Circles for Learning: A small group and whole class project for schools to support the development of positive strategies for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Volume 1

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of the Circles for Learning (CfL) Project. This included staff training, parent-baby observations sessions in the classroom and follow-up teaching and learning sessions, within a variety of secondary school environments over three terms. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected to look at the impact of the project on the five areas identified to form the foundations of Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHWB): Relationships, Emotional Literacy, Sense of self, Skills for Learning and Neuroscience and Learning. The project worked with 4 secondary schools from the UK including two mainstream schools, a SEMH school, a special school for ASC, and a special school for children and young people with severe and complex learning needs. This involved 40 children from across the schools from KS3, KS4 and KS5. Staff were all trained to both introduce and deliver the project within their school environment using the CfL resources with the age range of their choice. All Lead Practitioners were trained teachers.

Assessments undertaken to measure the impact of the project on Children and Young People (CYP) included Emotional Literacy, Effective Lifelong Learning and Butler Self-image profile. Evidence from staff included semi-structured interviews which were then analysed using IPA, Staff feedback forms after training, Staff teaching logs and questionnaires pre and post project.

The findings strongly suggest that CfL developed self-esteem, emotional literacy and strengthened social skills with CYP. It also showed an impact on staff-student relationships and a classroom environment supportive of MHWB.

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Acknowledgements

What an amazing journey it has been, from the conception of ideas to this finished thesis. I would like to say a huge THANK YOU to Dr Poppy Nash. When we first talked on the telephone I knew I wanted her as my tutor and coach. She was really interested in the Circles for Learning Project and was so enthusiastic about the journey ahead. Despite being miles away she has always been there to offer advice, support and enthusiasm. An equally BIG thank you to the truly amazing practitioners and schools who joined me on the journey. They have been brave enough to try something new and to adapt it and develop it for their own environments and children. They have used their own professional knowledge to add to the project and so it has flourished because of them.

To a wonderful daughter who has believed in me, supported me, analysed my writing and given me a hug when I lost faith. Thank you.

Your journey has moulded you for the greater good. It was exactly what it needed to be. Don't think you've lost time, it took each and every situation you have encountered to bring you to the now. And now is right on time.

Asha Tyson

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of my original work and that I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 *Outline of Thesis*

This chapter will describe the Circles for Learning (CfL) Project, how it was created and developed, key theories which influenced the project and why it was felt these were important in creating strong foundations for Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing (PMHWB) for children and young people (CYP) today.

1.2 *Mental Health and Wellbeing*

1.2.1 *Defining and Understanding Mental Health and Wellbeing*

In the 20th Century psychologists became interested in studying happiness. Several called for the inclusion of positive states in definitions of wellbeing, (Jahoda, 1958; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). This caused a shift in the understanding of mental health, no longer was an absence of mental illness a sufficient description for mental health but happiness was also seen as being important. MHWB were therefore linked together. MH includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being, it affects how we think, feel and act. Our MHWB helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices (Cohen, Kessler & Gordon, 1995).

The focus of positive functioning has grown over recent years (Duckworth, Steen & Seligman, 2005). Dodge, Daly Huyton, & Sanders, (2012) put forward the definition of wellbeing as the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced. They argue that stable wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, physical or social skills to manage the challenges being asked. When a person has more challenges than resources their see-saw dips along with their wellbeing and vice versa. The diagram below (Figure 1) illustrates this balance and how if the challenges experienced exceed the resources of a person their wellbeing will dip. If, on the other hand, the individual has the resources to manage the challenges their wellbeing increases.
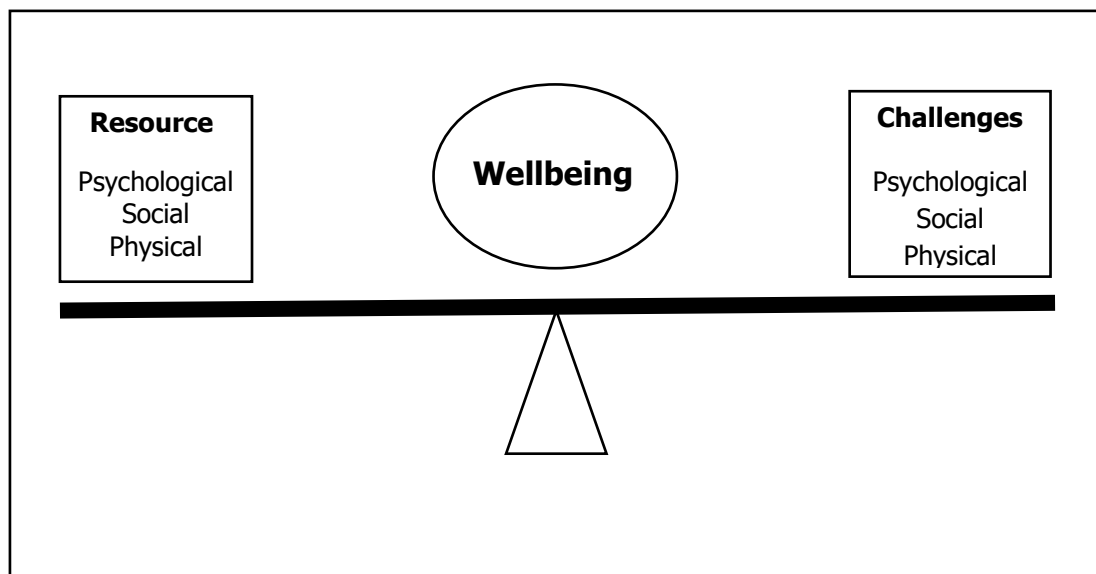
(Dodge et al., 2012 p 230) Figure 1: Wellbeing Balance

1.2.2 *Government Initiatives*

When thinking about wellbeing within an educational environment, consideration has to be given to Government policy. This was spearheaded by the Every Child Matters Agenda (ECM) (DfEs, 2003), which placed increased focus on children's wellbeing and promoted PMH, with emphasis on early intervention and identification. It led to the 2004 Children's Act.

The National Healthy Schools programme was launched in 1999 with the aim of supporting schools take a whole school approach to promoting health and wellbeing in CYP. This was followed by a substantial policy review of CYP in 2006, which offered analysis of the factors that contribute towards good mental health. Building resilience was a major theme and there was also recognition of the importance of good social and emotional skills in helping to protect children and families from poor outcomes later in life.

Since ECM a variety of initiatives have followed supporting schools develop PMHWB. The following examples demonstrate the complexities of the work. In 2005/6, the Government introduced the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) which introduced a whole school approach and curriculum for teaching social and

emotional competencies. The complexity of wellbeing was well highlighted in The Marmot Review (2010).

The wellbeing agenda continued to develop with *The Schools White Paper* (DfES., 2010) which made a number of detailed points about the importance of CYP's wellbeing and how schools could develop and enhance this. In 2014, the Government released its *Mental Health and Behaviour* policy which identified ways to help schools support pupils, whose mental health problems were visible in challenging behaviour. In 2014, the Government also released *The Link between Pupil Health and Wellbeing and Attainment* (Public Health England 2014). Within this report scientific evidence demonstrated the link between health, wellbeing and attainment highlighting the importance of schools in promoting positive wellbeing (Erten & Burden., 2014).

SEND Code 0-25 (2015) was another important document that supported CYP with SEN. No longer was Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) a specific category, this changed to Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). SEN provision was recognised as the responsibility of all, which should be met in the first instance, by high quality differentiated teaching. Another important aspect of this document was the focus on engaging CYP and their parents, ensuring their participation in decision making.

Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health (Public Health England,. 2015) highlighted evidence that promoted student wellbeing. In 2017 *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision* Green Paper introduced the need for Wellbeing Leads in schools and Mental Health Support Teams. The role of schools in supporting the development of children and young people's mental health has thus been recognised for the past 20 years.

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) stated that social and emotional wellbeing forms the foundations for healthy behaviours and educational attainment and helps prevent behaviouraL and mental health problems. Within this document, the concept of wellbeing incorporates emotional, psychological and social development (NICE, 2018).

Wellbeing in schools is still mainly seen as a subject separate from the comprehensive goal of schooling which is primarily focused on academic achievements. In the past, school effectiveness research has largely focused on cognitive outcomes, this tension between the two still exists. Since the Government's *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision* (2017), a variety of school awards have been launched to give schools recognition for developing this area. This has led to the development of the role of Wellbeing Leads and exploration of the Wellbeing Curriculum. This has been supported by the new draft inspection framework which highlights that Inspectors will make a judgement on the personal development of learners by: '*evaluating the extent to which the curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.' (Ofsted, 2019, p.12).*

Circles for Learning (CfL) with its focus on developing positive foundations for MHWB and its focus on staff development, would act as a core component for such a curriculum and help bridge the gap.

1.3   *Origin of Circles For Learning*

As the founding head of a Therapeutic Special School, and in my role as a Special Educational Needs and Wellbeing Consultant and Educational Psychotherapist, I have always been fascinated by children's beliefs and thinking about their learning; what causes them to engage and make progress, stall or become stuck.

A few years ago, a friend of my daughter's had a baby. I watched the curiosity and interest of her peers unfold and was reminded of my baby observation whilst training as a psychotherapist. During this time, I was working in a school supporting staff with Work Discussion Groups (WDG, Hanko, 2016). I found myself talking about attachment and learning and helping the INAs to understand the Learning Triangle (Geddes, 2006), discuss the emotional responses to learning and the importance of early relationships in developing our ability and attitudes to learning.

Also at this time, I undertook some work with Bristol University on the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory or ELLI, (Crick 2006). The culmination of these thoughts experiences and observations resulted in my development of CfL which drew upon my own experiences as a class teacher, headteacher, and psychotherapist. The project was strongly influenced by the work and research of psychoanalysts, such as Bowlby (1969), Bion (1962), Winnicott (1960) and Klein (1958). I also subsequently drew upon the work of Vygotsky (1978), neuroscientists and other educationalists, such as Hattie (2014), Claxton (2001) and Rinaldi (2004), in formulating CfL. At this point of the CfL development, I was unaware of Roots of Empathy (RoE). RoE will be explored in greater detail later in this section.

1.4 *What is Circles for Learning?*

CfL has been designed to: support teaching staff to increase their knowledge and understanding on how to support CYP to build solid foundations in the five areas that support PMHWB, facilitate the parent-baby sessions, ask questions that support the CYP to make links between the baby's learning, development and how it experiences the world and their own. To enable this, all staff are trained in the theoretical work that underpins the project and are mentored throughout the work. During the training staff are firstly, supported in understanding ways of promoting positive MHWB within their classroom by the use of the curriculum, classroom practice and the environment. Secondly, the training develops and promotes the skills, strategies and ways of thinking that enable CYP to develop positive MH.

CfL is a whole class and small group programme that develops positive foundations for MHWB in Key Stage 1-5 (KS1-KS5). The project trains teaching staff to bring a parent and baby into the classroom for one hour a month for a year. During these sessions the role of the practitioner is to ensure that CYP are helped to observe the interactions between parent and baby and supported in understanding the skills needed to develop and maintain relationships and learning. The teacher helps the CYP focus on the emotional content of the interactions and the behaviours that

occur. Alongside of this, they help CYP observe the learning as it unfolds and make links to their own learning, understanding of themselves and their own emotions and behaviours.

During the sessions the class observe, relate and interact with the parent and baby. After the observation session the class teacher enables the CYP to discuss and reflect on what they have observed, linking this to their own experiences of learning, relationships, emotions and behaviours. The teacher starts this process by encouraging the CYP to answer four main questions: What have you found interesting? What would you like to know more about? What has the observation made you think about? What connections has the observation allowed you to make? In the weeks between the observation sessions, the teacher then develops lessons to support the CYP to extend their knowledge or skills in specific areas. These follow-up sessions include activities, discussions and reflections that support the five areas identified for examination within this study: relationships, emotional literacy, self-development, skills for learning and neuroscience and learning

1.5 *Aims of the Secondary Schools Research Project*

The aims of the current research are to identify, explore and measure the extent to which the three strands of the CfL, have an impact on the PMHWB of the CYP within the secondary schools involved. The project focuses on three distinct areas:

1. Staff training in a range of areas that impact on PMHWB, including attachment neuroscience and learning, emotional literacy and emotional barriers to learning, social skills, learning dimensions and how understanding the brain supports managing behaviour.
2. Parent-baby observations within the classroom once a month for a year.
3. Follow-up teaching and learning sessions which have been inspired by the parent-baby observations or identified as being important to the CYP development by the teacher.

Sharing with teachers the knowledge of the importance of their role in the form of containment (Salzberger-Wittenberg, Henry & Osborn., 1983), secure base (Howe, 1999; Pianta, 1998) attachment (Barrett & Trevitt, 1991; Alexander et al., 1987) and the way CYP think about themselves as learners (Watkins, 2001; Crick, Broadfoot & Claxton 2004) are key to the project. It is suggested that by conducting training within these areas it will enable teachers to understand how to extend their classroom practice, develop a range of strategies to support behaviour and vulnerable CYP and engage CYP in conversations about their learning and themselves as learners. This will then develop a classroom environment supportive of PMHWB.

It is suggested that by training teachers to facilitate parent-baby observations within a classroom, they will be able to guide the CYP's observations of the parent-baby dyad and highlight areas focused on social skills, empathy and relationship development. This will enable CYP to discuss what they have seen in a more open and emotionally literate way making links between how we feel and how we behave.

It is anticipated that the observations and follow-up work will create a positive learning environment, including a group language around learning, positive social interactions, empathy, increased levels of emotional literacy, greater understanding of relationships and how emotions affect our learning (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki & Schellinger. 2011). All of these areas will influence the development of positive foundations for MHWB within the classroom.

The teacher's behaviour has a powerful effect on promoting children's exploration and curiosity (Engel, 2011). Acting as the Learning Guide, the class teacher will be able to model asking of questions, making links between what they see and how their class baby or parent might be feeling. It is suggested that this will encourage the children to be more curious, explore what they see, ask questions, hypothesise and make links with their own development, learning and relationships.

1.6 *Research Questions*

The proposed study will take place in 5 secondary schools in the UK. In this thesis, each school is treated as a case study with results then being evaluated across the Secondary age group range. A range of qualitative and quantitative data was collected pre and post project and utilised in answering the following research questions:

Does the implementation of CfL within secondary schools, including parent-baby observations once a month for a year, and follow-up teaching and learning sessions, develop:

1. a more positive sense of self?
2. stronger relationships, including adult to young person and peer to peer?
3. young people's emotional literacy?
4. a positive learning environment which is supportive of PMHWB?

Following the introduction, the thesis is divided into six chapters. The Literature Review will explore research around the five identified areas that impact on MHWB. This will be followed by the Methodology which will share how the research was conducted and why. The analysis of results and discussion of findings chapters will explore the data collected from the participating schools, address how each school developed CfL to meet the needs of their CYP and link the data to the research questions. The final Conclusion chapter considers the limitations of the study and the wider implications of the findings for practice and policy.

Chapter 2 examines literature pertinent to the five areas that create the foundations for PMHWB and how these impact on the research questions.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 *Introduction*

A considerable amount of research has been published on MHWB over the past 25 years highlighting the many factors that impact on its development. The literature review revealed five distinct areas influencing early development of MHWB and its impact on the ability to handle stress and maintain good MH.

Each area (below) will be subsequently explored examining key theories and research and how they influence knowledge and understanding of the foundations for MHWB in CYP.

2.2. Self-Development

2.3. Relationships.

2.4. Skills for Learning.

2.5. Emotional Literacy and emotional aspects of learning.

2.6. Neuroscience and Learning

2.2 Self-development

This section looks briefly at the concept of self and the areas that influence self-development and how a positive sense of self can act as a protective buffer supporting MHWB. It will also explore research that has been undertaken and the themes that have emerged.

Philosophers and psychologists and others have been interested in the question 'Who are you?' for hundreds of years. The traditional, philosophical answer found in Plato and Kant and many religious thinkers, is that self is an immortal soul that transcends the physical. Some philosophers have rejected this metaphysical view. Hume (1888) stated that the self is nothing more than a bundle of perceptions and Dennett (1992, p.1) dismissed the self as a 'centre of narrative gravity'. Freud was one of the first psychologists to suggest a theory about self. He describes the self as being comprised of the id, the ego and the superego (Freud, 1923).

Mead (1934) argued that the individual was a construct of social or environmental factors. He divided the self into the I – the subjective and active self that tells us how we feel about ourselves and the Me which is how we view ourselves. Mead believed that the self was being continuously developed through its interaction with the environment and through social experiences.

Cooley (1902) states that we have a looking-glass-self. This theory suggests that we understand our self, based on how we believe others perceive us. Thagard (2014) puts forward the idea that the self is a complex system operating at four different levels: social, psychological, neural and molecular. He argues that the most familiar is the psychological level, which focuses on how we talk about ourselves and incudes our self-concept, but that a deeper understanding can be gained if we look at molecular mechanisms. He states that the self is a multilevel system that emerges from the interactions of mechanisms operating at neural, psychological and social levels (Thagard, 2014).

Therefore, understanding self is complex but how an individual thinks, experiences and sees themselves strongly influences how they interpret and interact with the world, which in turn influences their PMHWB. Researchers agree that one's sense of self has its roots in early interactions and experiences of the world. How one understands oneself is a personal construct that has developed from internal reflections on how one is and how one would like to be. Thus, sense of self is an interpretive act (Butler & Green, 1998). When an individual is born they have a genetic makeup which influences their biological traits, who that individual is develops over time and is heavily influenced by their social interactions, this becomes the nature nurture debate.

Social and clinical psychologists frequently use the concept of the self in their discussions of a wide range of phenomena. However, there is no general unified psychological theory of the self that is able to manage all of these phenomena (Thagard, 2014). Thagard describes more than eighty frequently used topics that come under the umbrella of self-phenomena including self-esteem, self-regulation, self-image, self-concept (Thagard and Wood, 2015). For the purpose of this thesis, I have chosen focus on self-concept including self-esteem and ideal-self, self-efficacy,

self-awareness and self-regulation, due to their impact on relationships, emotional literacy and learning.

2.2.1 *Self-concept including Self-esteem and Ideal-self.*

Baumeister (1999) defined self-concept as the individual's belief about themselves, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is. Epstein (1973) suggests that self-concept is a theory that a person holds about himself as an experiencing, functioning being in interaction with the world. Carl Rogers (1959) proposed that self-concept had three separate components: self-concept, self-image and ideal-self and that it was the discrepancy between the self-image and the ideal-self, which created our self-esteem or our overall sense of self-worth. (See Appendix 1 for Rogers' Self-concept model).

It is the child's interpretation of life experiences which determines self-esteem levels. It is not the events which a child experiences that determines emotions, but the interpretation of those experiences. The foundations for self-esteem are laid early in a child's life when they develop attachments with a caring responsive adult who is attuned to them. Several developmental psychologists (such as Erickson (1963) and Sroufe (1979), have emphasised the role of early affective experiences in determining an individual's sense of self-worth.

Empirical studies over the past 15 years have shown that self-esteem is an important psychological factor that contributes to PMHWB. Evans (1997) examined 15 years of research and highlighted the impact of psychological factors have on health and wellbeing, including self-esteem. Mann Mosman, Schaalma & De Vries. (2004) examined research on self-esteem and its links to MH and found that positive self-esteem was linked to good mental wellbeing. The protective nature of self-esteem is particularly apparent in studies exploring stress/physical disease, where self-esteem is shown to safeguard the individual from uncertainty and fear (Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, Rosenblatt, Burling, Lyon & Pinel., 1992). Greenberg et al. (1992) set up three experiments to explore their hypothesis, that people are motivated to keep a positive self-image because self-esteem protects

them from anxiety. They concluded that self-esteem did provide protection against anxiety in response to threat. From the perspective of terror management theory, they argue that self-esteem – the feeling of being of value, reduces one's sensitivity to anxiety. This is linked to the connections we make between behaviour, which is encouraged by parents, and the subsequent protection given.

Thinking about self-esteem as a defensive structure to protect self could mean that it has to be viewed in a different way. Furnham & Cheng. (2000) explored lay theories, as opposed to academic perspectives on the cause of happiness, by analysing the self-report questionnaires of 230 young people and found that self-esteem is a major predictor of happiness. This research has not yet been replicated and so conclusions have to be carefully applied. Also, self-report questionnaires are based on subjective appraisals and are more prone to distortions arising from intrapersonal factors (such as social desirability, over- or underestimation of the frequency or severity of events) than external observers' assessments (Goodman, Renfew & Mullick, 2000).

Research strongly suggests that after the home environment, teachers can directly influence CYP's self-esteem. Teacher's impact on CYP self-esteem is supported by Burnett (1999), who collected data from 269 CYP in Australia demonstrating that feedback from teachers has significant effect on CYP sense of self. Battistich, Soloman, Kim, Watson & Schaps (1995) showed that a classroom culture focused on supportive relationships and developing a caring approach enhances self-esteem.

The role of self-esteem in adolescent development is well documented, showing that low self-esteem is associated with depression (Harter et al., 1993), suicide (Kazdin et al., 1983), delinquency (Bynner, O'Malley & Bachman, 1981), substance use (Dielman, Kloska, Leech, Schulenberg & Shope, 1992). The research highlights the focus on the measuring of self-concept before and after an intervention (Shavelson, Hubner, & George., 1976), rather than how to incorporate positive self-development as part of teaching and learning. Bong & Skaalvik (2003) build on this understanding stating that an individual's self-esteem is composed of an academic self-profile comprising of how they feel about themselves as a learner, what attributes they believe they have, what they think they can achieve and how they judge what they

can do in relation to others. This has all been taken from their interpretations of past achievements. These subjective beliefs make up their academic self-concept which influences their learning experience and achievements. Thomas, Butler and Hare (2011) looked at self-esteem of adolescents with learning disabilities. They found very limited research in this area but recognised that adolescents with learning disabilities could share a variety of self-constructs across different dimensions of self when supported.

2.2.2 *Self-Efficacy*

White (1963) put forward the argument that self-efficacy is not built on what others do or what the environment provides but is based on what one can make the environment provide, even if it is only through more vigorous sucking or louder cries that last for longer. From this standpoint, we can see that self-esteem is closely linked to feelings of efficacy as it develops, and the general cumulative sense of competence.

Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people think, feel, motivate themselves and behave (Bandura, 1994). A strong sense of self-efficacy, enables self-accomplishment and therefore has an impact on wellbeing in many ways. Self-confidence is a positive state that has an effect on self-efficacy. People with strong self-efficacy take on tasks with a belief that they are challenges which can be achieved, failure is due to insufficient effort or a lack of knowledge or skills and not due to themselves. This way of looking at things reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Bandura, 1994). For those with a low sense of self-efficacy, the challenge is perceived as a threat to be avoided. They dwell on their lack of skills and personal deficiencies and obstacles they might encounter.

Research over the past 20 years has supported the findings of Bandura that self-efficacy mediates the effect of skills or other self-beliefs on performance. Within education the majority of research has focused on the link between self-efficacy and motivation (Collins, 1982) or how students regulate their own learning process Zimmerman (2002). This was the focus of the Education Endowment Foundation

(EEF) Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning programme (2018). Thus, there is a consensus that if CYP can be supported in developing a strong sense of self-efficacy, it will support them to manage life's stresses and therefore have a positive impact on MHWB.

2.2.3 *Self-Awareness*

Crisp and Turner (2014) define self-awareness as the psychological state in which people become aware of their traits, feelings and their behaviour. Self-awareness is a core component of emotional intelligence. If we can be aware of our thinking and how this impacts on our behaviours, it enables us to challenge our thoughts and our actions. Self-awareness is a core component of social and emotional learning (Collaboration for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2005). Extensive research indicates that mastery of social and emotional competencies is associated with greater wellbeing and academic success (Durlak et al., 2011; Zins, Weissberg, Wang & Walberg, 2004; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1990).

The narrative we create is the mind's way of integrating our experiences into our mental models of the world. What we think and how we manipulate this to fit our beliefs and values framework impacts on our mindset. This is an area that is linked to self-awareness and developed in recent years by Dweck. Dweck and Leggett (1988) proposed that children and young people have either a fixed or a growth mindset and that these mindsets create frameworks for interpreting and responding to events experienced. By teaching children and young people about the way their mind interprets how they learn and about how the brain works Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck, (2007) demonstrated that academic achievement and ability to persevere with learning increased. The EEF (2015) looked at improving the academic attainment of children in Y5 in 36 primary schools by delivering a growth mindset workshop, however found no statistical significance in academic attainment. When they looked at pupils' own theories of intelligence the validity of the findings was questionable and may have occurred by chance.

2.2.4 *Self-Regulation*

For a child to learn to self-regulate they must first experience being regulated by another. As the child grows more attuned to their inner state and becomes more self-aware they become better able to cope with regulation (Winnicott, 2018). Once we become aware of our thoughts, feelings and behaviours we become more able to regulate and manage them. Developing the ability to regulate our thoughts, emotions and attention is a crucial aspect for learning.

Terms such as self-control, impulse control and will power have been used extensively when examining human development. The predominant theories were influenced by Mischel (2014) who used the marshmallow test to explore delayed gratification development in children. As researchers established self-control as a personal trait, the literature on self-control began to show that self-control was more important than IQ in predicting outcomes. Shanker (2016) argues that there is a profound difference between self-regulation and self-control. He states that self-control is about inhibiting strong impulses, whereas self-regulation is about reducing the frequency and intensity of strong impulses by managing stress. He argues that it is self-regulation that makes self-control possible. Shanker (2016) has linked this with what happens in the brain, stating that when a CYP is under stress the brain responds by activating survival systems.

The Pre Frontal Cortex (PFC), the systems used to think about actions and behaviours is bypassed as the limbic system takes control. When this happens the ability to self-regulate diminishes. As the danger or stress reduces the PFC takes over and the ability to self-regulate increases. Shanker (2016) highlights that it has always been argued that the PFC is not strong enough to manage the impulses, whereas he now believes it is not about the strength of the PFC, but the fact that the stress response means it is not accessible. He proposed that self-regulation is based on five circuits which interrelate to create a complex integrated system. It is difficult to find independent validated research, with the majority of the research undertaken by Shanker himself. His work on self-regulation is interesting, but more independent evidence is needed regarding its impact within a classroom environment.

2.2.5 *Resilience*

Resilience is a dynamic process, whereby individuals show a positive adaptation having experienced significant adversity or trauma (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 1999; Rutter, 1999). Therefore, it is a two-dimensional construct that states that exposure to adversity/trauma is the catalyst which leads to positive adjustment.

Werner, Bierman & French's (1971) studies on children in Hawaii, led to research identifying three key protective factors protective in the development of resilience:

1. Attributes of the child,
2. Aspects of their families
3. Characteristics of their environments (Masten & Garmezy, 1985).

One conception of resilience is a focus on the presence of assets rather than the absence of risk. Research suggests that it is the accumulation of risk factors (such as parental mental health, poverty, domestic violence, abuse etc.), that creates a significant threat to children's mental and physical wellbeing and long-term outcomes. Paralleling this is the belief that it is the accumulation of resilience factors that may be significant for positive outcomes. Evidence is accumulating regarding the effectiveness of interventions to enhance resilience, but predominantly emerging from US studies. UK-based interventions (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, United Kingdom Resilience Programme, Friends, Paths Curriculum, Communities that care, Promotion Prevention), have adopted some of the principals of the US interventions, however their effect on resilience is largely unknown due to lack of trials . Most intervention work focuses on repairing deficits rather than on developing strengths. Evidence points to the fact that schools are ideally placed to play a significant role through focusing on developing protective factors (Masten & Coatsworth. 1998).

2.2.6 *Summary of Literature on sense of self.*

We can see from the research that positive sense of self is of great importance to PMHWB and that schools can provide the ideal environment to support its development. Schools provide opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in a variety of areas all of which can strengthen CYP sense of self-efficacy. The importance of developing protective factors to build resilience rather than just focusing on deficits and the importance of teaching social and emotional competencies are all linked to improved MHWB.

2.3 Relationships

This section will explore areas that impact on the development of relationships and the skills needed to maintain them. Extensive evidence shows that having good-quality relationships can help us to live longer and happier lives with fewer mental health problems. (Relationships in the 21st Century Mental Health Foundation 2016).

2.3.1 *The Impact of Early Relationships*

Gould (1992) put forward the idea that all babies are born prematurely – they are foetuses outside the womb therefore the baby's brain at birth is considerably immature. The neural systems that underpin language, emotion and social development, thinking and behaviour are all being wired through early child-parent interactions. When the carer smiles at the baby this stimulates the release of endorphins and dopamine, hormones which stimulate brain development. Negative facial expressions trigger the stress hormone cortisol which in turn impacts on the growing brain. These interactions with other people directly shape the growing mind of the baby (Siegel, 2015).

Attachment Theory, proposed by Bowlby stated that human infants are biologically programmed at birth to seek and make emotional bonds with another, this attachment system, he argued were an evolutionary mechanism to ensure survival

(Bowlby, 1951). Bowlby showed that as mobility increased the infant starts to feel safe enough to explore, confident in the availability of their primary carer at times of stress. He described this 'secure base' as vital to the containment of anxiety if exploration and new learning was to unfold. The capacity, sensitivity and ability of the primary carer to comprehend the anxieties set off by fear, uncertainty and distress he describes as a major aspect of early attachment experience.

Bowlby's Attachment Theory opened up an understanding of the importance of relationships in child development and created a shift in thinking that enabled an understanding of how behaviour is influenced by relationships and how important the early relationship is for a child to thrive. One of the main critics of Bowlby's attachment theory is Judith Harris. Harris (2011) argues that it is not parents that shape their child's personality but their genes. She argues her case through the use of three propositions supported by research. Firstly, parents have little power to shape a child's personality (using the research of Reiss, Neiderhiser, Hetherington and Plomin, 2000 to support this). Secondly, children are socialised and their personalities shaped by exposure outside the home, in the environment shared with their peers (using the research of Kindermann, 1993 to support this). Thirdly, individuals behave the way they do in different social contexts due to their genetic predisposition (using the research of Deater-Deckard and Plomin, 1999 to support this).

Klein (1931) proposed that the way primary carer and baby come together in the earliest months of life and the way they negotiate the feeding relationship, set the scene for all other subsequent relationships including the learning relationship. Bion (1962) in his theory of Container Contained, extended Klein's model of learning based on the interaction between mother-infant. He believed that the way in which the primary carer was able to connect with the infant's mind, meant that the baby experienced containment for all their anxieties and projections. He put forward that the ability to learn and to think had its foundations in the meeting of minds of the mother-baby dyad.

Ainsworth subsequently developed Bowlby's work devising the Strange Situation Procedure (1969). She identified specific patterns of behaviour for both mother and

child. Three categories of attachment were observed: secure, insecure avoidant and insecure resistant/ambivalent (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall., 2015). The fourth category, disorganized/disoriented attachment was put forward by Main and Solomon (1986). Researchers disagree about whether these categories sufficiently describe the variations in attachment relationships well enough (Fraley & Spieker, 2003). Some researchers refer to two categories, secure and insecure, whilst others use a continuum of security of attachment. Field (1996) argued that the attachment model had serious limitations, as it was based on behaviours that occurred during momentary stressful situations rather than non-stressful situations. Subsequently, behaviours used towards the attachment figure when separating and reuniting, should not be the only factors used when defining attachment. She also asserts that Bowlby's model does not consider attachments that occur during adolescence, such as first love or close friendships and that these can have strong influences on individuals.

2.3.2 *The Learning Relationship*

'No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship.'
(Attributed to Dr. James Comer)

When the child engages with the learning task they expect the same response as the one they experienced in their early relationships. If this experience was a positive one of being thought about, supported and having their emotions regulated then this becomes the expectation for the teacher and the school. If however this experience was one of not being understood or supported, where emotions were not contained then it is this negative experience that the child expects. When children experience this they learn to protect themselves and to do this they use a range of defence mechanisms whose function is to manage the anxiety that an internal conflict of desires has created. These defence systems (Klein, 1935) when triggered by learning, impact on the relationship between adult-child and impede learning. The initial deprivation of not having experienced a thinking attuned adult means that the

child is now not able to experience the opportunity of help and new learning. Williams calls this double deprivation (Williams, 1997).

Minuchin and Shapiro (1983) highlight the unique contribution teachers can make to CYP's social, emotional and intellectual development throughout their school lives. Attachment Aware Schools (Rose et al., 2016) supports an attachment-informed approach and promotes whole school practice and targeted interventions demonstrating the impact of this increase in knowledge on attainment and behaviour. (Farr, Cressey, Milner, Abercrombie & Jaynes, 2014). Opdenakker & Maulana (2012) identified the impact of secondary transfer on the teacher-child relationships showing that this disruption in interpersonal relationships has an impact on CYP motivation which they showed had a strong impact on student motivation.

Geddes (1999) explored cases of children being supported within school. From these she surmised that particular patterns of attachment could be observed, through responses to both the teacher and the task. This led to the Learning Triangle model, relating learning patterns to attachment patterns (Appendix 2), in terms of relationships between child, teacher and task. Geddes found that children who had a secure attachment, were more able to relate to the teacher and found the world exciting to explore. She translates this into an evenly balanced triangle between the child, the teacher and the task. (Appendix 2 Figure 3). For the child with the avoidant attachment pattern, their sensitivity to the presence of an adult often triggers uncertainly which they try to avoid. This is shown by a triangle with a strong connection to the task. (Appendix 2 Figure 4). The focus on the task helps them to manage this uncertainty, however, it is often accompanied by behaviours that are controlling. This is linked to the rejection perceived by the child in its earliest relationship which is now transferred onto the teacher. Being able to separate from the secure base and explore the world outside of the primary relationship is a crucial step in development.

For the child with the resistant attachment pattern, Geddes demonstrates that it is this fear of separation that causes them to focus on the relationship with the teacher to the detriment of the task. She demonstrates this with a triangle with a strong line linked to the teacher and a dotted line to the task. (Appendix 2 Figure 5). Lastly is

the disorganised attachment pattern, for these children early life experiences may have been dominated by high levels of stress, where they have not experienced a sense of safety in their early relationship. To demonstrate the affect this has on the learning task, Geddes depicts the link between the child, the teacher and the task with dotted lines. It highlights the difficulty the child has in engaging with the teacher and also with the task, neither are safe and both trigger fear. (Appendix 2 Figure 6).

Another area of research that has been shown to impact on CYP social, emotional and cognitive development is that of transition. Transition within an educational context refers to the move from one key stage to another. The major transition for CYP is the move from primary to secondary school. Zeedyk, Gallacher, Henderson, Hope, Husband & Lindsay (2003) describe this as one of the most difficult areas to negotiate in CYP's educational careers. Tobin, Staunton, Mandy, Skuse, Helligreil, Bykanker & Murin (2012) explored the transition experience of ASC CYP and their parents and found that for CYP this became a very stressful time due to additional demands in both academic and social fields. West et al. (2010) looked at the transition of CYP in Scotland and the impact this had on WB. They found that CYP with low ability and self-esteem were far more vulnerable and that transitions impacted in a negative way causing a post-transition dip in both self-esteem and WB.

2.3.3 *Empathy*

Empathy is described as the building block for all social interactions (Weare, 2004), therefore supporting how one interacts with the world and the people within and thus impacts upon MHWB. It is for this reason that empathy has been placed within the relationship domain for the purpose of this study. Eisenberg (2010, p.1) defines empathy as:

> *An affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another's emotional state or condition and that is identical or very similar to what the other person is feeling or would expect to feel.*

Adding to the discussion on empathy is the developing research on mirror neurons (Rizzolatti & Arbib, 1998). Mirror neurons are thought to be specialized brain cells that allow an individual to learn and empathize through observing the actions of another. Since their discovery over 20 years ago much has been written. At present, researchers have proved that humans have a general mirror system which is key to explaining many aspects of social cognition, including the ability to understand the actions of others (Heyes, 2010).

The research highlights that knowledge of how empathy develops and ways of enhancing this in the classroom are of great importance for teaching professionals. Mary Gordon, in RoE (Gordon, 2003; Wrigley, Makara & Elliot, 2015), trained facilitators to support classroom teachers deliver sessions using a parent-child dyad, to engage children and support their understanding and ability to think and imagine another person's feelings, emotions and needs. The work has been very successful in developing empathy in primary schools throughout the world. Schonet-Reichl, Smith, Zaidman-Zait & Hertzman (2012) looked at the impact of the RoE on 28 elementary schools across two Canadian cities involving 638 CYP over a year. The research was a quasi-experimental design. The researchers ran the project in 14 schools with 14 control schools. The programme instructors, all of whom were professionals, delivered the manualised programme of 26 lessons across 9 themes within the classrooms, including empathy, emotional literacy, social inclusion, temperament, attachment, authentic communication and neuroscience – love grows brains. Each lesson lasted between 30-45 minutes. All the programme instructors had to undertake a three-day training programme.

The research undertaken by Schonet-Reichl et al. (2012) used a variety of assessments to measure the impact, these included the Instructors' diary entries rating student engagement. The children completed the Understanding of Infant Crying assessment. Another measure used was peer and teacher-rated prosocial and aggressive/antisocial behaviour. Research shows that RoE had a significant effect on the increase in prosocial behaviours and a significant decrease in proactive and relational aggression. The research, however, used a quasi-experimental design and not a randomised clinical trial and so the observed results could be due to the

characteristics of the RoE instructors. The teachers who took part had all volunteered and so their belief in a SEL curriculum within the classroom is likely to be high. Some of the data was obtained from self-reports from the instructors and so the implementation may not have been delivered as intended. Neither teachers nor CYP were blind when providing ratings for the children's behaviour, so teacher and CYP bias may have influenced the results.

Another project that explores the use of parent-baby observations within the classroom as a way of reducing aggression and anxiety is Babywatching (Brisch 2010). Babywatching brings a parent and child into the classroom for 20-30 minutes once a week for 2-3 terms. The work is led by a trained teacher and the observations are followed-up with a discussion about what the CYP observed, thought about the interactions they saw or questions raised. There is no curriculum or specific follow-up lessons. Lionetti, Snelling and Pluess (2017) looked at the effects at a London Infant and Junior School that measured the impact of Babywatching on 161 children; 88 of them were assigned to the intervention and 73 to a control group. To measure the impact they used the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for parents and teachers, Rating of Children's Adolescent's Behaviour, Griffith Empathy Measure and parents were asked to fill in a Highly Sensitive Child Scale. The children in the intervention group were significantly more at risk than those in the control group and were rated higher on conduct and emotional problems by teachers. The researchers found that at the end of the year's work there was no significant difference between the two groups. This could be interpreted as reflecting group differences, due to non-blind experimental conditions or to the non-random assignment of the children into the control and the intervention group. Another aspect of the work that needs to be taken into account is the fact that it only involved one school.

2.3.4 *Social Skills/Social Competencies*

An overwhelming body of research shows that positive social skills are important for maintaining social, psychological and occupational wellbeing. People who lack these

skills appear to be at risk of developing a range of difficulties, including being less popular with peers, less successful in relationships, at risk of depression, social anxiety and academic underachievement (Segrin & Givertz, 2003). The term social skills refers to a wide group of abilities that enable people to interact, relate and communicate with others. Children learn these skills through social situations, relationships at home, within their community and at school. They are often linked with emotional competencies, but for the purpose of this thesis they will be treated as a separate area of skills under the relationship domain.

Weare and Gray (2003, p.79) use the term social competencies to describe: 'Attachment to others, empathy, communicating effectively, and managing relationships'. They describe competencies as including knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills. Research has shown that the development of social competencies involves a complex and fragile interaction between neural, behavioural and environmental factors. These skills have been shown to play an important role in positive developmental outcomes, such as peer acceptance, friendships, self-development and academic achievement, all of which impact on MHWB (Durlak et al., 2011). Durlak et al.'s research highlighted the need for more data on academic achievement post-study as only 16% of studies included this. It also highlighted the impact of classroom environment and the importance of monitoring implementation of interventions.

The development of social competencies creates crucial foundations for better academic success (McClelland & Morrison, 2003). McClelland & Morrison explored whether early learning-related social skills indicated school success and found a statistical correlation. However, their findings need to be viewed with caution due to the small size of the sample and the parental population, 81% of which were Caucasian and well educated. Wentzel (1991) explored the relationship between academic performance and three aspects of social competence in adolescents and found that social competence and achievement were statistically correlated. The research subjects were mainly Caucasian (68%) and from one Midwestern school in America, the relevance of the research to UK schools has to be questioned.

2.3.5 *Summary of literature on relationships*

Understanding how the brain develops in relation to others and how this impacts on future relationships is vital for teaching professionals. By developing knowledge within this area teachers become more able to give CYP new relational experiences and develop a classroom environment that supports the skills needed in building and maintaining positive relationships. This knowledge linked with the research on how attachments affects learning using the learning triangle (Geddes 2006) provide teachers with vital information, which has an impact on teaching and learning and PMHWB. The picture that has unfolded showing the developmental consequences of attachment has been complex. Longitudinal psychosocial outcomes of children observed in the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP) undertaken by Sroufe (2005), demonstrated that secure children scored lower than insecure children on assessments of behaviour problems and avoidant children were highlighted as being particularly at risk. These research findings demonstrate the strong link between attachment patterns and PMHWB.

The link between social competencies and their impact on MHWB has highlighted the need for schools to address this area. Research on preventative strategies has highlighted the importance of supporting the knowledge and understanding of staff when developing new initiatives within the classroom.

2.4 Skills for Learning

This section will explore the importance of effective skills for learning, the emotions of learning and the learning environment and how these impact on MHWB. As the relationship between teacher and child has already been discussed previously it will not be explored here.

The ability to learn helps us thrive, grow and flourish and so is vital for PMHWB (Health Education Partnership 2012). This ability is influenced by three key areas:

1. A range of tools, skills, beliefs and attitudes, linked to the learner, making them an effective learner.
2. An effective learning environment
3. The Teacher/Facilitator.

Claxton (2004) argues that 21st Century education must enable young people to manage complex issues that they will face with skill and confidence. The focus of education, Claxton (2004) argues is divided into two specific areas: contents curriculum and learning curriculum. The contents curriculum is comprised of valuable and exciting areas of study and the learning curriculum is the attitudes, values and habits of the CYP towards learning. Claxton asserts that education should be aiming to support CYP develop a capacity and skills to learn (Claxton 2006). These skills for learning are vital in supporting CYP to meet the general challenges of life in this century. He argues that the trend in adolescent mental ill-health is an indication of the increased stress levels of our CYP (Claxton 2006).

Crick (2006) further developed the understanding of learning power, suggesting that it is at the heart of the classroom and that the role of the teacher is to create the optimal ecology for the children to grow, learn and thrive. The research evidence from the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) identified 7 dimensions which all support learning (Crick et al., 2004). Each dimension is thought of as a spectrum with an emergent pole being positive for learning and a contrast pole which inhibits learning. ELLI built on the previous instruments from Ball (2001) extensive interdisciplinary literature review in the field and inputs from policy and practice. We can see thus that the research had strong foundations. Empirical studies have been undertaken in hundreds of school, colleges and universities where it has reliably measured the seven dimensions which have shown to be important to the way in which a learner engages in learning and the school environment (Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008). Deakin Crick & Guoxing Yu. (2007) looked at the internal reliability, validity and stability of the seven dimensions in their study (see below), which examined 10,496 individuals from 122 institutions and 413 classrooms and found the scales demonstrated a high reliability, consistent over time.

1. Changing and Learning ⟷ Being Static or Stuck
2. Curiosity ⟷ Passivity
3. Meaning Making ⟷ Fragmentation
4. Creativity ⟷ Rule Boundedness
5. Learning Relationships ⟷ Isolation or Dependence
6. Strategic Awareness ⟷ Behaving like a Robot
7. Resilience ⟷ Dependence and Fragility

See Appendix 3 for a description of each of the seven dimensions.

The findings show that supporting CYP to think about their learning enables them to make greater sense of their life experiences and to regulate their behaviour to optimize learning (Paris & Winogradl, 1990). EEF (2016) however explored the power of learning conversations and found no evidence that this programme (Powerful Learning Conversations) had an impact on engagement or attainment. The EEF however did not use the ELLI profiles as a framework for the conversations but focused on teacher feedback.

2.4.1 *Emotions linked to learning*

Learning is a complex process and involves many sub-processes. At times, the teaching-learning process fails due to a range of barriers that act as obstacles to the learning intentions. These barriers can be personal, attitudinal, organisational or emotional. In the section above, the impact of personal attitudes beliefs and values has been explored and so in this section the focus will be on emotional barriers to learning.

To be an effective learner a wealth of emotions needs to be managed and regulated. From their early experiences, CYP create their own beliefs in relation to how they regulate the emotions of learning, the not knowing or the frustration of a task, the fear of failure or the shame of not being able to achieve as others in the class can. Classroom experiences give children a second chance at learning and managing the skills needed for effective learning with the support of a professional (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1996).

2.4.2 *The Learning Environment*

Moving from the skills needed to learn, the learning relationship with the teacher and the managing of the emotions of learning we can see that classrooms are complex living communities. They all operate in many different ways and are affected by many aspects. The climate that is both created and perpetuated has a profound impact on the quality of learning and the skills CYP develop.

Claxton (2004) proposes four types of learning environment: Prohibiting, Affording, Inviting and Potentiating, each of which creates a specific environment which impacts on CYP. The importance of the classroom environment to learning is supported by Wang et al. (1990) which showed that the way classrooms are managed is more important than any other aspect in school. Simon Fraser University has mapped out a set of inter-connected conditions for creating positive wellbeing in the learning environment which highlights ten specific areas that develop positive wellbeing including: personal development, social connection, positive classroom environment, real life learning and instructor support. (Dhaliwal & Stanton, 2017). All of which are embedded in the CfL work. Digby, West, Temple, McGuire-Snieckus, Vatmanides, Davey & Parker (2017) looked at the impact of Emotional Coaching and found that the training and work had increased awareness of emotional wellbeing, and had a positive impact on professional practice by improving relationships and reducing behaviour incidents within the classroom.

Another area of note is that of transition and its impact on MHWB. The evidence base is small and inconsistent despite a plethora of reports from Local Education Authorities, reviews on transition projects and reports. A consistent finding is that CYP with lower ability experience transition as stressful and anxiety provoking and evidence would suggest that self-esteem shows a dip following transfer (Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm & Splittgerber, 2000).

2.4.3 *Summary of literature on skills for learning*

The research clearly indicates that by enabling CYP to develop effective skills for learning, they are also developing the personal resources to manage the challenges and stresses that they encounter in life. By creating a positive classroom environment with relationships, emotional literacy and effective skills for learning at its core, schools are able to support CYP manage the emotions that learning provokes, the social dilemmas they encounter and in so doing further develop CYP wellbeing at the time and in the future.

2.5 Emotional Literacy

This section explores the links between emotional literacy and MHWB. It shares a definition that will be use throughout this thesis and explores how emotional literacy develops in CYP and how this is promoted within schools.

2.5.1 *A Brief History of Emotional Literacy*

Extensive literature has been published on emotional literacy with multiple terms used to describe the concept. Some researchers argue emotional literacy is fixed and unchangeable (Mayer and Cobb, 2000). Others support it being an ability model (Bracket and Mayer, 2003) and believe that it involves the perception, integration and understanding and management of emotions. For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of emotional literacy proposed by Splendlove (2009, p.4) will be adopted:

> *Our ability through thinking to recognize, manage, comprehend and suitably communicate our emotions and to understand how they shape our actions and relationships and influence our thinking.*

The definition implies knowledge, attitudes and behavioural components and thus identifies that the concept is made up of a range of skills and abilities that can be acquired and taught.

2.5.2 *Development of Emotional Competencies.*

Gottman (2011) was one of the first researchers to explore how emotional competencies develop in children, by observing the interactions between parents and children. Through these observations he identified that successful parents used emotional coaching techniques, which followed five basic steps in supporting children manage emotions: they were aware of their child's emotions; they saw emotions as an opportunity for connection and teaching; they listened to and validated their child's feelings; labelled emotions and helped their child problem solve within limits, that is, all emotions are acceptable but all behaviours are not and solutions that were used could not hurt anyone with words or deeds. Within schools a wide variety of interventions have been used to support the development of emotional competencies, including the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL Curriculum, 2005) and Emotional Coaching (Gus, Rose & Gilbert, 2015).

2.5.3 *Teaching emotional competencies within schools.*

Up until the 1960s, supporting CYP's wellbeing was considered part of a teacher's role, with teachers working on social and emotional competencies alongside cognitive development. Over the past 20 years this has changed, with the teacher's role becoming more focused on cognition and academic progress (Best, 2002). The role of the teacher has been influenced by the Government's focus on developing a National Curriculum in the Education reform Act 1988 and Government guidelines on teacher workload.

Weare & Gray (2003) highlight evidence demonstrating that the development of emotional competencies can achieve greater education and work success; improvements in behaviour, increased inclusion; improved learning; greater social cohesion and improvements in mental health. This finding is supported by Durlak et al. (2011, p.417) in their meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programmes in the US, which concludes that: 'participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills'. Many of these interventions were exclusion models, delivered to specific groups identified by their schools as needing additional support within

these areas. As the study was based in US schools, the findings cannot be generalised to UK schools.

Within schools in the England, SEAL was a national strategy launched in 2005 for Primary and 2007 for Secondary school pupils. It was a comprehensive approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour and attendance. The intervention was an inclusive model with lessons being delivered to the whole class. The Silver SEAL intervention supplemented the whole class SEAL curriculum and was an exclusion model, with children being withdrawn to work in groups outside the classroom. When an exclusion model is used, it deprives the group of peer role models who can support the learning of new skills and behaviours. Other aspects highlighted since the introduction of SEAL have been the lack of mythological rigour (Banerjee, 2010), a range of negative findings (Hallam, Rhamie & Shaw, 2006) and variability of implementation (Wigglesworth et al., 2012).

Lendrum, Humphrey, Kalambouka & Wigglesworth's (2009) evaluation of Small Group Work, found that there was significant evidence that Primary SEAL small group work had a positive effect, with impact being sustained over time and outside the small group environment. Secondary SEAL evaluation (Humphrey, Lendrum & Wigglesworth, 2010) showed that a third of schools studied showed little or no progress. Their findings contrasted with those of Banerjee (2010), who found that higher quality SEAL implementation produced an enhanced school ethos which led to better behaviour, higher academic achievement and higher attendance.

It is evident from the research that emotional competencies are interwoven with the task of learning and affect the academic achievement of CYP. Good emotional competencies are associated with greater wellbeing and better school performance (Spinrad, Eisenberg, Cumberland, Fabes, Valiente, Shepard & Guthrie, 2000; Masten and Coatworth, 1998) and so need to be incorporated into everyday classroom experiences.

2.5.4 *Summary of literature on emotional literacy*

Learning involves the ability to manage emotions, neurological processes and social interaction. These three strands permeate all that we learn and all that has to be managed by the learner. At times our emotional responses to learning, or the learning interaction, can overwhelm our cognitive processes and thus prevent effective learning. *Emotion is the on off switch to learning, memory and the ability to make novel connections.* (Vail, 1994 p.2)

Evaluative studies have been predominantly undertaken in the US, with most of the programmes focusing on reducing socially risky behaviour. Research conducted in the UK includes Promoting Health and Wellbeing and Resilience in Primary Schools (Banerjee, McLaughlin, Cotney, Roberts & Peereboom, 2016) which demonstrates the importance of school-based strategies that promote the development of social and emotional competencies. This report highlights the need for good professional development, sharing of practice, good assessment and early support and the need to focus on building preventative skills and competencies. We can see by the research that supporting CYP with emotional competencies encourages tolerance, the ability to manage cultural diversity (Weissberg & Greenberg, 1997). The research also highlights the link between good emotional competencies and PMHWB (Durlak et al., 2011).

2.6 Contributions to Mental Health and Wellbeing from Neuroscience

This section will look at a definition of neuroscience, the impact of knowing and understanding about the brain for CYP and how understanding the brain supports teachers in creating a positive learning environment. Neuroscience is the scientific study of the nervous system. It combines physiology, anatomy, molecular biology, developmental biology, and psychology to understand neurons and neural circuits within the body. Most of the research is focused on understanding the fundamental processes within the brain both in health and disease.

The brain is an interconnected system made up of different subsystems. Each of our experiences shape our brain structure, therefore brain development is an experience dependent process. Experiences activate pathways, strengthening existing connections or creating new ones. A wide range of research has shown that brain development is a product of the effects of experience on the developing genetic potential (Siegel, 2015). Research in the latter part of the 20th Century has shown that the brain has the ability to change throughout life (Rakic, 2002). This finding is in contrast with previous scientific thinking that the brain only develops during a critical period in childhood.

Brain research can extend our understanding of learning in a variety of ways. If we look at the cognitive, emotional and relational circuits in the brain, we are able to understand learning in more detail. Hebb (1949) found an experience caused a network of neurons to fire together, these complex networks span the brain and the body like a fine net. The more the neuron net fires, the more likely they will fire in the same pattern. This is the same for positive experiences as it is for negative ones. (Olson, 2014). If a child continually experiences asking questions with a negative response from an adult, they will soon associate questions with a negative outcome – the net has been formed.

In the report How Neuroscience is Affecting Education (Simmonds, 2014), nine out of ten teachers stated that their understanding of neuroscience influenced their practice, yet despite this only 25% of teachers reported having a good/fair amount of knowledge about neuroscience. This means that for many teachers their practice is being influenced by a limited amount of knowledge, some of which could be inaccurate. Churches, Dommett & Devonshire (2017) state that knowledge about neuroscience can be a powerful way of informing teaching and learning and also support the evaluation of the many brain-based learning products on the market. Della Sala & Anderson (2012) argue that incorrect, but widely held beliefs about the brain – neuromyths (Pasquinelli, 2012), can affect teaching and learning in a negative way. Neuromyths develop when information travels between areas of research and becomes misinterpreted, often due to the oversimplification of results (Churches et al., 2017).

2.6.1 *The importance of understanding the brain and how it affects relationships, emotions and learning for CYP.*

Research suggests that mental health problems are appearing at a much earlier age. Although there is little research on the effects of engaging CYP on the neuroscience of learning and emotions, there are many practitioners who are working in this way and are able to show impact through their work. Hawkins (2017) suggests that if we want to support our CYP in understanding how their minds work and give them more strategies to cope with stress, regulation, learning and relationships then helping them understand neuroscience can support this. This way of working is also supported by Dr Lori Desautels who is engaging students through neuroscience in education (Whitehead 2017). She argues that when we teach CYP about the brain and how the different parts work, it gives the brain a scientific context which then extends into learning. She found CYP became fascinated by the neuroscience and that for many understanding how they felt and why, had a calming response as well as supported learning.

In the same vein, Olsen (2014) argues that teaching CYP about the brain and how it works enables them to manage difficult situations later in life. He gives examples such as teaching about negative bias, explanatory styles and how the brain remembers events. This gives CYP the ability to understand why they view things as they did, as well as giving them the power to make changes. Cozolino (2013) also supports this way of engaging CYP, stating that by helping them to understand stress and the body's response to stress it enables CYP to learn strategies to manage, which then impacts on their wellbeing.

MindUp Programme (Malony, Lawlor, Schonert-Reichl & Whitehead, 2016) is a teaching curriculum and framework devised in the USA based on neuroscience, positive psychology, mindful awareness and social and emotional learning. It is one of the few programmes designed for schools that teaches how the brain works and the importance of understanding this. Shonert-Reichl & Lawlor (2010) tested the effect in 75 classrooms and found that the programme boosted feelings of happiness and enjoyment of school, reduced stress and improved executive functioning. Her study was a rigorous experimental design with MindUp children and a control group

and included pre and post-test assessments. Limitations of the study included the use of teacher behaviour ratings, which linked to the fact that the teachers were also the programme deliverers is likely to have influenced the findings. There was also no follow-up assessment to measure whether positive improvements were sustained.

2.6.2 *Summary of literature on contributions to MHWB of neuroscience*

Neuroscience invites us to think about CYP's attitudes, beliefs and behaviours as neural networks that have been created by past experiences, but which can be altered by new experiences and positive relationships. Olson (2014, p.6) suggests that new positive experiences with a trusting adult can create 'disconfirming experiences' for CYP, who have had negative experiences which have created negative neural networks. Disconfirming experiences can weaken previously developed neural networks or traumatic memories (Ecker,Ticic & Hulley, 2012).

From the research available we can see that linking neuroscience to emotions and learning, supports a deeper understanding of learning and also the emotions we experience. This is turn supports CYP's ability to manage stress, regulate emotions and understand their responses to situations more clearly. Siegel (2015) suggests that knowing about how the brain works can empower people to choose to transform their lives and move towards greater health and wellbeing.

2.7 Circles for Learning

2.7.1 *The Primary Schools Research Project*

Initial research into the impact of CfL was undertaken in Primary Schools (2014-2015). The Primary Schools Project trained, supported and followed 5 Primary practitioners undertake the project within their schools for a year (Waterhouse, 2015). This was followed by a whole school study that measured the impact of whole staff training and the implementation of CfL across two rural primary schools for one year (2015-2016) (See Appendices 4,5,6).

The Primary Schools Research Project influenced the current research study in several ways. It identified:

1. Areas that underpin positive mental health and ways to support these to develop within the school environment.
2. Need for staff training in a range of areas.
3. Impact of whole class observation of parent-baby interactions supported and led by a trained Lead Practitioner.
4. Demonstrated that a focus on emotional literacy and relationships enables a more supportive class culture to develop.
5. Showed how a language for learning develops when the learning of another is the focus.
6. Demonstrated improved relationships between class teacher and children.

2.7.2 *How CfL has developed and key sources which have shaped it.*

Evidence shows that work on emotional and social competence and wellbeing has a wide range of educational and social benefits, including greater educational and work success, improved behaviour, increased inclusion, improved learning, greater social cohesion, increased social capital, and improvements to mental health (Weare & Gray, 2003).

Bion (1962) put forward a model of learning based on the intricate pattern of interaction between mother and baby in the earliest stages, suggesting that infants need considerable help from their mothers in thinking about and making sense of their experiences. If the infant consistently experiences a mother/carer who is able to 'contain' his primitive anxieties, he will be able to draw on this memory as he develops. Barrett & Trevitt (1991) suggest that this containing function is taken over by the school staff.

Bowlby (1969) was particularly interested in the early mother-infant relationship. He believed that it was fundamental to a growing child's ability to explore and learn. His research and experiences led to the concepts of an attachment figure and a secure

base from which the developing infant could explore the world. It has been suggested that when children enter the world of formal education, the teacher and the school take over the containing parental role and become the attachment figure for the child (Alexander, Entwisle, & Thompson., 1987). It is through this relationship with the teacher that children experience a secure base for exploring the world within the classroom. (Howe, 1999; Pianta & Walsh, 1998).

2.8 *Implications of Literature Review for Current Study*

There are many different types of intervention being delivered within schools to enhance PMHWB, but only three that include CYP observing the complex parent-child interactions within the classroom, namely, RoE, Babywatching and CfL. The aim of RoE is to support the development of empathy and prosocial behaviour as a way to decrease bullying and aggression. Babywatching focuses on using the parent-baby relationship as a way to reduce aggression and anxiety, whereas CfL focuses on developing five areas that all affect the development of PMHWB. RoE uses special instructors to come into the classroom to deliver the programme, whereas Babywatching and CfL train the teaching staff to deliver the intervention. This ensures that teaching staff understand the theoretical underpinnings of the work and means that they stay within the school environment, where they can continue to use their training and expertise. The CfL intervention is the only intervention that combines initial staff training with mentoring during the first yearly cycle.

RoE uses a manualised programme whereas Babywatching has no curriculum that teachers follow. CfL is a non-manualised intervention that offers a range of lesson plans that can be used. However, the use and timing of plans are left to the practitioners delivering the intervention. It is felt that the classroom teacher has the knowledge and understanding of the CYP and the resource materials and can therefore create an appropriate programme. Although the three interventions all use parent-baby observations within a school environment, they are very different. CfL is the only intervention that works with children in KS1-KS4 and the only one that

focuses on supporting the development of strategies and skills in the five areas found to support PMHWB.

It is clear from the review of pertinent literature that several gaps have emerged. Research clearly demonstrates the vital importance of both emotional literacy and relationships, including social skills, in developing PMHWB and yet neither are fully understood nor taught, apart from in the Early Years. Research also highlights the importance of new relational experiences that educational staff can offer CYP. These disconforming experiences are rarely promoted or utilized within interventions. Educational professionals are seldom supported in understanding the importance their role can play in creating positive experiences for MHWB. Therefore, two of the questions that this research seeks to explore are: To what extent can the implementation of CfL within secondary schools, including parent-baby observations once a month for a year, and follow-up teaching and learning sessions, develop:

1. a more positive sense of self?

2. stronger relationships, including adult to young person and peer to peer.

Research has also identified that CYP's sense of self impacts on their ability to develop positive skills and strategies that grow and maintain PMHWB. Many interventions focus on a deficit model, withdrawing children who have been identified as needing support, rather working in a preventative way building on skills and beliefs as CYP grow and develop. Interventions that include a practical element that encourages them to notice, question and be curious about themselves and others, have also been shown to be more successful in engaging CYP. Therefore, the research seeks to understand if the implementation of CfL supports the development of:

3. young people's emotional literacy?

Regardless of the research demonstrating schools as ideal places to support CYP to develop the skills and strategies to both develop and maintain PMHWB, few schools have developed a wellbeing curriculum. This could ensure identification of need, early support and the ability for teaching staff to build on skills and competencies.

Linked to this is the gap in teacher knowledge and understanding of how MHWB develops and also knowledge, skills and strategies that are beneficial for CYP to learn. Both of these areas are linked to creating a positive classroom environment that facilitates, teaches and supports the skills needed for learning as well as PMHWB. At present, there is no intervention that supports both teacher knowledge and understanding of the factors that impact on PMHWB within the school environment, which enables them to deliver a proactive inclusive intervention. Therefore, the final question the research explores is whether running CfL in school develops:

4. a positive learning culture within the classroom which is supportive of positive mental health and wellbeing?

The four research questions posed in this study are namely: Does the implementation of CfL within secondary schools, including parent-baby observations once a month for a year, and follow-up teaching and learning sessions, develop:

1. a more positive sense of self?
2. stronger relationships, including adult to young person and peer to peer?
3. young people's emotional literacy?
4. a positive learning environment which is supportive of PMHWB?

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 *Introduction*

This chapter presents the rationale, research design, profile of participants and how they were recruited for the project, procedure, study samples, validity and reliability, analytical methods undertaken, ethical considerations and reflexivity.

Both practice procedures and theoretical fundamentals will be discussed within this chapter.

3.2 *Research Design*

'Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.' (Attributed to Einstein)

It is important to consider the research paradigm in which a study is set. Kumar (2011) suggests that most studies require the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative tools in order to fully explore the research questions. However, Denscombe, (1998) states that research involving quantitative data only tends to be more highly regarded for their scientific credibility and sense of robust objectiveness.

Quantitative methods focus on obtaining data by means of numbers and statistics, whereas qualitative research methods aim at providing the answer to why things are how they are, thus emphasizing understanding and context. Qualitative data can be difficult to measure and quantify, however, it can shed light on attitudes and viewpoints that are not available through quantitative methods. With respect to the current study, qualitative research methods enabled a dialogue between the researcher and the Lead Practitioner (LP), about the project, their experience facilitating it and the young people's learning experience. Quantitative methods allowed the researcher to collect data on children's views of themselves, as well as those of LP, in several categories and then compare these with post-intervention assessment data. This enabled the researcher to identify the areas in which the project appeared to exert the greatest impact. The use of qualitative and

quantitative methods provides a richer contextual basis for understanding results and enables a fuller picture of the study to be seen (Bonoma, 1985).

Due to the range of schools and the individual specific design of the project within each school using CfL, a case study research model was felt to be the most appropriate design. This approach enables the researcher to investigate a single concept within different environments and the ability to identify and extend practice within schools (Cohen et al., 2011). Case Studies research is a way to investigate where little is known, in greater depth, using a variety of methods of collecting data (Kumar, 2011). Case Studies also involve investigation over time (Willig, 2008). As the main aim of the current research was to identify the impact of CfL within a school setting over one academic year, it was felt that this was the most appropriate form of research design to adopt.

The ability to collect pre-intervention assessment data and then compare to post-intervention quantitative data, means that the research is an experimental design conducted within the context of a case study measuring outcomes of CfL. Outcomes research measures the end results (outcomes) of the structure and the process. Assessments are used to determine a baseline and then the same assessment is used to measure progress at the end of the project (Pote, Stratton, Cottrell, Shapiro, & Boston, 2003). Experimental design can be used in many types of situations and can be used to draw causal conclusions regarding interventions or treatments as it offers control over the variable (Kirk, 2007).

CfL was designed to be a non-prescriptive, non-manualised model. The researcher was clear that the focus needed to be on developing the skills, understanding and practice of the LPs rather than asking them to follow a manual. Manuals clearly specify the activities and the way they are to be undertaken. This can oversimplify ways of working, restrict creativity and influence the attunement and thus the relationships involved between the LPs and the people involved (Pote et al., 2003). As detailed in the previous Introduction and Literature Review chapters, CfL proposed that by training and supporting the LPs develop their own skills and

understanding rather than teaching to a manual, practice could be enhanced and be more child focused.

The opportunity to collect qualitative data enabled the researcher to explore the experiences of the LPs using semi-structured interviews at different time points throughout the project. The first interview was conducted in the initial term after the project had started, the second midway through the project and the final interview at the end of the project. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was chosen to examine the data from the LPs.

Phenomenology has its theoretical origins in phenomenology and hermeneutics, and the philosophers Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty have all been leading figures in its evolution. It is concerned with understanding human experience and strives to understand the participant's internal map of the world. IPA requires the researcher to focus on this internal map and then develop interpretations which then in turn help to explain what the participant's experience of the phenomena was. This involves what Findlay (2008) refers to as the 'dance' between reduction (bracketing the researcher's preconceptions) and reflexivity, where the researcher is building interpretations and yet acknowledging their own perceptions. The challenge for the researcher is to reveal the participants' thinking and make inferences about constructions, which are hidden behind the language and yet are reliant on the language to reveal them (Carpenter, 2009).

IPA was chosen over Thematic Analysis as it focuses on how people see and interpret their experiences and turn them into form which is understandable to them (Broki and Wearden, 2006). Using IPA enabled the researcher to understand how the LP experienced CfL within their environment as professionals within the field of education. This added to the researchers understanding of the implementation and impact of the project.

Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit a detailed first-person account of the phenomena under investigation. This enables the participants to tell their own story

in their own words (Brocki & Wearden, 2006) and also to ensure that specific areas were explored. These were then analysed and descriptions, language and concepts were highlighted and emergent themes started to become more visible. The final phase is to find links between emergent themes, identifying superordinate themes and subthemes.

Alongside this, quantitative data was collected from the CYP and LP which explored their sense of self-image, emotional literacy and their sense of themselves as a learner. Being able to use both types of data adds a richness and depth to the data collected for the study.

3.3 *Participants*

The researcher chose to engage a variety of schools to work on CfL. This enabled the impact of the project on different group settings, within the secondary school system led by a range of practitioners.

Recruitment of schools for the current project initially proved difficult and so a variety of methods were used. Some schools were approached through the researcher's professional network, speaking at a local Headteachers' meeting, advertising on LinkedIn, through conferences, advertising within educational magazines and at the SEND show in London. Several schools came forward who were interested in the project, but then dropped out. The reasons given included staff changes, promotion of staff, senior leaders who were interested but then lacked the support of class teachers and difficulties releasing staff to attend the training. Following recruitment, five participating schools in England committed to CfL (Schools A-E) and can be profiled as follows:

School A is a Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) school in England aged 11-16. 8 Year 7 boys took part in the project. All CYP had an EHCP and seven had an ASC diagnosis.

School B is a larger than average non-selective school in England aged 11-18. 12 Year 9 CYP took part in the project, 3 were female and 9 were male. 7 CYP were

on the SEN register. As the school started the project in November the CYP were in Year 9 however moved into Year 10 (1 Term) before the project finished.

School C is non-selective Academy school in England. Age 11-18.
12 year 9 CYP took part in the project, 3 were female and 9 were male. 6 children were on the SEN register and 1 young person had an EHCP.

School D is a Local Authority Community Special School in England for children aged 3-19. 12 CYP took part in the project, 2 were female and 10 were male. All children had an EHCP.

School E is an all through Academy SEMH School in England for children from 4 - 16. This school withdrew in the very early stages of the project due to staff changes.

The research explored CfL in 4 secondary schools with 44 CYP from KS3-KS5, six qualified teachers and three Teaching Assistants (TAs). All LP were teachers.

See Appendix 7 for information on participating schools and staff.

3.4 *Data Collection Instruments*

Two forms of analytical methods have been used in exploring the data collected; Interpretive Phenomenological analysis (IPA) and frequency counts which represented outcomes data.

The IPA was chosen as the preferred method to examine the teacher's semi-structured interviews. IPA is concerned with exploring experience in its own terms (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2013). The delivery of CfL had been experienced as very complex by the researcher herself and so it was hoped that by using IPA this complex experience could be explored and understood more fully. The IPA ensured that the researcher was enabled to explore the 'insights of the experts, the research participants themselves' (IPA, 2005 p.1). Through the semi-structured interviews over a year each part of the journey can be explored, as well as the impact it has had on the participants. Thus the separate interviews are linked with a common thread and through the use of IPA the researcher was able to follow that thread and

discover the parts, connections and meaning to each participant as well as identify overall themes.

The semi-structured interview questions were designed to help the researcher focus on the areas being explored by the research questions. These questions included: In what 3 ways has the training on attachment, neuroscience and learning impacted on your practice? How has CfL supported the development of emotional competencies with your class? (For the full list of interview questions see Appendix 8). The initial questions were designed to explore the impact of the training on classroom practice, the assessments, as well as explore how each practitioner was experiencing the project. The researcher was clear that having access to a wide variety of practitioners was an important aspect of evaluating the project. The LPs running the project within each school were specialists in their own field and so the researcher wanted to capture this professional dialogue within the interviews.

The second set of questions was used midway into the project and were designed to explore the different themes that had emerged, the impact on the practitioners and the impact on the CYP within each school. The final set of questions was focused on supporting the LPs to give a professional evaluation of the project linked to the research questions within their own school environment.

Additional information was collected with the use of Teacher feedback questionnaires pre- and post-project (see Appendix 9), training feedback questionnaires (see Appendix 10), Teacher Logs and project observations by the researcher.

Another aspect of the research was focused on the impact of the project on the CYP's learning and MHWB. To understand these, the following baseline assessments were undertaken, all were standardised assessments:

1. Emotional Literacy (Southampton Psychology Service (SELA) 2003) including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation empathy and social skills. This has a self-report questionnaire for CYP and also questionnaires for staff and parents. It was used to measure the impact of the project on emotional literacy and thus understand if the project had had an impact in this area.

2. Self-Image and Self Esteem (Butler Self Image Profiles (Butler SIP) 2001). This is a self-report questionnaire for the CYP and was used to measure the impact of the project on CYP self-esteem.

3. Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI). Comprised of 72 questions exploring how CYP think of themselves as learners. It produces a spider diagram that was used to explore the CYP beliefs about themselves as learners at the onset of the project and then as a measure to see the impact of the CfL work at the end of the Project. 'The ELLI learning profile is best described as a form of dynamic assessment with integrationist orientation' (Deakin Crick 2007 p 142).

See Appendix 11 for summary of assessments used.

All of the baseline assessments chosen for CYP used self-assessment, with the SELA also using teacher assessment. Self-report is a standard means of gathering data in the social sciences about an individual's values and attitudes and dispositions. What young people believe about themselves impacts on the way they behave and experience the world, which includes how they think about themselves as a learner. Begly (2000) highlighted that any adult information on a CYP is only an informed opinion whereas a CYP feedback highlights what they perceive about themselves. Thomas et al. (2011) used Personal Construct Theory as a way of exploring self-image with adolescents with learning difficulties and found a lack of research in this area but demonstrated that using self-report questions to explore self-esteem were viable with CYP with learning difficulties.

The checklists measure perceptions rather than behaviour, competencies or skills. Self-administered questionnaires about oneself are subject to biases. When questionnaires are completed for others to look at the respondent tends to present themselves more favourably, his social desirability (Van de Mortel, 2008) identifies the need of the participant to answer more towards what they think is a good response rather than what is true. It is also important to recognise that when completing a questionnaire about others, there is a tendency to succumb to what is known as the 'halo effect' (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977). Once someone holds a particular view there is a likelihood that they will continue to carry on thinking that

way about the person. To compensate for this some of the questions in the questionnaires are worded both positively and negatively, which helps to reduce response bias (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977).

Each of the groups chosen within the 4 schools undertook the baseline assessments before embarking on CfL.

The ELLI assessment created a spider diagram for each young person showing how they thought of themselves as a learner for each of the 7 dimensions; creativity, curiosity, resilience, meaning making, changing and learning, learning relationships and strategic awareness. These were then used at the end of the project to show changes in CYP perceptions (see Appendix 3).

The Emotional Literacy assessment used both LP and CYP assessment. For the LP this enabled them to show where they thought the CYP were in the five domains: Self-regulation, Self-awareness, Empathy, Social Skills and Motivation.

The data were gathered to address the research questions and through analysis highlighted the impact of the project on each of the 3 areas. Due to the small size of the cohorts within each school, statistical analysis of data focused on frequency counts to show pre- and post-project comparisons.

3.5 *Procedure*

To undertake the research a variety of school settings were required. This enabled the research to explore how the project would work in a variety of Secondary school settings with a variety of CYP led by different teachers.

Staff training was led by the researcher working with teaching staff in participating schools, it was an essential requirement for the project. Each school agreed to train 2 practitioners, one of whom had to be a qualified teacher and who would become the LP. Schools A and D were trained at the same time. Training was for 15 hours over 3 days. School B and E were not able to come together for the training and so were trained individually, training was undertaken for 15 hours over 2 days.

The training ensured that all staff understood the theoretical basis of the project. To ensure this a variety of papers was used to support the practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding in the key fields. Each area of training was linked to discussion and real-life practice by the researcher (see Appendix 12 for staff training presentations). The first day started with attachment, neuroscience and learning. This explored a brief history of attachment research, implications for relationships and the affect that attachment could have on both learning within schools (Geddes, 2006) and also on relationships with teachers and peers. The training also looked at the information that neuroscience is now offering to this field.

The second part of the CfL staff training focused on emotional literacy and emotional barriers to learning. Papers were again shared and research discussed, with specific information being highlighted and ways the project might develop this area within the classroom. The penultimate part of the training was focused on social skills, what was meant by this term, how they were taught and supported within schools and a variety of ways that they might be developed through the use of the parent-baby observations.

The final part of the training focused on learning dimensions and what makes a good learner. This brought together the threads of a secure base, relationships, emotional literacy and self-regulation within the school environment and the impact these had on learning. It finished with exploring the ways that CfL could support the development of learning dispositions within the classroom. To support practitioners' understanding of how to develop the project within their class, video clips were used to demonstrate how the observations could be narrated, how the use of open questions could stimulate discussion and debate and the use of the teaching resources created by the researcher to support follow-up lessons. (See Appendix 13 for resources for teachers). The focus throughout the training was twofold: firstly, developing staff knowledge and understanding about the key theoretical concepts involved and secondly, developing the knowledge and understanding of how to use the baby-parent observations to stimulate work within the five key areas supporting PMHWB.

Training also involved looking at the assessments: Butler Self Image, (SIP) Effective Lifelong Learning (ELLI) and Southampton Emotional Literacy Assessment (SELA) that would be utilised and how to implement these.

Once the training had been completed, a plan of implementation was created and agreed with each participating school. This included:

1. Groups identified to take part and rationale behind these choices.
2. Baseline assessments.
3. How and when the observations and follow-up sessions would be undertaken for the year ahead. (See Appendix 14 for the timeline for participating schools).
4. Who would lead the observation and follow-up sessions.
5. How the work would be shared with other colleagues within school.
6. How the children's discussions and work would be recorded.
7. How the teachers understanding, thought processes and reflections would be recorded.

Each school became a case study and worked with the researcher to develop the project within its own environment to meet the needs of their CYP. Each school undertook the work in slightly different ways. Once the parent-baby dyad had been identified and the children prepared, the sessions began. A special blanket was used for the mum and baby to sit on so that the baby did not have contact with a dirty floor and all CYP used a hand sanitiser before the visit. The children then positioned themselves around the blanket in a circle so that they could observe the interactions. The LP chose to sit in a variety of places, however, the most useful place seemed to be opposite the parent-baby, as this allowed them to narrate what was happening and to ask questions. Children were encouraged to ask questions and interact with the baby. The time of the session was gauged on the ability of the baby or the CYP to manage, but most groups worked for 30-60 minutes. After the session, the practitioner explored the CYP's thoughts and observations, which then fed into their follow-up lessons.

Due to the project being a case study research the researcher looked at the baseline assessments and then final assessments of children and young people undertaking the project, the topics covered and the learning that grew out of the observation sessions. The researcher also undertook semi-structured interviews face-to-face or by telephone with all LPs, to understand the impact of the work on their practice. (Appendix 8) In addition, the researcher was able to observe the parent-child sessions and videos made by the schools and also use the teacher's log to discuss ways the project could develop within each school. The researcher then looked at the information collected from each school, both as individual case studies and then collectively.

3.6 *Sampling*

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study. The sample is a way of representing the larger group. Through sampling, data can be collected, this data can then be generalised to the population from which the sample has been taken. A systematic sampling design Kumar (2011) was used to identify schools to take part in the research. First, the researcher identified the different types of secondary schools in the field of education: Mainstream Local Authority non-selective, Mainstream Academy Sponsored, SEMH, Special School for Severe and Complex Learning Differences, Special School for ASC, Independent Selective. One school from each area was sought through a range of means, including advertising at an Education show, speaking at Headteachers meetings and through the use of LinkedIn.

The LP from each school taking part in CfL discussed which pupil groups would take part in the project with the researcher and looked at individual children within the group. This approach ensured that any vulnerable children were identified before the project began and that the researcher was satisfied that schools had robust practices in place to meet any needs that arose.

See Appendix 7 for information on schools, staff and cohorts chosen.

3.7 Reflexivity (Researcher bias)

It is impossible for the researcher to position themselves outside the subject matter, as the researcher has a relationship with the subject as the focus of their research (Haraway 1988 quoted by Willig, 2008). To ensure bias was reduced quantitative data methods are included within the design and LP were trained to undertake the assessments and to lead the baby-parent observations sessions.

Qualitative research acknowledges that the researcher influences the research process, both as a person (personal reflexivity) and as a theorist (epistemological reflexivity) (Willig, 2008). This however, adds an additional dimension to qualitative research, as it enables exploration into personal responses and bias and their impact on what is observed. By understanding personal thoughts and ideas a greater understanding and insight can be gained from the data collected (Willig, 2008).

3.8 *Validity and Reliability*

Joppe (2000, p.1) provides the following explanation of what validity is in quantitative research: 'Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are.' The concept of reliability in relation to research, looks at whether the research tool is consistent, accurate and predictable (Kumar, 2011).

Thus within the research, the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews with the practitioners are designed to measure the impact of the training, the parent-child observations and the interaction with the young people through the delivery of the follow-up sessions, on the practitioners. All of these form the qualitative aspects of the research.

In contrast, the young people's assessment of Self-Image, Emotional Literacy and ELLI are all aspects of the project that were measured with a quantitative approach as were the LP assessments of CYP emotional literacy. These assessments were undertaken at the beginning of the project and then at the end, thus measuring impact.

3.9 *Ethical Considerations*

The research involved children and young people and so ethical considerations were vital (British Psychological Society, 2009). This study was approved by the Department of Education Ethics Committee at the University of York. Informed consent was obtained by all concerned. All headteachers and participating staff were shown the research proposal and all signed consent forms.

Parents/carers for children undertaking CfL were asked to sign an opt-out form if they did not wish their child to take part in the project. All children taking part in the project were told about the parent-baby observation work and then co-created the follow-up work undertaken by the teaching staff.

See Appendix 15 for Ethics forms

All participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without the threat of any penalization.

Confidentiality was achieved by:

1. Referring to schools as: A, B, C, D and E.

2. The removal of names from the baseline assessments that make up the data.

3. Referring to staff as Teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and linking this with their school (School A-E).

Staff transcripts were kept on file and no individuals could be identified. The data generated by the CYP was only accessible by the LP within each school and the researcher, both use password protected computers. It was felt that the baseline information needed to be shared with schools, as it provided useful understanding of the CYP and their perceptions of themselves.

Following completion of the research, all practitioners in school were debriefed and the highlights of the research were shared with them.

Chapter 4. Presentation and Analysis of Results

4.1 *Introduction*

To determine the impact of CfL on teachers and CYP, a range of quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed pre- and post-project. This chapter presents the findings divided into sections, so that each of the four participating schools can be examined separately. Insights can thus be gained as to how the project was conducted in different educational settings in answering the four research questions, namely: Does the implementation of CfL within secondary schools, develop:

1.   a more positive sense of self?

2.   stronger relationships, including adult to young person and peer to peer?

3.   young people's emotional literacy?

4.   a positive learning environment which is supportive of PMHWB?

4.2 *School A:* SEMH Special School

4.2.1 *Self Image Profile (SIP)*

The SIP asks the CYP 25 questions about how CYP see themselves, and how they would like to be. This is recorded on a scale of 0-6 (where 0=Not at all and 6=very much). The scores are then calculated to show a positive sense of self (SI+ve), negative sense of self (SI –ve) with the discrepancy between the 'where I am' and 'where I would like to be' being calculated to show Self-esteem (SE) scores

The results from the SIP for School A highlight that 37.5% (n=3) of the CYP had a more positive sense of self post-project and 12.5% (n=1) indicated no change. 37.5% (n=3) of CYP decreased their negative aspects of self during the project with 12.5% (n=1) showing no change. From the data, 12.5% (n=1) of participants showed an increase in self-esteem at the end of the project.

Several points need to be noted when analysing these results. Firstly, the difficulty the school had in administering the test. The TA who administered the test left at the end of the first term without ensuring all the pre-test assessment had been administered. It became apparent that the CYP had not understood the instructions, as many had only responded once indicating 'Where they believed they were' and not the second mark to show 'Where they would like to be.' This made several assessments invalid. The researcher worked with the LP and administered the assessments with the CYP mid project and then assisted again post-project.

Table 1 School A SIP

School A SIP													
		Pre-project Jan 2018				Mid Project April 2018				Post-project July 2018			
Child	M/F	SI (+ve)	SI (-ve)	SD	SE	SI (+ve)	SI (-ve)	SD	SE	SI (+ve)	SI (-ve)	SD	SE
A1	M	59	14	3	28					51	14	5	8
A2	M	21	40	3	47					33	48	0	53
A3	M	Ass incorrect				47	33	4	29	53	39	3	36
A4		CANCELLED											
A5	M	Ass Incorrect				53	46	4	13	51	36	5	23
A6	M	Ass incorrect				57	23	0	16	47	30	6	44
A7	M					36	10	6	40	43	14	5	42
A8	M					28	38	4	27	15	28	1	74
A9	M					46	43	3	48	46	45	2	50
SI+ve Positive self-image; SI-ve Negative Self-image; SE self-esteem; SD score for item 13. This score reflects the individuals sense of uniqueness													

Secondly, regarding the use of self-report questionnaires with CYP on the ASC. There has been an increase in the development of self-report questionnaires for CYP in both clinical and research use. This has been influenced by the need to listen and respect CYP's understanding of themselves. Begly (2000) pointed out that adults only provide an opinion of how they believe a child feels and their responses may be contaminated by their own beliefs or interpretations. Thomas, Butler, Hare and Green (2011), use personal construct theory as a way of exploring self-image with adolescents with learning disabilities and highlight the lack of research in this area. Their research demonstrates that adolescents with learning differences are able to describe a variety of self-constructs and so the use of self-report questionnaires if supported.

4.2.2 Emotional Literacy Assessment (SELA) School A

The SELA assessment is a 25 question self-report questionnaire for CYP which explores the 5 key areas of emotional literacy: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. It asks CYP to indicate where they are on a spectrum: very true, somewhat true, not really true and not true at all. The SELA has a staff questionnaire which looks at where staff feel CYP are for a range of questions that link to the five areas. The staff questionnaire can then be analysed to show scores for each of the five areas. These staff scores were then compared pre- and post-project.

The results from the SELA demonstrate that at post-project assessment, staff recorded CYP making progress in four of the five areas. The CYP in this school undertook the project as part of their transition into school in year 7. The project ran for three terms from September to July.

Table 2. School A Emotional Literacy

School A Emotional Literacy				
	Increase	**No Change**	**Decrease**	**No. of CYP**
Self-awareness	4 (50%)	1 (13%)	3 (38%)	8
Self-Regulation	5 (63%)		3 (38%)	8
Motivation	3 (38%)	1 (13%)	4 (50%)	8
Empathy	4 (50%)	2 (26%)	2 (26%)	8
Social Skills	5 (63%)	1 (13%)	2 (26%)	8

Table 2 shows staff observed increased social skills for 63% (n=5) of the CYP which suggests that the baby-parent sessions on social interactions and follow-up discussion around interactions with others had an impact on the CYP.

Half (50%) of CYP show increased self-awareness. The CfL sessions focused on social interactions and also on coaching children through these to ensure successful interactions. The findings suggest that these experiences may enhance self-awareness over time.

The third area of growth was in the domain of empathy with staff observing 50% (n=4) children showing an increase in empathy during the three terms of the project.

Table 3 Average Points Progress in each of the Emotional Literacy domains pre and post-project for School A

School A Average points progress in each area n=8					
	Initial Points	Average	Final Points	Average	Rank in line with increase
Self-awareness	85	10.63	90	11.25	2
Self-Regulation	82	10.3	85	10.63	4
Motivation	105	13.13	103	12.88	5
Empathy	86	10.75	89	11.13	3
Social Skills	86	10.75	106	13.25	1
Ranking: 1 highest and 5 lowest					

When looking at the SIP and the SELA findings, it is important to be mindful of the research on secondary transfer and its impact on social and emotional health. This transition to secondary school is especially challenging for CYP with a diagnosis of ASC as it places increased demands on their ability to be flexible in managing situations and their social competencies (Tobin et al., 2012). Despite this there seems to be a lack of evidence within this field. The impact of secondary transfer and the negative impact this has on self-esteem would be supported by the findings from the SIP and the SELA.

The decrease in motivation experienced by 50% (n=4) of the children is noteworthy. Martin (2003) suggests that motivation may not be sufficient, to deal with academic changes or stress and that motivation levels can drop if not supported by academic resilience. Bong et al. (2003) found CYP's academic self-concept was influenced by their past learning achievements. If both these aspects of research are taken into account when viewing the results from the SIP and SELA, the drop in self-esteem of 87% (n=7) of CYP in school and the low scores in motivation might be indicative of the challenges that the CYP were experiencing with the transition to their new

school. This would also be supported by research around attachment and the class teacher's role as a secure base (Farr et al., 2014).The impact of transition therefore has to be considered.

4.2.3 Effective Lifelong Learning Profiles (ELLI) School A.

The ELLI questionnaire is a self-report questionnaire for the CYP which uses a 72 question online assessment to explore how CYP think of themselves in the seven domains of learning: Strategic Awareness, Meaning Making, Changing and Learning, Resilience, Learning Relationships, Creativity and Curiosity. The responses are turned into a spider diagram which demonstrate what the CYP believed about themselves.

The blue area of the spider diagrams indicate where the CYP thought they were pre-project, the pink post-project for each of the seven domains. The pre-project profiles were shared with the CYP by the LP and formed the basis of individual learning conversations.

Figure 2: Effective Lifelong Learning Inventories (ELLI) School A
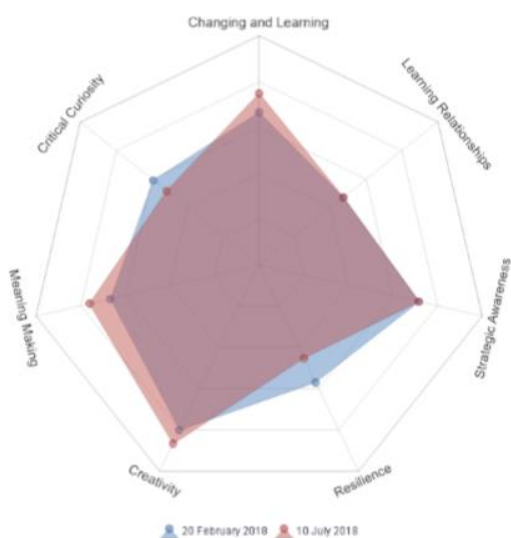
Child A 6   Child A 9
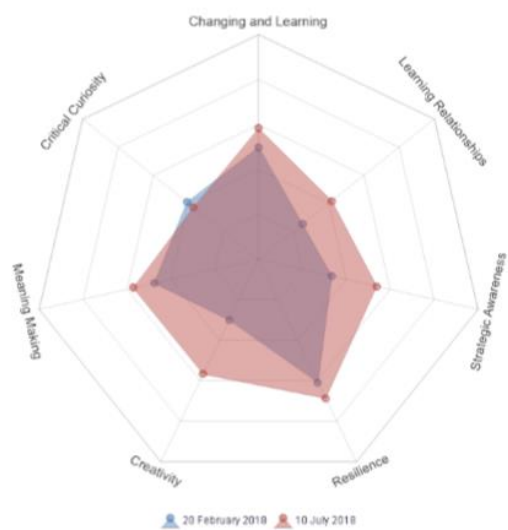
Child A7
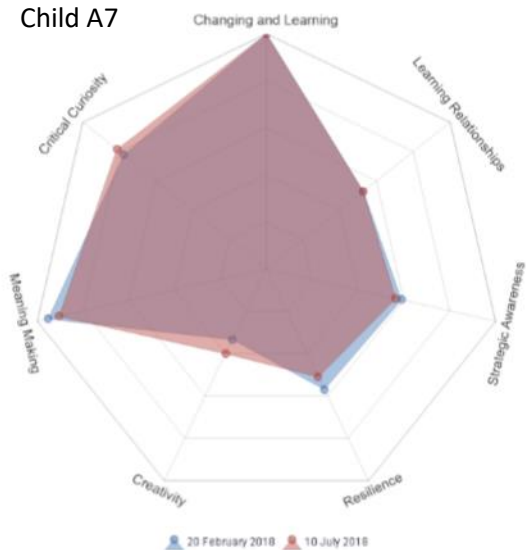
Child A1
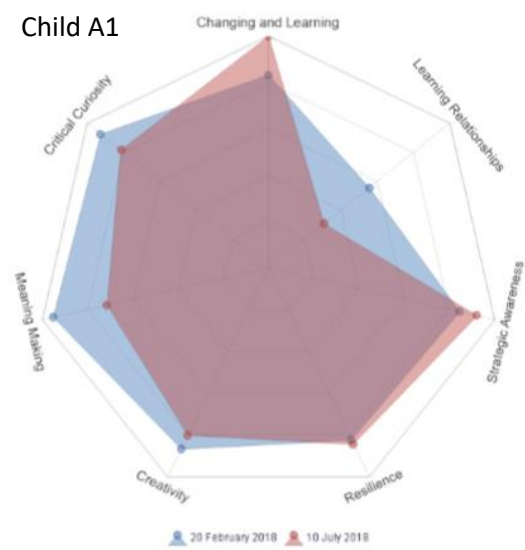
Child A3
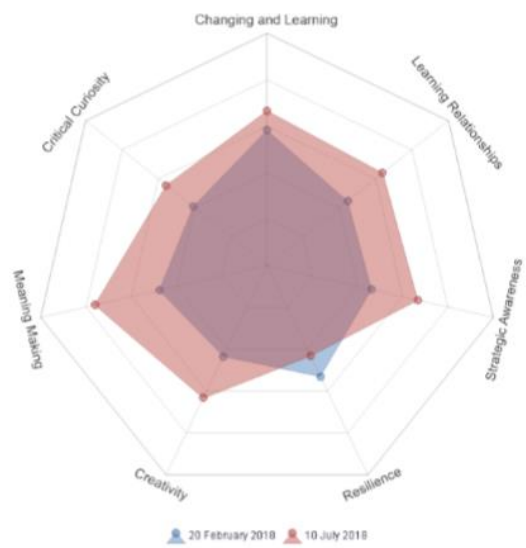
Child A5
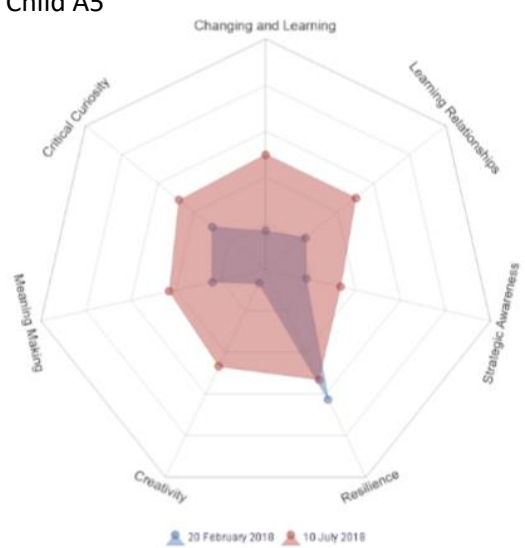
Child A2
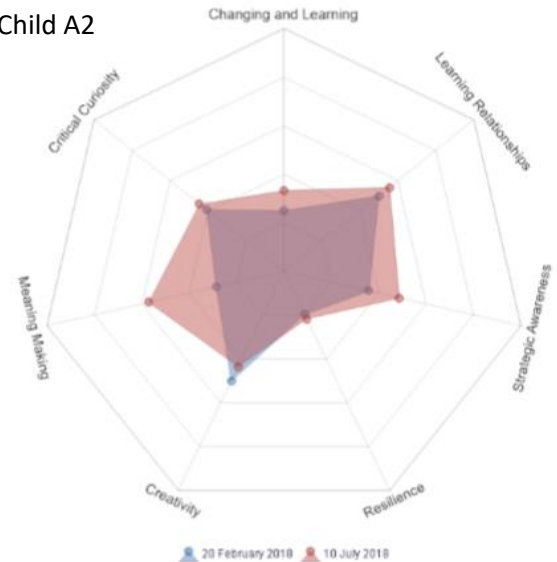
The greatest area of growth shown by the ELLI Profiles was in the Changing and Learning dimension, with 86% (n=6) of CYP feeling that this was an area they had strengthened during the project.

Table 4. School A ELLI scores

School A ELLI					
Learning Dimension	**Increase**	**Same**	**Decrease**	**No of CYP**	**Rank**
Changing and Learning	6 (86%)	1 (14%)		7	1
Strategic Awareness	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	7	2
Resilience	3 (43%)		4 (57%)	7	7
Meaning Making	5 (71%)		2 (28%)	7	2
Creativity	5 (71%)		2 (28%)	7	2
Curiosity	4 (57%)		3 (43%)	7	5
Learning Relationships	4 (57%)	2 (28%)	1 (14%)	7	5
Ranking 1 is high and 7 is low					

The ELLI findings indicate that focusing attention on the skills of learning and the use of learning conversations with CYP has a positive effect on the Changing and Learning dimension. The EEF research on Powerful Learning Conversations, however, showed that feedback conversations had little or no impact in their pilot study (EEF 2018). The EEF used coaching conversations with CYP to give feedback, whereas the current ELLI project supports the teacher-student conversations around the learning profile produces, which is more focused on the CYP beliefs about themselves as learners.

The ELLI profiles, at post-project assessment, show six of the seven learning dimensions increased in strength for 50%+ of the CYP, with the seventh increasing in strength for 43%. The results also highlight that 57% (n=4) of CYP felt that their resilience had decreased during the project. This result may be linked to the research on transition to secondary schools and the impact that this can have on emotional and social development and academic progress. International data consistently shows a dip in attainment following secondary transfer (West et al., 2010) and a link between motivation and academic resilience (Martin, 2002). As the results show a decrease in motivation for 50% (n=4), of the CYP and a decrease in

resilience for 57% (n=4), this could suggest that for several CYP the transition impacted on their academic self-concept and their resilience in a negative way.

Overall, the results pertaining to School A suggests that watching and discussing their class baby develop and learn new skills influenced the CYP's own understanding of learning.

4.2.4 *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Themes for School A*

A major part of the IPA was the narrative that was shared with the researcher on each of her visits. As the results indicate Teacher A was interviewed three times and Teacher B once during the project (see Appendix 16 for IPA themes)

The themes identified through IPA to be considered within this section are: Personal Impact, Impact on CYP and CfL as a teaching and learning tool. Key issues will be focused on within each section.

4.2.4.1 *Personal Impact*

It is clear from the IPA themes, (Appendix 16) staff training session feedback (Appendix 10) and teacher questionnaire (Appendix 9) that the journey for staff started with the training. This acted as a catalyst for thinking about social skills development. It highlighted a lack of understanding around social and emotional competencies as well as ways of developing these skills with CYP on the AS.

> *I can teach science but I know bugger all about emotions … What are social skills?...*

The staff training also raised awareness of emotional literacy and how to develop this with CYP. Both of these considerations had an impact on the development of the project within this school.

> *They have become quite nurturing in a way that's surprised me … You can tell by their body language …*

They've recognised emotions in the class-baby and we've discussed when the class-baby was told no … she would have a little strop … they were able to make a link between emotion and cause … they tried to distract her … and comfort her … Mummy's coming back.

Once the project was established, the focus moved to the enjoyment of working with CYP and the practitioner's interest in observing the interactions and behaviours of the CYP.

I think it's been very valuable … They talk a lot, they talk openly about things … Its good, we've seen that development and it's the confidence really of interacting.

This interest led to a reflective phase about the CYP and the behaviours and responses observed within the sessions. These aspects enabled a greater understanding of the CYP and their experiences to be developed by school staff over the course of the project.

I think it has given then … as aspect to look at their own experiences … but it gives them an aspect to really break down some of the key elements of socialisation which a lot have missed … to look at those aspects of socialisation and learn again perhaps through observing the Class-baby play.

4.2.4.2 *Impact of CfL on CYP*

The impact of the project on CYP was clearly identified by the LPs, the first being that it created an environment where CYP could be curious, observe and interact with a baby and their parent and that through this their confidence grew and developed.

They have become more confident … they have engaged with her as time has gone on.

The impact of the observations on the CYP was also noted by teachers. These observations acted as a catalyst enabling them to remember and share some of their

early experiences. These shared experiences enabled them to focus and listen to each other supporting further interactions and social skill development, as well as a sense of group involvement.

> They have talked about when they were young a lot, they've talked about siblings ... Talked about places in sibling order.

As the project progressed, the LPs described the positive relationship developing between the children, linked with their sharing of early experiences which led to a greater understanding of each other.

> They are actually talking to each other.

> The boys building the tower today …. I've never seen them working together

4.2.4.3 *CfL as a Teaching and Learning Tool*

The initial response of the project, noted by the LP was the unexpected reduction in anxiety within the sessions. She attributed this to the perception that the sessions had no academic pressure.

> I think they look forward to it… I don't think it's a stressor for them… I think they feel there is no academic pressure to achieve…

The project allowed for the CYP to access the experience in different ways and this enabled the LP to think about the individual needs of the CYP and to use the observation as a framework for supporting their individual development.

> Their confidence grows, their interactions improve with the class-baby. They have become more interested in her play… they reflect on how they perceive themselves with her.

The results clearly demonstrate an increase in social skills facilitated by the LP coaching children through the interactions, helping them understand what was going on, what the baby might want and ways they could respond.

> *Mum was working with X … she coached him through reading a story to our class-baby.*

The coaching aspect of the sessions also helped focus LPs on the importance of their relationship in helping CYP feel safe and secure and have the mental space for learning.

> *It really is important … for these children… that they become comfortable in those social situations and the only way they can do this is by actually experiencing them in a controlled way … here they feel guided, Teacher A is fantastic with them.*

4.3 *School B: Mainstream Secondary School*

4.3.1 *Self-image Profile SIP School B*

The results from the SIP for School B highlight an increase in positive self-image 87.5% (n=7) at post-project assessment. This shows an increase in positive aspects of self. The results also indicate that CYP experienced an increase in negative aspects of themselves 75% (n=6).

Table 5. School B SIP

School B SIP								
		Baseline February 2018				**End of Project Nov 2018**			
Child	**M/F**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**
B1	M	50	39	3	95	30	39	3	44
B2	M	6	0	3	6	41	22	3	30
B3	F	14	12	3	28	51	39	3	34
B4	F	12	15	2	27	64	14	2	27
B5	F	27	23	2	52	LEFT			
B6	M	23	17	3	40	35	41	3	40
B7	M	10	21	3	33	42	24	3	28
B8	M	18	6	3	24	40	33	3	38
B9	M	11	25	2	36	43	42	2	45
B10	M	6			6	LEFT			
B11	M					39	31	2	41
SI+ve Positive self-image; SI-ve Negative Self-image; SE self-esteem; SD score for item 13. This score reflects the individuals sense of uniqueness									

Several aspects have to be considered when analysing the results. Firstly, the CYP found completing the self-report questionnaires very difficult. The questionnaires were completed as a group. As the assessment proceeded, the staff observed CYP becoming increasingly aware of each other's responses and becoming less conscientious when filling in the questions. Social desirability became more important (Van de Mortel, 2008). Dissimulation, where the CYP is keen to be seen as undesirable and gives an exaggerated negative response is also possible. From this the vulnerability of the group members can be seen and the fact that this vulnerability is not considered a safe aspect to share.

The second aspect that needs to be taken into account was the phraseology used by the practitioner. Instead of the phrase 'Where would you like to be?' which is used in the second part of the questionnaire the phrase 'Where do you think you should be' was used. This has a very different connotation and so changes the outcome and implications for the findings.

4.3.2 *Emotional Literacy (SELA) School B*

Within the SELA 40% (n=4) of CYP were assessed by staff at post-project assessment to have developing stronger self-regulation skills and 50% (n=5) assessed to have stayed the same. When these results are considered alongside the themes from the IPA, semi-structured interviews and the lesson focus discussions, it becomes clear that this is an area that the LP both focused on and also engineered as a way of supporting the CYP's improve their behaviour.

Table 6. School B Emotional Literacy

School B Emotional Literacy				
	Increase	**No Change**	**Decrease**	**No. of CYP**
Self-awareness	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	10
Self-Regulation	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	10
Motivation	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	10
Empathy	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)	10
Social Skills	3 (30%)	4 (40%0	3 (30%)	10

Table 6 shows staff assessed empathy as having increased by 40% (n=4) and social skills by 30% (n=3). The impact of the project on both of these areas is also supported by the IPA themes that have emerged. Both areas became a focus of the parent-child observations and were then developed further in follow-up sessions. The focus for many of the observation sessions can be seen as understanding the young child's behaviour and thinking about this as communication. The semi-structured interviews demonstrate that this focus was deliberately chosen by the LP as a way of supporting thinking and discussion about the behaviour. The impact of this on the behaviour of the CYP is demonstrated in the reduced use of the Learning Support Room, reduction in exclusions and the ability to discuss incidents.

Table 7 Average Points Progress in each of the Emotional Literacy domains pre and post-project for School B

School B Average points progress in each area n=10					
	Initial Points	Average	Final Points	Average	Rank in line with increase
Self-awareness	107	10.7	109	10.9	4
Self-Regulation	90	9.0	97	9.7	1
Motivation	91	9.1	90	9.0	5
Empathy	93	9.3	99	9.9	2
Social Skills	101	10.1	105	10.5	3

Table 6 indicates that Motivation was an area that staff identified as showed the least development, with only 30% (n=3) of CYP developing this area and 40% (n=4) of CYP staying the same throughout the project. This can be understood in terms of academic resilience (Martin 2002). Motivation is the CYP's energy and drive to learn and work effectively and to achieve their potential in school. However vulnerable CYP may struggle if the academic demands and stresses are too great. Within School B many of the CYP chosen for the project were struggling with accessing lessons within class. It would therefore follow that these CYP found the stress and academic demands being made on them high for a number of reasons. This then had an impact on their motivation and belief in themselves as learners.

4.3.3 *Effective Lifelong Learning Profiles (ELLI) School B.*

Figure 3: School B ELLI Profiles
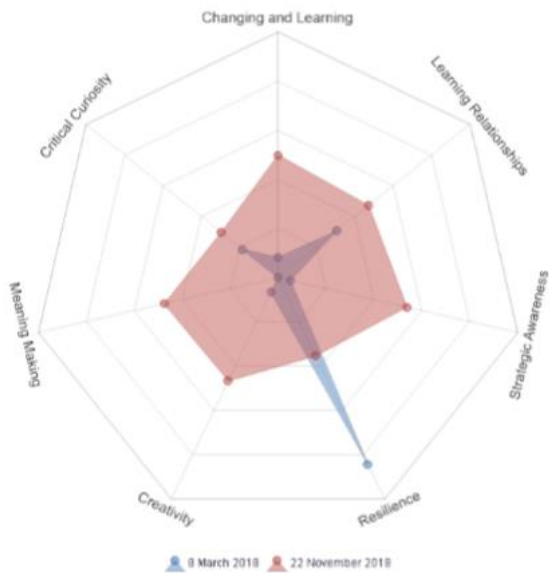
Child B3
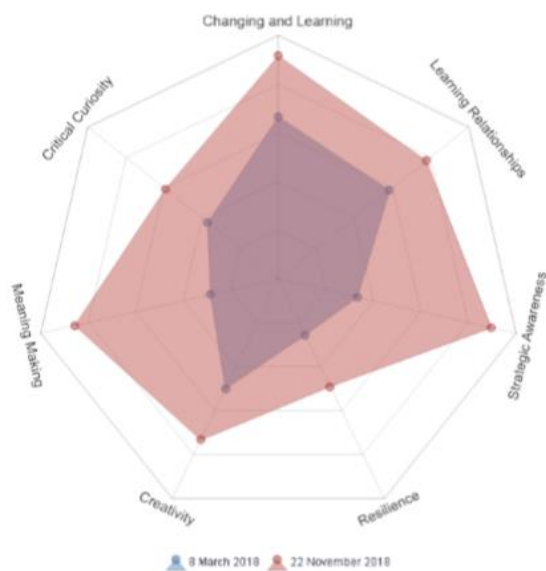
Child B4
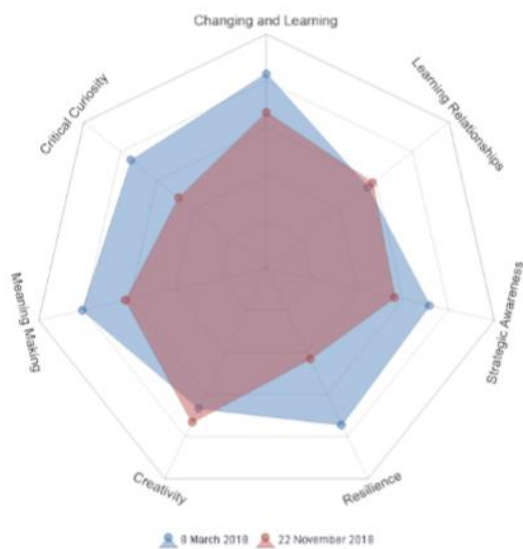
Child B8
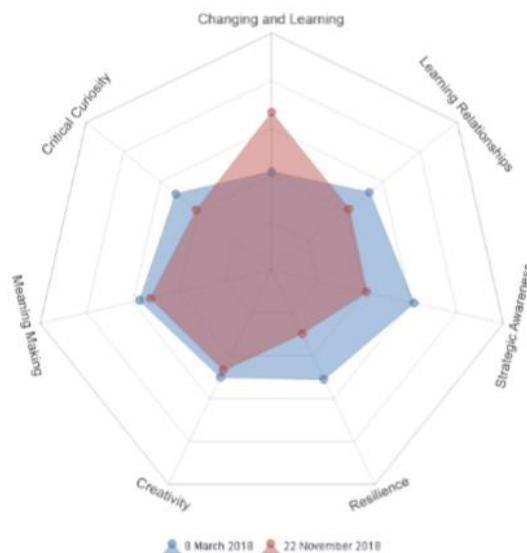
Child B9
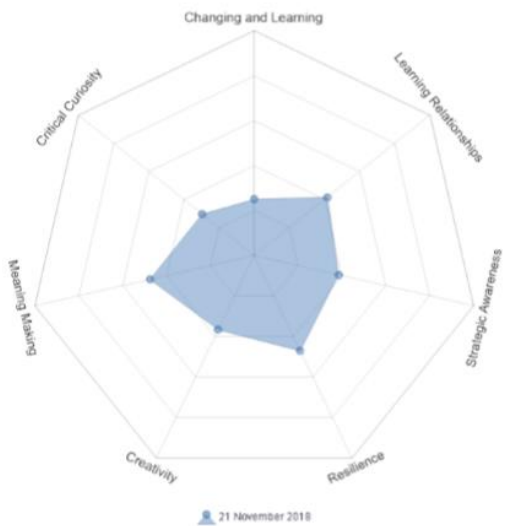
Child B11
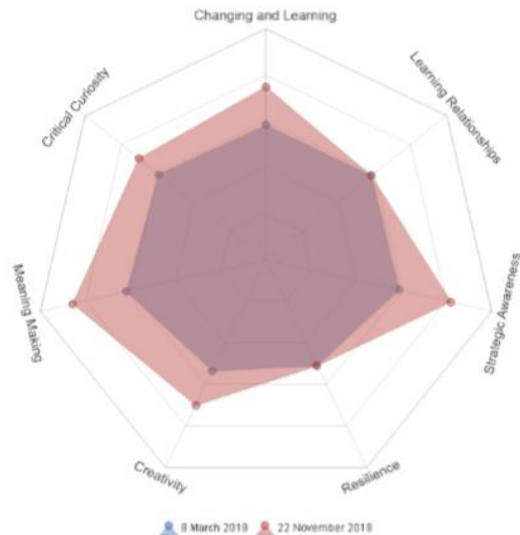
Child B6
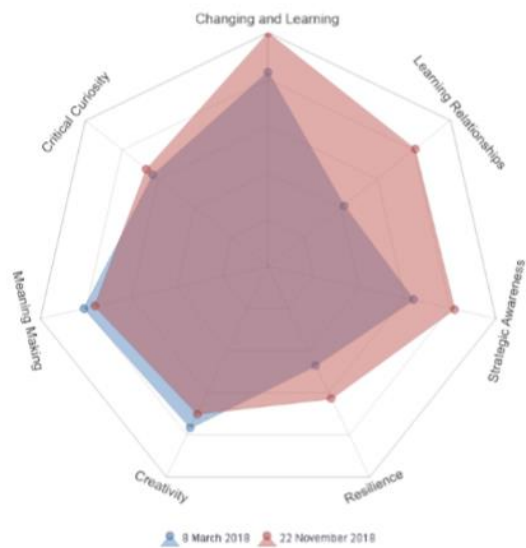
Child B7
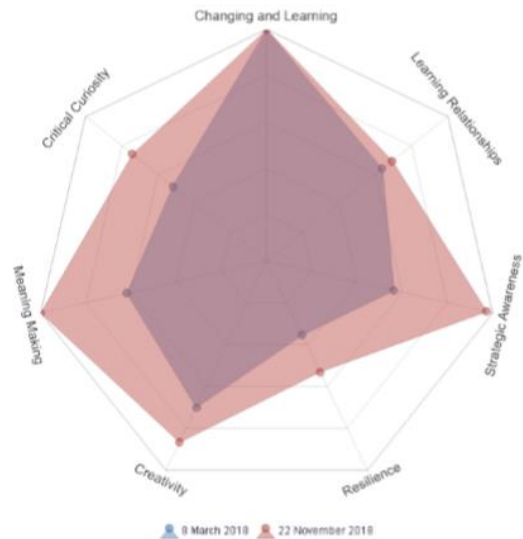
Child B1
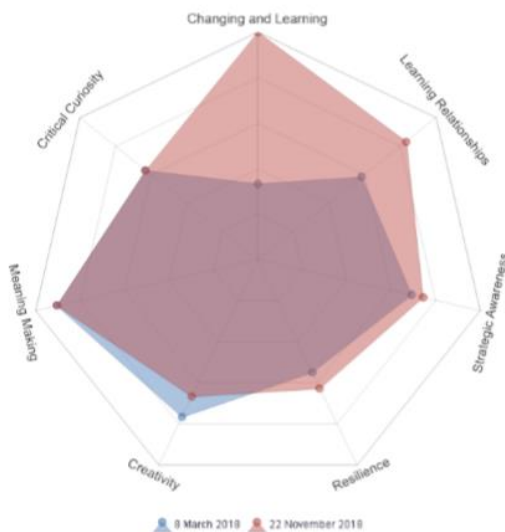
Child B2

The ELLI Profiles show that CYP believed that 75% (n=6) had developed stronger skills in Changing and Learning, 75% (n=6) Strategic Awareness and 75% (n=6) Learning Relationships over the length of the project. Changing and Learning demonstrates that CYP understand that learning is learnable and not static and that there is a sense of getting better and growing as a person in a variety of ways. The change in perception from a static less effective position would suggest that the CYP have grown in confidence as well as mind-sets and although this cannot be completely down to CfL, the work and the experience has certainly had an impact on the CYP beliefs of themselves as learners.

Table 8 School B ELLI Scores

School B ELLI				
Learning Dimension	**Increase**	**Same**	**Decrease**	**Rank**
Changing and Learning	6 (75%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)	1
Strategic Awareness	6 (75%)		2 (26%)	1
Resilience	4 (50%)	1 (13%)	3 (38%)	6
Meaning Making	4 (50%)	1 (13%)	3 (38%)	6
Creativity	5 (63%)		3 (38%)	4
Curiosity	5 (63%)	1 (13%)	2 (26%)	4
Learning Relationships	6 (75%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)	1
Ranking 1 is high and 7 is low				

The strengthening of the CYP beliefs in their Learning Relationships is also supported by the themes and comments made by teachers in the semi-structured interviews and the focus of observations and discussions. The LP clearly stated that their relationship with the CYP had improved and that the young people were far more able to discuss incidents and work with the behaviour support teacher in times of crisis.

Table 8 shows that 50% (n=4) of CYP identified Resilience as having increased during the project. However, 38% (n=3) identified it as having decreased. This split would link with the research of Martin (2002) on the influence motivation and resilience have on each other. The findings would suggest that the CYP undertaking the project were struggling with the academic requirements of the classroom, the

stress this caused had a negative impact on their motivation, which in turn then decreased their ability to manage the learning requirements in the classroom.

4.3.4 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Themes for School B

The IPA interviews once more enabled the narrative of the project to be shared, and highlighted the important areas identified by the LPs. Initially two teachers agreed to run the project with Teacher 2 also being the parent of the Child brought into the sessions. Due to timetable implications the second member of staff was not able to participate in the project during the last term.

The themes that emerged that will be considered within this section are the personal impact of the project, the impact of the CYP and CfL as a teaching and learning tool (See Appendix 17).

4.3.4.1 *Personal Impact*

For one teacher the personal impact of the project was initially related to introducing something new into school and the response this would generate from staff. This was also linked to her anxiety about how CYP would respond and engage with the project. This quickly changed after the first session.

> *I loved the first session … the impact of the first session was far greater than I thought it would be.*

> *They engaged more than I thought they would… one boy in particular … he started smiling … I don't think I have seen him smile for 6 months.*

For the second teacher, the project provoked thinking about the tension between meeting CYP needs, school ethos and the strategies promoted to manage behaviour. Linked to this was the reduction in stress she experienced after the staff training on attachment and emotional barriers to learning, due to a greater understanding of behaviour.

The training helped me unpick behaviour and understand what is underpinning it, makes it easier to deal with the most extreme behaviour … it's good for the wellbeing of staff.

For both teachers the fascination and enjoyment of working with the students on the project and the understanding they gained from observing, reflecting and listening to the views and ideas was immense.

I teach English and I ask them to empathise with characters…. I've always attributed this to lack of ability to articulate. This brought home to me that perhaps they don't even understand the feeling.

There were quite a lot of situations when I had to distract the young-child and they kept saying why don't you tell her off? …… I find the whole thing absolutely fascinating……. But sad that this was their first response.

4.3.4.2 *Impact of CfL on the CYP*

As the project evolved, the LP started to focus on the early experiences of the CYP and the link this had to their behaviour, learning needs and development and because of this, the importance of developing CYP's emotional resilience.

It is really quite sad … because I just thought what is your life like, to live in fear?

Look at our class-baby's face how does she feel… is she smiling?… what do you think that means?…i gave him a selection of emotions and he said I think she is happy.

For the teacher who was also the parent of the young child coming into school, there was a great deal of enjoyment in watching how robust and confidently her child interacted with the CYP. Another aspect she felt was important, the fact that she allowed her child to come into school and be part of the project, this seemed to conveyed a deeper level of trust to the CYP she was working with.

So having that relationship with them where they see that I've trusted them with my child and I think that it's shown them more trust than I think anyone's ever given them.

Teachers identified the impact of the better relationships they were developing with the CYP due to the project. These stronger relationships enabled them to support the CYP in a far greater way, both on a behaviour level and in their learning.

If I am called to class … I am able to say if our class-baby was in this situation would you be using those words, and the response is usually a bit of a smirk … well let's get out of this situation then.

I would purposefully give our class-baby something that I knew she would struggle with … We'd pause the video and ask the CYP what would you do? … followed by lots of discussions around what would work and why.

The project also showed a decrease in exclusions and incident logs for CYP working on the project.

4.3.4.3 *CfL as a Teaching and Learning Tool*

CfL as a teaching and learning tool became a theme identified within the interviews of both members of staff. This seemed to involve the fact that it facilitated observation, reflection about behaviour and enabled practitioners to support CYP make links for themselves.

It helps you to be more reflective … What can I do differently?

It's not safe to be vulnerable in school … outside school … or at home.

Staff found the resources for the follow-up work very useful and shared these with other departments. This clearly indicates how different curriculum areas can incorporate work around PMHWB into their classroom lessons.

We always did the follow-up sessions and we would use little clips of footage or videos and the follow-up materials …Our English department has seen

> *some of the work and think it's really useful and have been looking at some*
> *of the topics and adapting them to use in their own lessons.*

Both members of staff found the assessments interesting, this enabled them to more fully understand the way the CYP thought and made links, something that they had never really focused on before.

> *Teacher 2 is completely involved and we can both talk about it with each*
> *other.*

> *Fascinating … Absolutely fascinating*

The final point that was highlighted in the semi-structured interviews was the understanding of the importance of coaching children in both their social interactions and in the links that they were making between thoughts, behaviours and emotions.

> *But you're not telling her off … but I don't need to tell her off, she's exploring*
> *… and they are completely blown away … She's doing something naughty …*

4.4 *School C Mainstream Secondary School.*

4.4.1 *Self-image Profile (SIP) School C*

The results for School C show mixed findings, with an increase in positive sense of self for 30% (n=3) children and a decrease for 70% (n=7) of CYP. Alongside this was an increase in negative sense of self for 70% (n=7) children and a decrease for 20% (n=3) with one child staying the same. This is in contrast with the data gained from the semi-structured interviews and IPA themes, which describe self-esteem as strengthening during the project. This finding raises questions. This could be explained by the high number of CYP with learning differences within the group, with 50% (n=6) on the SEN register, and their understanding of language and concepts used within the questionnaire. Thomas et al. (2011) explored the use of self-assessments measuring self-esteem with CYP who had learning differences and highlighted the lack of research in this area.

Table 9. School C SIP

School C SIP								
		Baseline February 2018				End of Project Nov 2018			
Child	M/F	SI (+ve)	SI (-ve)	SD	SE	SI (+ve)	SI (-ve)	SD	SE
C1	M	40	23	3	46	38	28	2	
C2	F	55	45	4	55	59	36	6	
C3	M	64	3			65	4		
C5	M	56	23	5	10	40	46	3	
C6	M	72	15	5	0	132	15	6	
C7	F	60	32	3	54	53	36	3	
C8	M	40	22	1	15	25	44	4	20
C10	M	45	40	5	43	44	33	1	
C11	M	51	17	2		47	30	2	
C12	F	39	23	3	43	36	52	5	44
SI+ve Positive self-image; SI-ve Negative Self-image; SE self-esteem; SD score for item 13. This score reflects the individuals sense of uniqueness									

4.4.2 *Emotional Literacy (SELA) School C*

Within this area staff assessed 60% (n=6) or more CYP as showing an increase across the five domains, with the greatest gains in self-regulation 70% (n=7), empathy 80% (n=8), social skills 60% (n=6) and self-awareness 60% (n=6). No CYP demonstrated a decrease during the project however 30-40% were assessed to show no change.

Table 10. School C Emotional Literacy

School C Emotional Literacy				
	Increase	Stayed the same	Decrease	No. of CYP
Self-awareness	6 (60%)	4 (40%)		10
Self-Regulation	7 (70%)	3 (30%)		10
Motivation	7 (70%)	3 (30%)		10
Empathy	8 (80%)	2 (20%)		10
Social Skills	6 (60%)	4 (40%)		10

The greatest area of growth in School C was shown to be in empathy 80% (n=8), with staff assessing eight CYP developing stronger skills in this area during the project. Linked to the evidence from the IPA (Appendix 18), the Teacher interviews

(Appendix 19) and Lesson Logs (Appendix 20), this finding links to the changes in practice and classroom environment as described. The LP tried to incorporate knowledge about CYP into planning with 'What's in it for Me' (WII4Me) thinking. They also focused developing emotional literacy within the classroom with a commitment to support children with emotional issues that arrived in the classroom. This enabled the CYP to feel supported, thought about and contained. This sense of feeling thought about and having emotions contained would link to the work of Bion (1963) and Farr et al (2014).

By supporting CYP to think about what had happened within the classroom, the LP was able to support their emotional regulation and gave the strong message that emotions had a place within the classroom, could be thought about and managed. Initially, the concern was that this would take time away from teaching and learning, however this was found to be untrue. This extension of practice enabled CYP to be supported in dealing with the emotional issue which then enabled them to have the capacity to think about the lesson. This way of working, the LP described, as having a significant impact on classroom dynamics, increasing the ability to tolerate differences and creating greater trust and stronger teacher-student relationships. This finding supports the work of Batlistich et al. (1995) and Digby et al. (2017) in that classrooms which focus on developing supportive relationships also impact on self-esteem.

The second area of growth shown at post-project assessment was that of motivation with staff assessing 70% (n=7) of CYP increasing in this area. This increase could be linked to the LPs thinking about WII4ME and the LP linking lessons to areas of relevance for the CYP and the increase in supportive practice within the classroom. These findings support the work of Opdenakker et al. (2010), which shows the impact a classroom environment can have on motivation, also how positive Teacher-student relationships impact on cognitive, social and emotional development.

A total of 60% (n=6) of the CYP displayed an increase in social skills during the project. This increase linked with the feedback from the LPs on how they used the parent-child observations sessions to highlight interactions and support CYP think

Table 11. Average Points Progress in each of the Emotional Literacy domains pre and post-project for School C

School C Average points progress in each area n=10					
	Initial Points	**Average**	**Final Points**	**Average**	**Rank in line with increase**
Self-awareness	117	11.7	128	12.8	3
Self-Regulation	126	12.6	140	14.0	1
Motivation	99	9.9	109	10.9	5
Empathy	131	13.1	143	14.3	2
Social Skills	131	13.1	142	14.2	3

about how that supported the young child. This clearly demonstrates the effect of the project. The parent-child observations were then used during follow-up sessions with the CYP to extend knowledge, undertaking work around body language and non-verbal communication and its impact on others. It is evident that a combination of observing, reflecting and discussing linked to specific teaching, strengthened this area for CYP.

4.4.3 *Effective Lifelong Learning Profiles (ELLI)*

Figure 4: School C ELLI Profiles
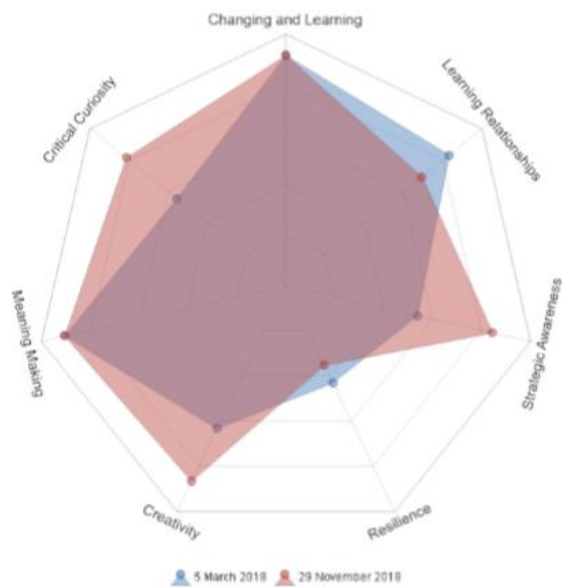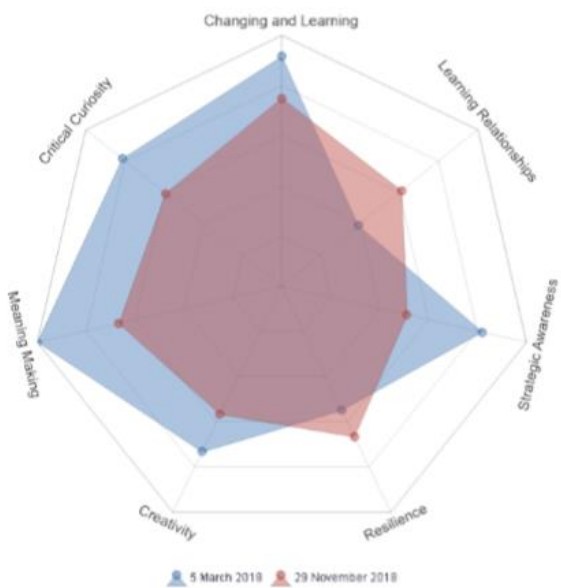
Child C1
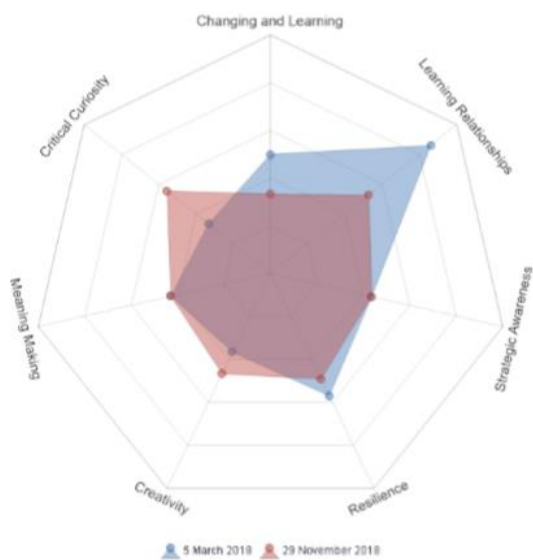
Child C2
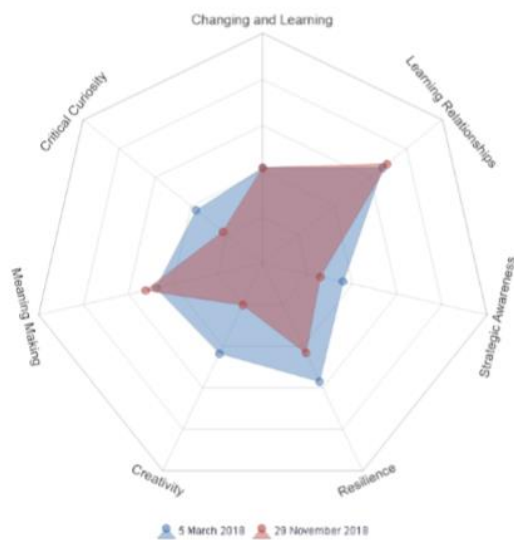
Child C3

Child C6

Child C7
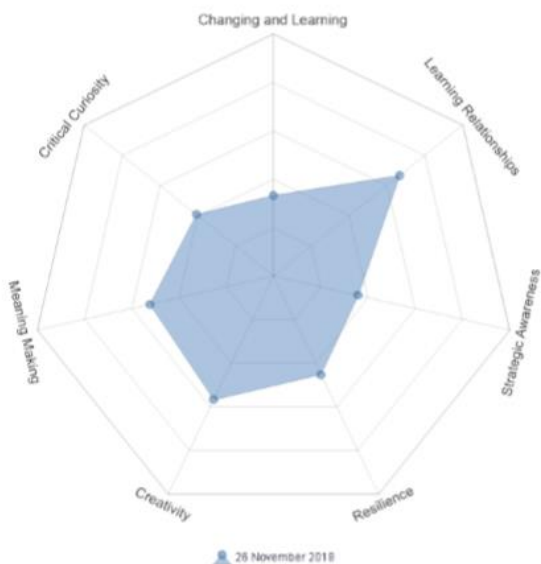
Child C8
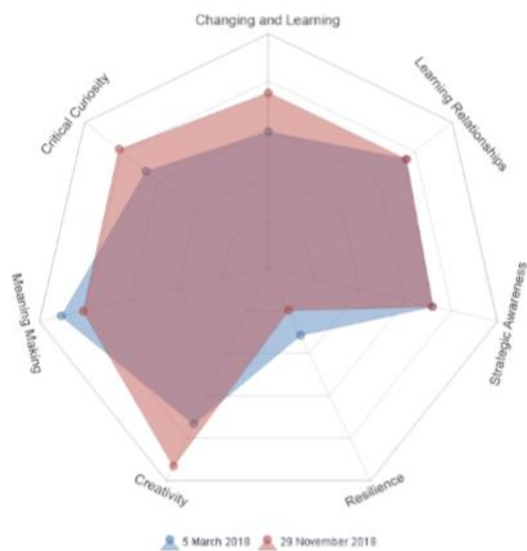
Table 12: Sch ^{Child C10} ata   Child C12

School C ELLI				
Learning Dimension	**Increase**	**Same**	**Decrease**	**Rank**
Changing and Learning	2 33%	2 33%	2 33%	3
Strategic Awareness	2 33%	2 33%	2 33%	3
Resilience	1 17%		5 83%	7
Meaning Making	1 33%	3 50%	2 33%	3
Creativity	4 66%		2 33%	1
Curiosity	4 66%		2 33%	1
Learning Relationships	2 33%	2 33%	2 33%	3
Ranking 1 is high and 7 is low				

The ELLI Profiles for the CYP highlight an increase in the dimensions of Creativity and Curiosity, which became stronger over the course of the project. This finding links with evidence from the LP teaching logs and semi-structured interviews, which show increased focus on planning with children in mind, developing follow-up lessons to support areas of non-understanding or deficit and also supporting emotional literacy within the classroom. By modelling interest and questioning and wondering about the baby and parent, the baby's learning and interactions, the CYP were able to develop these skills within themselves. This would be supported by the work of Crick (2006) which describes the 'ecology of learning power as a complex and sensitive web of values and practices which create the classroom environment and nurtures or inhibits learning' (Cricik 2006 p.38).

4.4.4 *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Themes for School C*

The IPA highlighted several themes that developed over the project including impact on the CYP, impact on the Teacher, the classroom environment and the use of CfL as a teaching and learning tool (See Appendix 18).

4.4.4.1 *Personal Impact*

The initial experience of CfL shared by the Teacher (See Appendix 19: semi-structured interview), was the impact on his relationships with the CYP, these the LP

described as strong in the past, but changed due to the project and his extension of practice to incorporate a greater focus on emotional literacy. (See Appendix 20 for Teacher Logs)

> *It's made me look slightly differently at the students in a more critical way … How can I approach you differently … Because I understand a bit more about what's going on with you.*

Due to the staff training on attachment and emotional barriers to learning, the LP developed planning with the CYP more in mind, focusing on WII4ME and the emotional aspects of what he was introducing and how this might be perceived. The LP described the training and the project:

> *I think it has made me look at student differently … I think it has forced me to confront his knowledge and thinking and to make changes.'*

The LP was very interested in the ELLI profiles and enjoyed the learning conversations with the CYP. This interest in the CYP's ideas of themselves as learners linked to the staff training led to a more collaborative exploration of learning.

> *I've had individual conversations with them about their profile … Self-understanding and self-realisation … trying to develop individual strategies in order to manage their learning a bit better.*

4.4.4.2 *Impact of CfL on CYP*

The LP felt CfL had exerted a strong impact on the Teacher-student relationships and on the class dynamics.

> *It's become a really nice group, good relationships … More relaxed … More comfortable … opened up and I am thinking a bit more about how to help them manage their attitude to learning.*

Alongside of the atmosphere in the group of being able to talk on a much more mature level … There's an avenue of communication we didn't have before.

This change in class dynamic was believed to be due to the increased focus on interactions instigated by the baby and parent observations, the follow-up work on body language and non-verbal communication and a greater focus on supporting CYP with emotional difficulties which they brought into the classroom.

… topics we have done … different types of communication, verbal and non-verbal, difference between aggression and assertion … Passive aggressive behaviours.

4.4.4.3 CfL as a Teaching and Learning Tool

The changes the LP identified that developed due to CfL were the creation of a space where coaching became stronger and tolerance, respect and thinking and listening to each other were modelled and practiced.

A forum for more open discussion for emotional terms both emotionally and socially.

A couple of the most challenging children behaviourally … It's been really positive to move them on to get a pattern of co-operation.

Time was created within the classroom environment for emotions and feelings and by just doing this, the LP stated that things immediately became more contained and manageable in the classroom.

What I've done in terms of organisation and making time within a lesson for an emotional discussion … whereas before a couple of girls would have emotional issues which would mean … They'd be out in two minutes. It's OK for me to have that discussion now and not send someone off to the pastoral department … it's like yes, we'll do that.

The school had an ethos of research and reflection with staff hubs focused on different areas. This ensured that staff understood the project and were updated with different aspects of what had been discovered as it developed.

> *My role as Assistant Head for professional development … I've set up research groups … the project has crossed over the two groups, SEN and low cognition and it's been very valuable … because it's looking at emotional needs*

4.5 *School D*

4.5.1 Emotional Literacy and Self-esteem

School D was not able to use the SELA, SIP or ELLI questionnaires, as the language within the questionnaires could not be understood or accessed by the CYP. To support the achievement of a baseline assessment prior to the project commencing the LP adapted the SIP and the SELA to a more Child-friendly version using communication in print. (Appendix 21)

When this was tried out on the CYP with additional 1:1 support, the LP found that the CYP were still not able to understand the questions sufficiently. After consultation with the researcher it was decided to use the individual target setting format the at the school uses for all its lessons (Appendix 21 CYP's Targets).

The findings clearly demonstrate that the CYP were all able to gain skills, understanding and confidence in the area of communication. The use of individual targets enabled specific progress to be measured for CYP each term and to build skills and knowledge. Although it has not been possible to measure impact on self-esteem or emotional literacy as with the other schools, it is possible to see this reflected in the progress section for each child.

Self-esteem is how people think about themselves and how worthwhile they feel. There is evidence from the targets of the impact on each CYP of their interaction with the class baby. From the Teacher interviews and Teacher Logs (Appendix 23), it

is possible to see how much the children ask and discuss their experience and how enjoyable it was for them. The impact on self-esteem is therefore clearly visible within the results gathered.

Emotional Literacy was not able to be measured with the SELA however quantitative data from the semi-structured interviews, lesson logs and IPA analysis clearly demonstrate an impact within this area. The work on Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) supported children identify feelings and emotions and discuss these with others, this sense of self-development was then extended through the parent-baby observations where the CYP were able to observe the emotions in another and talk about these. In the video follow-up sessions the CYP were able to watch these interactions in closer detail and then reflect on what had happened and why.

4.5.2 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Themes for School D

The IPA analysis from School D (Appendix 24) has highlighted a range of positive aspects that the project developed. Originally, the project was to be undertaken in 2 classes a KS4 and KS5 class. Both class teachers attended the training and added their expertise within the field of SEND to the project development. They also undertook a range of assessment and information gathering activities before introducing the mother and baby to the project. After these initial assessments and information-gathering the KS4 teacher decided that it wasn't the right time to introduce a young child into the classroom due to the understanding of the CYP and safety aspects for the visiting baby. The KS5 class went ahead with the project.

The IPA highlighted several important areas, the main ones that will be addressed at this point are: Personal Impact, Impact on the CYP, Implementation and classroom environment.

4.5.2.1 *Personal Impact*

The LP found the training and reflection on the project created a space to think about learning and development focused on social interaction and emotional literacy linked to work undertaken on attachment and emotional barriers to learning.

> *… And just thinking about those concepts and how it impacts on practice has helped me meet their needs better …*

> *… the training really helped me focus on those things with the CYP.*

This enabled an awareness of CYP needs to be discussed within the team.

> *I think it's very useful then because it is talking about and making TA's aware of what they are observing … and what's experienced from the observations.*

The actual parent baby session facilitated observations by the team which were initially focused on assessment, identifying where the CYP were in their development in the fields of social and emotional competencies.

> *Shared experience for the team and the children, so allowed you that discussion as a team.*

> *They use it as a base for pupil reflection about their basic communication skills.*

The LP was fascinated by the observations made whilst running the parent-baby sessions and enjoyed the resulting professional conversations. As the project developed, the LP noted developing skills in compassion, empathy and interaction.

> *It gives an opportunity … the chance to explore*

> *Children responded in very positive ways … It showed that people with ASC can be interested in people.*

CYP were able to develop play skills, feed the baby and sing to her. All these experiences the LP believed added to their understanding of the world and impacted on their self-esteem.

> *One session was about greeting games … and we did peek-a-boo and did singing as well.*

The framework that the project brought was flexible and supported the school ethos of school and way of working.

> *It confirms our ways of working, creating that sort of environment…*
>
> *Knowledge of students … How some might react and creating an environment*
>
> *in which they can be successful.*

4.5.2.2 *Impact of CfL on CYP*

The experience and impact on the CYP of participating in CfL was extremely interesting. Firstly, the enjoyment of the experience for many was clear; their wish to engage, interact and play with their class-baby was obvious.

> *The mistakes the children made in their communication was the basis for*
>
> *their learning.*

The classroom had been set up in such a way that there were zones of engagement. The class baby and parent were positioned on a large PE mat, with those CYP who wanted to be close sitting on the mat. For others this initial proximity was too much and so they stood around the edges observing the baby and their peers. The LP and support staff encouraged CYP to observe and think about the interactions they saw and coached them in their own interactions with the baby. CYP were free to move closer or to regulate the experience by moving into another zone.

> *We created the environment … so it marks out areas… the baby was on the*
>
> *floor on mats CYP could then move away slightly and watch … or go to a safe*
>
> *space which was further away.*

The team felt that the opportunity for the CYP to be trusted with a baby and to have the opportunity to observe, interact and think about what they saw was very important.

> *It gives an experience of something that they might not have … which*
>
> *stretches their ability to do things.*

The children also engaged in problem-solving. When the baby cried they were supported in thinking about the reasons for this and then discussed what could be done to support the baby.

They were certainly able to recognise when she was sad and then several of them wanted to do things to make her feel better.

4.5.2.3 *Implementation of CfL*

The IPA highlights the thinking and planning and risk assessments that have to be completed to enable a new project being introduced within a special school environment. It also highlights the importance of knowing and understanding the CYP involved.

We were just looking at emotions really … we then did a bit with babies faces … people with ASC read things differently to us … we were trying to lead up to it and then I introduced our young child a little bit, just so they got used to it but then we had issues … Then we needed to stop.

Our students were much lower than in Teacher A's class … Developmentally …emotionally … Too much of a risk take to do it.

As the analysis of the findings demonstrates, the implementation of the project was key to its success. The information gathering and risk assessment, the knowledge and understanding of the CYP within the groups and the setting of the classroom environment.

Other factors that are interesting to note is the impact of the project on support staff. None of the support staff had undertaken the training and so needed to be supported and trained by the LP whilst running the project.

I do get the staff to write it down on post-it notes what people have done... They tend to be concrete … so they are not perhaps inferring what the student may be doing …

I think it difficult … I've been on three days training… and then our TA's are just supposed to adapt to it in five minutes …

The other aspect that was supportive to the project was the Parent and baby, both of whom were known to the school. In School D the Parent had been employed as a

TA within the school and therefore knew the children and was experienced in working with CYP with learning differences.

> *It was having someone who already knew the children and I could trust them.*

After two terms the parent and child moved away from the area and the school lost contact. This was a great disappointment for the LP and the CYP however it also provided the opportunity for staff to support the CYP with the loss of the project and the sadness of not seeing their class baby any more.

> *I'm just sad for the children that they can't get the next bit*

> *Sometimes you can come in and have something … then it goes and that is an important experience.*

The LP described CfL as a 'successful learning experience' on two levels, for the CYP and also for the staff involved. (Appendix 25 work undertaken by CYP).

Tables 13, 14 and 15 show the collective data for ELLI, emotional literacy and SIP from the three schools. These findings will be discussed within the next chapter, when linking the research findings from both qualitative and quantitative data to the research questions.

		Pre-project				Mid Project - April 2018				Post-project			
Child	**M/F**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**
A1	M	59	14	3	28					51	14	5	8
A2	M	21	40	3	47					33	48		53
A3	M	Ass incorrect				47	33	4	29	53	39	3	36
A4		CANCELLED											
A5	M	Ass Incorrect				53	46	4	13	51	36	5	23
A6	M	Ass incorrect				57	23		16	47	30	6	44
A7	M					36	10	6	40	43	14	5	42
A8	M					28	38	4	27	15	28	1	74
A9	M					46	43	3	48	46	45	2	50
Child	**M/F**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**					**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**
B1	M	50	39	3	95					30	39	3	44
B2		6		3	6					41	22	3	30
B3	F	14	12	3	28					51	39	3	34
B4	F	12	15	2	27					64	14	2	27
B5	F	27	23	2	52					LEFT			
B6	M	23	17	3	40					35	41	3	40
B7	M	10	21	3	33					42	24	3	28
B8	M	18	6	3	24					40	33	3	38
B9	M	11	25	2	36					43	42	2	45
B10	M	6			6					LEFT			
B11	M	39	31	2	41					39	31	2	41
Child	**M/F**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**					**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**

Table 13 All Schools Butler SIP

Table 15 continued					All Schools Butler SIP								
		Pre-project				Mid-project - April 2018				Post-project			
Child	**M/F**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**	**SI (+ve)**	**SI (-ve)**	**SD**	**SE**
C1	M	40	23	3	46					30	39	3	44
C2	F	55	45	4	55					41	22	3	30
C3	M	64	3							51	39	3	34
C5	M	56	23	5	10					64	14	2	27
C6	M	72	15	5						LEFT			
C7	F	60	32	3	54					35	41	3	40
C8	M	40	22	1	15					42	24	3	28
C10	M	45	40	5	43					40	33	3	38
C11	M	51	17	2						43	42	2	45
C12	F	39	23	3	43					LEFT			
SI+ve Positive self-image SI-ve Negative Self-image SE self-esteem SD score for item 13													

Table 14 ELLI Data all schools

Dimensions	School A			School B			School C			All schools		
	Increase	Same	Decrease	Increase	Same	Decrease	Increase	Same	Decrease	Increase	Same	Decrease
Changing & Learning	6	1		6	1	1	2	2	2	14 67%	4 19%	3 14%
Strategic Awareness	5	1	1	6		2	2	2	2	13 62%	3 14%	5 24%
Resilience	3		4	4	1	3	1		5	8 38%	1 5%	12 57%
Meaning Making	5		2	4	1	3	1	3	2	10 48%	4 19%	7 33%
Creativity	5		2	5		3	4		2	14 67%		7 33%
Curiosity	4		3	5	1	2	4		2	13 62%	1 5%	7 33%
Learning Relationships	4	2	1	6	1	1	2	2	2	12 57%	5 24%	4 19%

ELLI All schools

Table 15 SELA all schools

Emotional Literacy All schools											
Dimensions	**School A**			**School B**			**School C**					
	Increase	**Same**	**Decrease**	**Increase**	**Same**	**Decrease**	**Increase**	**Same**	**Decrease**	**Increase**	**Same**	**Decrease**
Self-awareness	**4**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**4**		13 46%	7 25%	7 25%
Self-regulation	**5**		**3**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**7**	**3**		16 57%	8 29%	4 14%
Motivation	**3**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**7**	**3**		13 46%	8 29%	7 25%
Empathy	**4**	**2**	**2**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**8**	**2**		16 57%	9 32%	2 7%
Social Skills	**5**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**6**	**4**		14 50%	9 32%	5 18%

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1 *Introduction*

Within this section each research question will be explored with the collective qualitative and quantitative data from schools. This will include IPA themes, feedback from teachers' pre- and post-project, lesson-logs and data from SELA, SIP and ELLI assessments.

5.2 *Research Question 1: Does the implementation of CfL within secondary schools, develop a more positive sense of self?*

Self-concept is the picture someone creates of themselves, it is made up of their self-image and ideal self. Self-esteem is the discrepancy between their self-image and ideal self (Rogers, 1959). For CfL. self-esteem was assessed using the SIP.

The SIP results across the schools indicated a range of differences (Table 13). School D was unable to undertake this assessment, as the language and concepts used were too difficult for the CYP to understand. The other three schools showed different profiles regarding an increase in positive sense of self, namely, 37.5% (n=3) of CYP at School A, 64% (n=7) in School B and 27% (n=3) in School C. Reasons for this variation could be linked to how the assessments were delivered. Two schools found the implementation of the SIP assessment challenging, due to staff changes and the use of language when administering the assessment. The assessments might also be influenced by the learning differences of the CYP. Research shows less is known about the development of self-image for CYP with different psychological and social experiences, which could impact on scores obtained. Although Thomas et al. (2011) indicate that CYP with learning differences are able to describe a variety of self-constructs when supported.

In contrast to the data elicited using the SIP, the semi-structured interviews and IPA strongly suggest that the CYP's self-esteem increased during the project. LPs observing increased CYP's ability to connect and interact with each other, better classroom dynamics, stronger student-teacher relationships and a greater ability to self-regulate and manage the classroom environment.

The ELLI results from across the schools highlight the development of Creativity, Strategic Awareness and Changing and Learning (Table 14). The creative end of the spectrum describes CYP who are able to 'imagine new possibilities' (Crick, 2006, p. 10) and enjoy playing with ideas. It could therefore be argued that CfL has tapped into a way of learning, which has enabled them to think differently.

Strategic Awareness describes CYP understanding themselves as learners, specifically, the ability to be more reflective, to be able to talk more easily about learning and to manage the emotions of learning better.

The Changing and Learning dimension shows an increased belief that learning itself is learnable, which shows that CfL has a positive impact on CYP's sense of academic self-concept. This demonstrates that the CYP experienced a sense of growth and development and that this could impact on life elsewhere. This was demonstrated in the CYP's ability to manage the social interaction in class better and their ability to share and discuss emotions. Maturation in this area suggests that CYP have developed a stronger positive mindset and are more open to believing that challenging situations can be overcome. This is a key component of resilience (Rutter, 1985), who asserts that resilience is developed in encountering adversity.

The data demonstrates an increase in sense of academic self, a greater ability to discuss and manage emotions and better social interactions. These would all suggest that CfL has enabled CYP to have a stronger and more positive sense of self.

5.3 *Research Question 2: Does the implementation of CfL within secondary schools develop stronger relationships, both adult to young person and peer to peer?*

The development of stronger relationships in implementing CfL is demonstrated from several data sources. The ELLI Profiles show an increase of 57% (n=12) CYP in Learning Relationships (Table 14), an increase of 50% (n=14) in Social Skills, 57% (n=16) in Self-regulation and 46% (n=13) in Self-awareness (Table 15).

Discussion and thinking about social skills were initiated by the staff training, this then led LPs to explore their thoughts and ideas on what social skills were, how they were taught and how they as practitioners, developed them within their environment. It was clear from the training that this was an area of interest. The second phase of development was the parent-baby observations, these provided a very visual and engaging way for the CYP to observe interactions and reflect on them with the support of the LP. The LP was able to act as a coach, pointing things out and asking questions, facilitating reflection and sharing of views. These observations and discussions enabled the LP to reflect on the CYP's abilities and support them on an individual level or through a focused area. For one school this focused area was work on body language and non-verbal communication.

> *The work around communication on body language and non-verbal communication, caused the environment to become more thoughtful and supportive … Social interaction improved and CYP started to demonstrate a greater awareness and interest in each other.*

Other LPs commented on their experience of CfL:

> *The project promoted as well as supported the development of social skills …*

> *At first the CYP were only able to undertake one step interactions- they would hold a hand out for the baby and the baby would reach towards them … Gradually some of the CYP were able to be supported to build on this and develop a chain of interaction.*

Within each school the project was developed in a way that supported the needs of the CYP. The training allowed space for discussion and increase in understanding followed by the parent-baby observations which provided the forum to observe skills and interactions. The follow-up sessions enabled the focus to develop for each specific cohort of children. As one LP commented:

> *The training acted as a catalyst for thinking about social skills development and lack of understanding what they were and how to teach them with ASC CYP.*

For some classes the impact of social competencies affected the group dynamics:

> *The group became more harmonious, tolerant and were able to listen to each other … the development of the group was amazing.*

Another area that was highlighted by the IPA themes was the impact that a relational way of working had on behaviour management.

> *The training and the project provoked thinking and understanding about behaviour and behaviour management and about how to support the most vulnerable CYP.*

> *The class became a safer space where opinions, ideas and questions could be asked … Children became more tolerant, accepting and able to listen to each other … Behaviour management became easier.*

For School B, engineering the situations to encourage conversations and discussions in class really supported conversations and enabled the LP to comprehend children's beliefs and understanding about interactions, behaviour and learning. The LP was then able to explore and develop these through the young child observations, rather than in relation to the CYP themselves. This way of working was perceived as less threatening and enabled the CYP to engage with the topic, as the CYP did not feel they were under personal threat. This practice had a twofold effect of supporting the LPs understand and support the CYP. It also supported the CYP's ability to reflect on themselves within a safe space. Greater trust and understanding grew from this work, which enabled the LP to support the CYP during difficult situations within classrooms in her role of Behaviour Support. The result from this was reduced stress for the CYP and also a stronger adult-Child relationship. This way of working clearly demonstrated an understanding of the teacher's role as an attachment figure and the use of the LP classroom as a secure base (Bowlby, 1951). For CYP within the group undertaking the project, there was a reduction in exclusions, as previously discussed in Chapter 4 and less use of the Behaviour Support room.

The interest, changes in practice and changes in the classroom environment can all clearly be seen to have supported the development of stronger relationships, which

in turn supported better behavioural management. This way of working and the results found supports the work of Salzberger-Wittenberg et al. (1996) and the experience of second chance learning (Bomber, 2007) and the effects of CYP being able to have a different experience with another person which extends learning. These relational changes influenced CYP's ability to manage emotions, self-regulate and problem-solve. This new experience, Olson (2014) describes as disconfirming as it creates a new experience from the one CYP may have experienced before and thus facilitates growth and development.

The current research also supports the importance of the teacher as an attachment figure (Bowlby, 1969; Rose et al., 2016), who becomes the secure base from which to explore and be curious, but also the place of safety to retreat to when difficulties occur. We can see the impact the training had on the LP in their thinking about attachment and the changes this caused in both practice and the classroom environment. This in turn impacted the CYP's behaviour, interactions and social, emotional and cognitive development.

The results from the qualitative and quantitative data demonstrate a strong link between CfL and the development of stronger relationships.

5.4 *Research Question 3: Does the implementation of CfL within secondary schools develop CYP emotional literacy?*

Being able to recognise and talk about how one feels and understand the feelings one experiences, are all important aspects of emotional literacy. Each of the schools developed this area in very different ways due to the needs of the CYP. For School D, supporting CYP with complex learning differences the work linked well with the introduction of Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) previously introduced to school. This is demonstrated by the comment from school D.

> *Zones of Regulation are operating in all classrooms so the CYP are now getting used to talking about emotions and sharing how they feel with others.*

The parent-baby observations sessions in School D built on this understanding, by allowing the CYP to observe the emotions within another and reflect on these. It also enabled the opportunity to link emotions with a cause and then to support the baby into a more positive state.

> *When the baby cried I asked them what they thought had caused the tears, some of the CYP were able to suggest that she was sad. They then started to suggest what she needed and one child found her dummy and gave her that. Another thought she needed her Mum*

From this account we can see the influence of the baby-observations had a positive impact on the CYP's thinking. The understanding that an emotion is not static but dynamic and the importance of knowing that by changing things or doing something they have the power to change how they feel.

> *The classroom environment became more thoughtful and supportive as time was made for emotions and feelings.*

> *I had never really thought about how to develop, or the importance of emotional literacy within my classroom.*

The comments above evolved during the project and highlight the journey of the LPs and the focus on emotional literacy, which developed and impacted on classroom practice, classroom environment and the CYP.

> *The project created an environment where CYP could be curious about a small child. … This provoked children to remember, think about and share their own early experiences. … Created a safe environment to discuss reflect and think about feelings and emotions.*

CfL created a space to talk about and explore feelings and emotions. This linked with the observations where the CYP could observe, discuss and reflect on the feelings and emotions that their class-baby experienced enabled emotional literacy to become a focus.

The SELA results from across all schools show that all the areas have strengthened by at least 46% over the course of the project (Table 15). The strongest areas of improvement were self-regulation and empathy. Although it is not possible to state that the increase in scores in these areas are solely down to CfL, it is notable that the training and the project itself has had a strong impact on increasing the knowledge of the staff. RoE (Gordon et al., 2003) and Babywatching (Brisch, 2010), both of which bring a parent and baby into the classroom, also showed an impact on empathy and emotional literacy. Although different in many ways, the findings from this project would support the findings of these two projects.

The data from CfL has demonstrated that supporting CYP understand why they respond in certain ways and coaching them develop new strategies, relationships and prosocial skills has a positive effect on emotional literacy. These results are supported by Digby et al. (2017) and Emotional Coaching, which demonstrated that by training practitioners to support and coach CYP in managing their emotions and behavioural responses, the quality of the teacher-student relationship increased which then influenced both their social and cognitive development.

The data would suggest that by introducing such a project into the school environment it has given staff both the confidence and forum to develop emotional literacy in a very positive way.

5.5 *Research Question 4: Does the implementation of CfL within secondary schools, develop a more positive learning environment which is more supportive of MHWB?*

The results of the current study clearly demonstrate that CfL has supported the development of a more positive learning environment within all of the participating classrooms. It has shown that it increases the focus of relationships and the skills needed to develop and maintain these. It has highlighted the importance of emotional competencies and has given practitioners the understanding and permission to support CYP manage these. Finally, it has given a framework to

exploring and discussing the skills needed to be a good learner through the use of the parent-baby observation and the use of the ELLI assessment.

CfL has developed a more positive learning environment in the classroom by:

1. Increasing the knowledge and understanding of practitioners on the importance of staff-student relationships, emotional competencies and skills for learning, and how they as practitioners can support their growth within the classroom.
2. Creating a forum for observing parent-baby interactions which clearly show relationships in action and how emotions can affect behaviour. The forum also offers the opportunity to coach CYP in social skills and interactions.
3. Creating a range of teaching resources that supports the follow-up work focused on developing positive foundations for MHWB.

Attachment for learning and emotional barriers to learning were two focus areas for the pre-project staff training. The training generated professional discussions which then had an effect within the participating schools. The teacher post-training feedback (Appendix 10) and the IPA themes (Appendix 16, 17, 18 and 24), highlight a deeper understanding in areas that impact on teaching and learning and on behaviour.

> *The training heightened my awareness of attachment and learning and emotional literacy … It has made me more aware of CYP needs … and why they may be responding in a particular way.*

> *The training was very powerful and thought-provoking as a tool to reflect, think about behaviours and interactions and make links … Provided a forum to understand CYP behaviours.*

The staff training also focused on thinking about learning, with the work on learning dimensions (Crick et al., 2006) and the use of videos showing parent-child interactions. This focus was then extended through discussions and LPs explored how these could be used to stimulate learning conversations within classrooms. These interactions and the observations focused on the class-baby's learning

enabled the CYP to engage with and discuss their own learning. This interest in how CYP thought of themselves as learners (academic self-concept), was then developed throughout the project. This shifted the emphasis within the classrooms from a direct teaching focus, to a more collaborative focus of working with the CYP and their beliefs as the LPs stated:

> *I engineered sessions to address some of the issues and challenges I knew were there for some of the CYP.*

> *It's made me look slightly differently at students … Let me think about this and how I can approach you differently or present something differently because I understand more what's going on with you.*

One of the LPs described the project:

> *It became a shared experience for us all to learn. It was a success because it was motivating, interesting and worthwhile.*

The use of parent-child observations enabled the special link between relationships and learning to be highlighted in a concrete way.

The parent-baby observation sessions were also seen by LPs as a time to observe the CYP's skills. These observations were then further enhanced within professional conversations with teams where a greater understanding of the CYP evolved. These professional conversations enabled reflection on individual needs and development of next steps for learning, as the following comment illustrates:

> *The project created a successful learning experience for the CYP and gave me information on those CYP which helped me support their development.*

Both the increase in capacity to engage with learning and the positive effect of staff knowledge and understanding in developing stronger relationships is supported by the work of the Attachment Aware Schools (Rose et al., 2016). This study demonstrated that Attachment Aware staff training had an impact on academic progress, professional practice, positive improvement on pupil behaviour and an impact on classroom environment that was supportive to both CYP and staff.

It is clear from both the qualitative and quantitative data that the current study has had a positive effect on both facilitating and developing a positive culture for learning within the classroom.

6.0 Conclusion

Five areas were identified, in the literature review (Chapter 2), as being important to the development of positive wellbeing:

4. Relationships including social skills, the learning relationship and empathy,
5. Self-development including self-concept, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-regulation and resilience.
6. Skills for Learning including learning dimensions, the learning environment and managing the emotions of learning.
7. Emotional literacy
8. Neuroscience including how knowledge and understanding of how the brain manages emotions and stress impact on the behaviour of teachers and CYP.

The evidence strongly suggests that each of the five areas has been influenced by the project in a variety of ways. The influence of CfL on relationships, self-development, skills for learning and emotional literacy has been demonstrated in discussing the previous research questions, with reference to both qualitative and quantitative data.

In the current study, the work around neuroscience and its implications for MHWB within school was focused on two levels: the benefits of increased knowledge and understanding for staff and the use of specific lessons with CYP to explain how the brain works and the links with behaviour. This area has shown the least development due to a range of reasons. Staff training explored the development of brain growth in response to poor relationships and attachment. However, the training was not strong enough on supporting knowledge and understanding in how the brain can affect behaviour and emotions. This added to the lack of resources provided to the LP on neuroscience and may have strongly influenced the results. CfL can be seen as potentially making an important contribution to this area. However, this would only be possible with an addition to the training and resources supplied for the teachers to use as follow-up materials within the classroom.

This is believed to be the first study that explores the three strands incorporated within CfL of staff training, parent-baby observation and follow-up teaching and

learning on core areas for PMHWB. Therefore, CfL helps to provide a more detailed picture of how this way of working with CYP in secondary schools could help develop positive foundations for MHWB and also weave the identified strands into mainstream classroom practice. This was recognised in an Ofsted visit to one of the schools undertaking the project. Ofsted questioned the school about how they were supporting CYP emotional wellbeing and were very interested in CfL:

> *We had Ofsted come in and they were asking what sort of stuff like extra-curricular do we do for emotional wellbeing of our students and the Teacher mentioned Circles for Learning, they were like 'that's amazing.*

All the research questions have been explored and addressed in relation to all the research findings. Overall, the findings show that CfL supports the knowledge and understanding of the teachers, which in turn has a positive impact on the teacher-child relationship and on behaviour management. The parent-baby observations sessions can be seen to have an impact on CYP's understanding of themselves both as individuals and as learners. The social interactions and relationships skills that the CYP both observed and were coached on, can be seen to have impacted on their own interactions with others. The discussion that emerged due to the parent-baby observations also highlighted the development of emotional literacy and empathy. All of these areas can be seen to be further developed by the follow-up teaching and learning sessions. CfL has demonstrated an impact on all the areas that were identified as being important for the formation of solid foundations for MHWB and therefore has contributed to the field of how MHWB can be both supported and developed within the school environment.

6.1 *Limitations of the study*

It was a real challenge undertaking research within participating schools due to staff changes, timetable constraints, staff workload and releasing staff to undertake training. The staff training was one component of CfL and acted as both a forum to extend knowledge and understanding, but also as a catalyst for the classroom project. It allowed for relationships to be developed and knowledge shared, which then supported the individual schools to develop a project that met the needs of

their CYP. Another area of tension for many secondary schools was finding the time within the curriculum timetable to undertake the project.

Challenges were also encountered in undertaking the assessments in three of the four schools. For one school, the assessments were not suitable for the CYP. For other schools the administration of the assessments did not follow the guidelines. This therefore had an impact on implementation fidelity. If similar research was to be undertaken again, it would be beneficial if the researcher undertook the baseline assessments with the LP.

The parent-baby observations worked really well in schools and can be seen to have engaged both the CYP and staff. The importance of risk assessments and knowledge of CYP was clearly demonstrated. Staff found the observations informed their practice, which then supported their coaching of skills and interactions. Each LP created their own model within the classroom, which supported the non-manualised design of the project, ensuring that each LP focused on the needs of the CYP, rather than imposing a focus and curriculum ignoring their needs. This practice was thus supported by the researcher-LP conversations, which allowed for a collaborative way of working to develop. This supportive model of working is both reliant on a mentor/coach who has both the knowledge of teaching and learning, but also on supporting PMHWB.

The final strand of the CfL work is the follow-up teaching and learning sessions. These were again undertaken in different ways in all four schools. Some schools utilised this time and developed a range of work with CYP, whilst others used this as a space to talk about the sessions only. We can see from the results that for schools who ensured this time was built in and used for specific teaching and learning, far greater benefits were recorded. To support the development of the project, it would be beneficial for teachers to have access to a range of resources that can be used to support the five areas identified as underpinning PMHWB.

6.2 *Implications for Policy*

The research highlighted the effect of focusing on teacher-student relationships and the impact this has on MHWB. This was due to both the training on attachment and learning and the coaching that developed during the parent-baby visits. The project put the teacher-child relationship into focus and also gave permission for this to be developed.

CfL clearly brought emotions, feelings and their link to behaviour into the classroom and gave teachers the tools to both work with and explore these with CYP. Therefore, the importance of a relational way of working and the importance of training staff on how to manage, facilitate and develop this cannot be under-estimated.

6.3 *Implications for Practice*

All LPs stated that they both enjoyed the project and also benefited personally from both the training and the work in the classrooms. We can therefore see that the training was of benefit and supported professional development, which impacted on practice and the learning environment. LPs enjoyed the professional conversations that they had with the researcher, which enabled the project to be shared and celebrated. These conversations developed knowledge and understanding further and extended the work in the classroom. This coaching way of working enabled LPs to develop the work specifically for their CYP and their school and so was seen as being of greater benefit than imposing a set of lessons from a manual.

With the new Ofsted focus on both CYP's wellbeing and the curriculum, it would seem that this research has brought into focus a way of supporting teachers to understand and manage behaviour. Plus support the social and emotional development of their CYP and also their understanding of themselves as a learner. CfL could therefore provide both the training for staff and curriculum focus that would support both these areas and fill the gap that is clearly present at the moment.