

## **HS5: SEAL summary**

### **Schools supported through the National Challenge: The role of the secondary SEAL programme**

#### **What is SEAL?**

In essence, secondary social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) is a comprehensive approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools. It proposes that the skills will be most effectively developed by pupils, and at the same time will enhance the skills of staff, through:

- using a whole-school approach to create the climate and conditions that implicitly promote the skills and allow these to be practised and consolidated
- direct and focused learning opportunities for whole classes (during tutor time, across the curriculum and outside formal lessons) and as part of focus group work
- using learning and teaching approaches that support pupils to learn social and emotional skills and consolidate those already learnt
- continuing professional development (CPD) for the whole staff of a school.

#### **What are the social and emotional skills and aspects of learning that SEAL is trying to develop?**

Social and emotional skills are the skills of making positive relationships with other people, of understanding and managing ourselves and our own emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, and understanding and responding to the emotions and behaviours of others, in ways that are in the best long-term interests of ourselves and others.

There are many possible categorisations for social and emotional skills. Primary and secondary SEAL uses a five-fold categorisation, first developed by Daniel Goleman (1996), which consists of; self awareness, managing feelings, motivation, social skills and empathy. These five aspects have been 'unpacked' into a range of universal learning outcomes and into more specific outcomes for particular age groups and identified learning opportunities used in the curriculum materials.

#### **Why are social and emotional skills central to school improvement?**

Social and emotional skills are essential for all those who learn and work in schools. This includes all pupils and staff, not just those pupils with identified social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Effective learning, high academic standards, an inclusive culture, positive behaviour, regular attendance and good professional practice by school staff are challenging to develop unless all pupils and staff have social and emotional skills, and the ability to manage their own behaviour.

Social and emotional skills contribute to staff effectiveness and well-being. If school staff are to help pupils develop social and emotional skills then they need these skills too. Such skills inform professional competence as well as learning since teaching is fundamentally a social activity, demanding high levels of emotional sensitivity, good self-management, empathy and the ability to make positive relationships. Programmes to promote social and emotional skills have been shown to have a beneficial impact on staff well-being, and can help to address staff stress, as well as improve staff retention.

SEAL encourages schools to use the same principles and theories across all aspects of school life. It recognises that when pupils and adults have high levels of social and emotional skills they create a learning climate that encourages high achievement and promotes emotional health and well-being.

### **What does SEAL involve?**

SEAL involves a process of reflection and enquiry and is best developed in a school as part of the school improvement process and using the same model. Inevitably, it starts with establishing a clear and shared vision of 'What would we like to achieve?' Once the vision is developed, schools can choose how to ensure that social and emotional skills are promoted. In many schools this will involve:

- members of school staff **explicitly** promoting social and emotional skills for **all** pupils across all subjects and all aspects of school life. During subject learning, SEAL learning outcomes will often be shared with pupils who will be encouraged to consider how they might apply what they have learnt in and out of school
- staff choosing pedagogical approaches that implicitly promote the social and emotional skills of pupils
- a review of policy and practice to ensure that each policy promotes social and emotional skills and does not undermine their development
- collaborative staff learning and development – secondary SEAL encourages schools to adopt a collaborative approach to staff learning. A model that links staff and curriculum development is promoted
- carrying out an audit of current provision both in and outside the classroom and building upon what is already in place in the school that is designed to promote social and emotional skills and emotional health and well-being
- the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches
- developing collaborative approaches with parents/carers to support learning.

---

### **Resources**

---

The secondary SEAL materials are available at [www.bandapilot.org.uk/secondary](http://www.bandapilot.org.uk/secondary). There is a range of materials that will promote school improvement, support staff development activities and assist with further reading, as well as examples of learning opportunities. There is a development site that provides a sample of subject specific learning opportunities, including materials produced by local authority school SEAL development groups. This work builds on successful practice in primary schools.

Goleman, D. (1996) *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Bantam Books, New York