' enjoyment of reading, which research shows is a vital factor in both their literacy progress and life outcomes. A number of factors come into play:

- An emphasis on characters and feelings increases pupils' 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 uses fun, creative activities to engage 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
- Teachers are supported to increase their confidence in choosing suitable books, using EmpathyLab's criteria for empathy-rich texts
- Training encourages teachers to read aloud regularly, 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

Quantitative and qualitative data collected from staff and pupils tells a strong story of improvements in attitudes to reading. Encouragingly, this was similar at the secondary schools, where levels of reading enjoyment are generally much lower.

- 57% of teachers surveyed said that pupils were reading more for pleasure
- 56% said that pupils were reading a wider range

*'Pupils are definitely reading more often. Planned opportunities mean that it is not left to chance, level of home support or pupil engagement.'* **Assistant Headteacher, Henry Tudor School**

*'We're really noticing the impact on enjoyment of reading - children are reading more widely, and enjoying reading more. They love choosing from the empathy book boxes around the school, and we're noticing more informal book discussions between classes.'* **Empathy Lead, Pennar Community School**

*'There's been a notable increase in reading for pleasure and pupils are reading a more diverse range of texts. A greater knowledge and availability of authors and genres has improved their choices.'* **Headteacher, Pembroke Dock Community School**

Several schools felt that the opportunity to engage directly with authors from EmpathyLab's author partnerships had a big impact on the pupils involved.

*'We have made links with authors through EmpathyLab including Rashmi Sirdeshpande, Onjali Rauf and Kwame Alexander. These were fantastic experiences which inspired them to read a wider and more diverse range of texts.'* **Empathy Lead, Pembroke Dock Community Primary School**



Henry Tudor pupils in Year 7 and 8 reported that they were reading more as a result of the school's empathy focus, both quantity and variety of authors and themes. Most pupils interviewed could name a range of texts they had read and enjoyed as part of their empathy work, including titles they said they would not have chosen for themselves.

**I enjoyed reading about Matthew Henson in *Race to the Frozen North* by Catherine Johnson [core empathy text], and how he persevered against the odds to achieve his dream.**

**I've been reading more since I came to Henry Tudor School - there's more choice and I'm finding what I enjoy.**

**I'm reading more because of learning about empathy.**

These boys at Golden Grove Community School explained what had changed for them:

**I enjoy reading more now we've been reading about what it's like to be in someone else's shoes.**

**I enjoy reading books with empathy because when I have family problems, it helps me a lot because if I'm in a situation when I've read a book and it's the same thing then I know what to do.**

## Impact on writing

Many schools commented on the impact they are seeing on children's writing. The factors identified were more extensive classroom dialogue about characters, improved perspective-taking skills and more developed emotional vocabulary.

*'Excellent examples of expressive writing have been inspired by pupils' study of empathy rich texts/topics and by Empathy Day 2021.'* **Assistant Headteacher, Henry Tudor School**

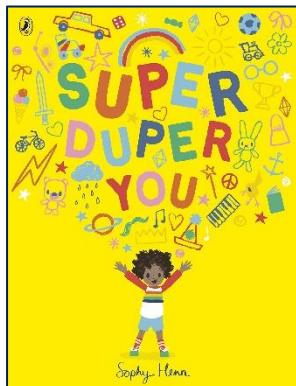
*'We've seen a real improvement. When writing first-person narrative, the children really are putting themselves in the shoes of others...without those empathy skills, they wouldn't be able to write at that level and now they're able to talk so much more, and openly and it really does kind of inspire that imagination.'* **Head of Literacy, Language and Communication, Pembroke Dock Community School**

## Section 7: Conclusions, Reflections and Next Steps

### 7.1 Conclusion

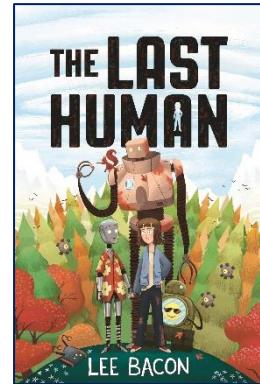
#### The power of empathy-rich books

The teachers in the project eagerly grasped EmpathyLab's challenge to use books differently, and to trust the power of quality literature, supported by empathic discussion and listening, to effect change. The guidance to 'trust the book to do the work' proved potent, and teachers were surprised at the shift made by focusing on character and feelings more than plot. This opened up more honest and heartfelt conversations about emotions, which in turn built deeper, stronger relationships and a more empathetic school culture.



Teachers were also struck by the way very contemporary, diverse books made it possible to explore difficult issues which they might previously avoided, such as bereavement, racism or homelessness. This resulted in pupils widening their horizons and helped challenge stereotyped attitudes.

Teachers found that the approach is sharply relevant to the new Curriculum for Wales, and used the books as a springboard for curriculum design.



#### The importance of quality adult interventions

Through the pandemic and its aftermath children are experiencing long term disruption. In the face of this, emotional intelligence in schools is particularly key, especially empathy, so that children feel understood, and can also understand what others are going through. Evaluation showed the importance of quality support from trained adults with a deep understanding, delivering a consistent empathy experience. Senior leadership teams played a key role in supporting a whole-school approach, with empathy language, learning and experiences embedded in all elements of school life. The ongoing, long-term importance of the work was recognised and embraced.

#### Role of dynamic school librarians

Dynamism is added to the work by the involvement of a strategic secondary school librarian. The librarian can make the library a hub to engage pupils in empathy-rich texts and activities, and can also play an important role in supporting shared cluster work and inspiring primary book-related work.

#### Shared work across a cluster

Schools welcomed the way the programme had helped build a stronger way to work together across the cluster. One aspect of this was the sharing of ideas and good practice; another was joining up empathy-based transition work.

Leaders recognised the importance of embedding empathy-focused approaches in primary school which are then picked up and reinforced at secondary school. The continuity of the experience has potential to produce more positive outcomes for 11-18-year-olds.

### **Families**

Empathy education begins at home, as children learn from their family to communicate empathically and understand and value others' perspectives. The work in Pembroke Dock saw promising first steps to build parental understanding of the significance of empathy, and support for the work in school. Despite pandemic challenges, many families used the simple, accessible Family Activity Pack, and parents' response to the questionnaire sent home by schools show that they parents supported an empathy education programme and were noticing the difference it made to children.

## **7.2 Reflections**

The schools where the Empathy Lab approach has had the deepest impact have SLT and strategically placed staff members driving it forward. The role of a committed SLT member with a deep understanding of this work is central to its progress. In secondary schools, it is helpful if an SLT member leads the assemblies introducing the empathy work to pupils - this signals the importance the school attaches to it.

The Nesta-funded work has shown that empathy education is relevant right across the school, and in all subject areas, not just English. The EmpathyLab approach supports cross-curricula planning and authentic learning contexts for Curriculum for Wales.

Nesta funding allowed us to experiment with evaluation methodologies, particularly a self-completion child questionnaire called EmQue, measuring changes in various areas of empathy. We found it did not align closely with measuring our target skills, and quite onerous for schools. We aim to use the experience to develop a more tailored tool and hope eventually to share this with partners.

EmpathyLab's work has always had an emphasis on social action. There is no point in children learning about empathy without support for them to put it into action. The introduction of Empathy Walks (as part of Empathy Day 2021) provided a powerful new springboard, helping children see their community through new empathy-focused eyes, and a stimulus for taking concrete steps to take action where they could see that increased empathy would make a difference.

### **Key learnings on secondary design**

Taking a long-term view is important, and the secondary schools we have worked with embrace the idea that this is a 3 - 5 year journey, and that working as a cluster is powerful since it provides a consistent, building empathy experience for pupils.

It takes time to develop a model in which all staff and all subjects see the relevance and application of the work. Staff need time to explore and share, and the establishment of a whole-school working party is essential. It can audit where the school is currently, agree a set of common strategies that take ownership of the school's



empathy journey and support new practices, such as a regular shared read-aloud book in tutor group time. The working party plays a vital role in establishing a consistent approach which will influence pupil experience and acquisition of empathy skills. It can inform the School Development Plan, making it clear what empathy opportunities are offered to pupils in less obviously linked subjects like technology and science.

Secondary schools have important resources to bring to bear on empathy education work that are not available in primary schools. As part of the working party model, it is helpful to explore the role of all staff - dinner ladies, ELSAs, HR and IT staff.

Cluster working can helpfully include working with primary colleagues to develop a reading journey from Year 5-8 which will strengthen the explicit links to literature, and build pupils' enjoyment of empathy-rich texts and accompanying creative and immersive activities.



### 7.3 Next Steps

#### In Wales

The new Curriculum for Wales includes empathy 35 times. This is stimulating schools' interest in EmpathyLab's work, and 2022 sees a major leap in the number of schools using our in-depth 6 and 18-month programmes. 74 new schools are coming on board, and Educational Psychology teams in two counties - Ceredigion and Denbighshire - are commissioning EmpathyLab to work with schools in the county.

We have developed a new Alumni programme for schools completing an in-depth EmpathyLab programme. This enables schools to keep learning and embedding the approach, and to share good practice. Nearly all the Swansea and Pembroke Dock schools have joined the Alumni scheme, recognising that this is long-term work.

As the work rolls out in Wales, we plan to develop a bank of expert teachers and co-trainers, so that the work and good practice evolves continuously.

Working with the Books Council for Wales, we have responded to demand for Welsh language materials with a pilot 2022 Read for Empathy book collection. This features books available in both Welsh and English.

#### Beyond Wales

We aim to strengthen EmpathyLab's research partnerships, and are delighted to be working with Professor Robin Banerjee's team at the University of Sussex, as impact partners in a three year study of the effect of stories on the development of children's empathy. We will also be working with Professor Teresa Cremin of the Open University to pilot a new, empathy-focused approach to *Teachers as Readers* groups.

Having experimented with different measures, we plan to test a different child questionnaire to measure four target empathy skills and pilot this with the new schools we are working with from 2022.

Our work in Wales is modelling an empathy education programme that would also fit well with educational strategies in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and potentially internationally. We will take steps to explore the policy and partnership implications.

The authors, illustrators and publishers who create empathy-building books are key partners. 46 children's publishers are supporting EmpathyLab's work in a new scheme called Empathy Builders. As part of this, EmpathyLab is developing a bank of authors and illustrators trained through Empathy Masterclasses - they can partner schools in their empathy education work adding important depth and inspiration. We will further integrate this area of work and scope the potential of a Patron of Empathy scheme which builds a longer-term relationship between schools and a particular illustrator or author.

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## Strategy group

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## Appendix

### Evaluation Methodology

During our previous work with Nesta's Future Ready Fund in 2019-20, we were given valuable support to refine and strengthen our evaluation processes. The project enabled us to create and test a triangulated evaluation framework containing tools that use a range of qualitative and quantitative measures, including EmQue-CA (the standardised empathy scale developed by Leiden University), reading for pleasure questionnaires, staff questionnaires, creative activities and on-going evidence gathered from pupils' work.

Building on what we learnt from that project, in our work with the Pembroke Dock cluster, we tested a more refined evaluation framework. To support staff with collecting data at a school level, we:

- introduced a stand-alone workshop to guide EmpathyLab Leads, backed up by a reinforcing video;
- produced a data-collection timeline linked to the schools' handbook;
- integrated our reading for pleasure and EmQue surveys so that schools could administer the survey and collate the data with the same tool
- created a web-based portal to host all relevant evaluation tools.

### Evaluation Framework

Our learning from this process has led us to further adapt and test child questionnaires for future work with schools, to achieve a tighter fit with our four target empathy skills. This table sets out the framework used in the work covered in this report.

Outcomes	Measure	Description	Which pupils/teachers	When
<b>Pupils' empathy skills and knowledge improve</b>	EmQue Questionnaire (combined with a reading questionnaire).	This is a validated psychometric measure of children's empathy skills. The measures are taken at 3 intervals to detect any change over time. Unique IDs are used in place of pupils' names.*	All pupils in Years 4, 6, 7 & 8	Nov 2020 March 2021 July 2021

	Empathy Conversations	This activity offers insight into children's empathy journey and tracks the development over 3 time points by asking questions within a dialogic framework.	All pupils in Years 4 & 6 Secondary form groups in Years 7 & 8	Nov 2020 March 2021 July 2021
	Parent Questionnaire	This activity asks parents/carers to report on any changes and picks up how the work in school is being transferred.	Whole school Primary KS3 only in Secondary	November 2020 July 2021
	Teacher questionnaire	Pre and post questionnaire to explore the impact of interventions	All teaching staff, including SLT	January 2021 Autumn 2021
<b>Reading for empathy increases enjoyment of reading</b>	Reading questionnaire combined with EmQue	This activity has been added to the EmQue survey. A standardised questionnaire exploring children's reading experience.	All pupils in Years 4, 6, 7 & 8	Nov 2020 March 2021 July 2021
	Teacher questionnaire	Questionnaire to explore the impact of interventions	All teaching staff, including SLT	Autumn 2021
<b>School climate, ethos and strategy is impacted positively</b>	Teacher presentation - includes change stories and case studies	This activity asks teachers to give evidence of any change they've observed or that colleagues have noticed across the school.	Empathy Lead in each school	March 2021 July 2021
	Teacher questionnaire	Questionnaire to explore the impact of interventions	All teaching staff, including SLT	Autumn 2021
	Listening audit, whole-school audit		Empathy Lead or Headteacher in each school	November 2020
	Outcomes Questionnaire for Headteacher	This activity asks SLT to reflect on the impact of their empathy work.	Headteacher	Autumn 2021
	Pupil case studies	Case study pupils selected from years 6, 7 and 8. Include individuals you feel would benefit from increased empathy skills. We would particularly	1 pupil in Yr 6 2 pupils in Yr 7 2 pupils in Yr 8	Introduce in November 2020

		welcome studies of disadvantaged children.		
	Pupils' empathy work	Across the year, teachers collect examples of pupils' empathy work and record observations of children demonstrating acts of empathy or changed behaviour that are pulled together for the Teacher Presentation and Teacher Questionnaire		Across year