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Charity No. 1045617



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Y Loteri Genedlaethol
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PPP/1/010345407 Getting the Message Across

Project Aims:

**Improved social & communication skills of children & young people
who have Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)
&
Reduced social isolation of young people**

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Introduction

Social Skills Workshops: The vast majority of those affected by Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN) will have poor social skills. As a result they have difficulty in making & retaining friendships, often lack confidence & self-esteem, and are prone to being bullied.

Initially the project aimed to run a series of workshops for young people with SLCN to specifically develop their social skills, which for most of us are innate but for those with SLCN need to be taught. When we submitted our original application for funding to run the Social Skills groups, it was very unlikely that secondary age children with ongoing, or previously undiagnosed, SLCN were receiving the specialist ongoing help they need to develop their social skills.

Our original intention was that over the course of this 3 year project we would run 16 social skills groups with 6 young people attending a series of at least 5 sessions to help imbed the new skills, strategies and behaviour. However, once we received the funding to carry out this work we were advised by our Advisory Group that by working collaboratively with Health & Education we could reach a far greater number of young people if we trained teachers and support staff to run the groups within secondary schools.



We contracted a highly specialist Speech & Language Therapist – world renowned for her specialism in teaching social skills to run a series of training days across Wales. Alex Kelly has 30 years' experience of working with people with social skills difficulties. She is the author of the bestselling TALKABOUT resources: Talkabout, Talkabout Activities, Talkabout Relationships, Talkabout DVD and Talkabout for Teenagers. She runs her own business providing social skills training and consultancy work.

Working collaboratively with Health & Education Departments we embarked on a 3 year programme to run training days across Wales, predominantly for mainstream Secondary School staff but also included delegates from Health Departments who worked with or offered support to Secondary Schools – these included Speech & Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists. Other agencies working directly with young people were also invited to attend for example Youth Offending staff (you will note the relevance of this by reading an additional report – An unexpected outcome of training professionals)

What are social skills?

In order to define social skills, it is important to understand the six main facets of social skills:

1. Socially skilled behaviours are goal-directed. They are behaviours which an individual uses in order to achieve a desired outcome and are therefore purposeful behaviours, as opposed to chance or unintentional behaviours. An example of this is if someone wants you to speak, they will use certain behaviours to encourage you: looking at you, nodding their head, and using listening noises, 'mmm'. These behaviours are therefore directed towards the goal of encouraging someone to communicate.
2. Socially skilled behaviours are interrelated. A person will use several behaviours in a synchronised way to achieve a particular goal, for example, nodding and smiling to show encouragement.
3. Social skills should be appropriate to the situation in that we adapt our behaviour to particular individuals in specific social contexts. In this way, we may develop a style of communication in one context but will need to adapt our style in other contexts, for example when being interviewed.
4. Social skills are defined in terms of identifiable 'units of behaviour' which the person displays. We therefore judge whether people are **socially skilled** based on how they **actually behave**. These behaviours can be divided into **non-verbal, verbal and assertive behaviours** (see table below)
5. Social skills are behaviours **which can be learned**. Social skills are learned through imitation, modelling and reinforcement as a child is growing up. Feedback is essential to this as children will employ those behaviours which are encouraged more frequently and will display less often those behaviours that are discouraged or ignored.
6. Social skills should be under the cognitive control of the individual. Thus a socially skilled person has learned when to employ social behaviours as well as what and how to use them – 'saying the right thing at the wrong

time' may often seem to be as socially inadequate as not saying the right thing at all.

Social competence contributes to quality of life, as our lives are built on positive interactions and relationships with the people around us. Indeed, social competence has been repeatedly demonstrated to be a critical variable in predicting success in future life, and as Frea (2006) says: 'even communication skills carry minimal power if social skills are not developed to ensure opportunities to communicate'.

Learning Social Skills will improve a person's ability to interact successfully with others around them and improve their quality of life

As one young person stated after attending one of the social skills groups run at his school *"I now know that social skills are about rules so teach me the rules and I can play the social game, easy"*

So, what are these 'social skills' or these 'identifiable units of behaviour'?

Social skills can be divided into 3 areas

1. non-verbal behaviour
2. verbal behaviour
3. Assertive behaviour.

Non-verbal behaviour

Non-verbal communication is fascinating as it is unavoidable in the presence of other people – you may decide not to speak, or be unable to communicate verbally, but you still give messages about yourself to others through your face and body.

Indeed, **93%** of the information that is communicated from person to person is non-verbal and it is well known that we rarely trust words alone.

Non-verbal behaviours have various functions: they can replace words, repeat what is spoken, emphasise a verbal message (especially the emotional type), regulate interaction or contradict what is being said, revealing a true feeling.

Non-verbal behaviour can be subdivided into **body language** and **paralinguistic skills**.

Body language can be further broken down into eight behaviours:

1. **Eye contact.** We use eye contact to indicate that we are attending to others; to watch for non-verbal signals from others; to indicate interpersonal attitudes by the amount and type of eye contact; to emphasise what is being said; to provide feedback and attention; to manage speaking turns; to express emotions and attitudes; and to express affiliation and intimacy.
2. **Facial expression** is one of the most informative aspects of body language as the face can respond instantaneously and is the most effective way to provide feedback to another person. Facial expression communicates the main emotions; provides a rapid and continuous commentary on speech; indicates willingness for the other person to continue speaking; acts as a reinforcer through smiling and nodding of the head; and gives information about our personality and identity.
3. **Gesture** has been found to be second in importance to facial expression. Gestures can be used without words, e.g. waving; they can be used to reinforce the verbal message, e.g. by shaking a fist when angry; the hands also indicate the level of arousal and anxiety and give information about personality, feelings and attitude towards self.
4. **Distance** is used to communicate like and dislike of others; express status; and control the behaviour of others, e.g. by changing furniture, or by moving closer or further away during conversations.
5. **Touch** is the earliest form of communication used by infants and because of this, it is a powerful signal later in life to indicate sexual, affiliative or aggressive attitudes. Touch is used to communicate warmth, caring, love and affection; to indicate emotional states such as fear, distress and exuberance; and in a more ritualised way as a part of greetings and farewells.
6. **Fidgeting.** We communicate anxiety, arousal or boredom through fidgeting. Most fidgeting is done with our hands but the feet can also convey information about our level of arousal.
7. **Posture** is used to reflect our attitude and feelings about ourselves and our relationship to others; to reveal feelings about the other person; to reflect our emotional state; to reflect individual personalities and self-image; and to reflect the status and power in relation to others.
8. **Personal appearance** is used primarily to send messages about ourselves and usually provides a basis for a first and sometimes long-

lasting impression. It affects our self-image and our behaviour and the behaviour of those around us; it conveys information about social status, occupation and personality; and constitutes one of the main forms of self-presentation. It also signals social attitudes like sexual availability and rebelliousness, and is often a good indication of someone's emotional state.

Paralinguistic skills or vocal cues include: volume, rate or speed, clarity, intonation and fluency. Our paralinguistic skills are used to significantly affect the meaning of what is said and therefore how it is received. They will also indicate our emotional state and people will form judgments based on their paralinguistic skills.

In summary non-verbal behaviour is the basis on which all other social skills are built and the importance of good non-verbal behaviour cannot be overestimated in terms of affecting someone's ability to be listened to and taken seriously.

Verbal behaviours are more complex than non-verbal behaviours. They often require the combination of two or more skills being in operation at the same time. Verbal behaviour can be broken down into a number of processes.

Listening is an essential part of conversation: to understand what is being said; to communicate interest and feelings about what is being said; to give feedback to the speaker who needs to know if they are being understood; and to provide them with reinforcement for them to continue the conversation. Non-verbal skills are particularly important in listening: appropriate eye-contact, facial expression and posture all go together to indicate to the speaker that they are being listened to. Verbal aspects of listening include sounds or isolated words of agreement and encouragement or a comment on what the person is expressing.

Opening a conversation. There are a number of ways to start a conversation and these vary according to the situation. They often start with general statements of fact which are then followed by more specific details. Generally conversations are started by asking a question or requesting something, comments about the environment, greetings, exchanging information, or personal questions or remarks.

Maintaining a conversation. This can be broken down into taking turns, asking questions, answering questions, relevance and repair.

Ending a conversation. The ability to end a conversation appropriately not only involves good verbal behaviour, e.g. 'I must be going now', but also good non-verbal behaviour, e.g. withdrawing eye contact and shifting your body posture.

Finally **assertive behaviour** is the ability to use non-verbal and verbal behaviours appropriately and effectively in order to act in your own interests, stand up for yourself without due anxiety, and to express your rights without denying the rights of others. Situations in which assertive behaviour is appropriate are: expressing feelings, standing up for yourself, making suggestions, refusing, disagreeing, complaining, apologising and requesting explanations.

All of these require appropriate use of non-verbal and verbal behaviour.

SOCIAL SKILLS in summary...

- 'Social skills' is the ability to communicate with others appropriately and effectively
- The communication itself involves the **verbal** aspect of speech and the **non verbal** aspects of body language and paralinguistic skills and these constitute the basic elements of **SOCIAL SKILLS**
- **Social competence** contributes to **quality of life** and is a critical variable in predicting **success in future life.**

Background

The three year programme to run the Social Skills training was prepared in conjunction with Alex Kelly's availability and in collaboration with Local Education Authorities (LEA's) & Speech & Language Therapy Services (SALT), some of whom are members of our Advisory Group. Advisory Teachers from LEA & SALT committed resources to support the setting up & running of Social Skills Groups, therefore it was agreed that these support staff would also attend the training days.

Once Alex's availability was confirmed, we were able to organise suitable venues in which to run the training day. The majority of Local Authorities were able to offer training rooms or suitable venues but for those who were unable to do this – venues were sourced at minimal cost to the project.

Another piece of work carried out in this project was to deliver SLCN training in Secondary Schools & has been evaluated separately - it was decided it would be logical to invite schools who had received SLCN training within the first year of the project to also attend the Social Skills training therefore the first two training days took part in Cardiff & Torfaen respectively.

Local Authorities invited schools and administrated a booking system. A flyer was sent to schools (see template on next page) with an invitation for each school to send a minimum of 2 staff to attend. We requested that at least 2 teachers/support staff attend the training together in order that they could support each other to run the group/s when they returned to school, in addition this would offer continuity for the young people should one of the staff be unavailable to run the group one week due to illness or because of other commitments.

Invitations were sent to both English & Welsh medium schools, Welsh medium schools were made aware however that the training would be delivered using the medium of English.

Each delegate received a training pack which included

- hand-outs of the training day for their future reference
- Afasic Cymru posters & information
- Evaluation forms

AN INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS IN MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The importance of being socially skilled cannot be overestimated. We all need these skills to communicate effectively in order to listen to others, to express ourselves, to be taken seriously, to learn and to make friends. And we know that social competence contributes to quality of life and has been repeatedly demonstrated to be a critical variable in predicting success in future life. However not all children develop social competence naturally. Some children are socially unskilled and require intervention. So what can be done to help them? Where do you start and how can it be done?

**Book to attend a FREE 1 day course by Alex Kelly
author of the best selling TALKABOUT series**

Date:

Venue:

This 1-day course aims to introduce you to social skills and in particular how to teach these effectively in your school. By the end of the day, you will:

- have a good understanding of social skills;
- understand the importance of structuring social skills training so that the correct skills are taught first;
- be familiar with the content of the Talkabout resources;
- and understand some of the ways you can teach social skills.

Programme for the day

09.30	An introduction to social skills Planning where to start – a video practical exercise The theory behind the hierarchy of skills Assessment of social skills
12.30	Lunch Break – please bring a packed lunch, beverages will be provided
13.30	Effective intervention – running groups, social stories, peer support, the environment Practical examples of how to teach skills Any questions?
16.00	CLOSE

To book a place please contact:



Cyflwyniad i ddysgu medrau cymdeithasol mewn ysgolion prif ffrwd

Ni ellir goramcangyfrif pwysigrwydd bod yn gymdeithasol fedrus. Mae arnon ni i gyd angen y medrau hyn i gyfathrebu'n effeithiol er mwyn gwrandao ar bobl eraill, mynegi ein hunain, i bobl ein cymryd o ddifrif, dysgu a gwneud ffrindiau. Ac rydym yn gwybod bod gallu cymdeithasol yn cyfrannu tuag at ansawdd bywyd a, thro ar ôl tro, profwyd ei fod yn newidyn allweddol wrth ragweld llwyddiant mewn bywyd yn y dyfodol. Fodd bynnag, nid yw pob plentyn yn datblygu gallu cymdeithasol yn naturiol. Mae rhai plant yn anfedrus yn gymdeithasol ac angen ymyriad. Felly, beth ellir ei wneud i'w helpu? Ble mae dechrau a sut mae mynd ati i wneud hyn?

Neilltuwch le ar gwrs undydd RHAD AC AM DDIM gan Alex Kelly awdur cyfres o'r gwerthwyr gorau, 'TALKABOUT'

Dyddiad:

Lleoliad:

Amcan y cwrs undydd hwn yw eich cyflwyno i fedrau cymdeithasol ac, yn anad dim, sut i ddysgu'r rhain yn effeithiol yn eich ysgol. Erbyn diwedd y dydd:

- bydd gennych ddealltwriaeth dda o fedrau cymdeithasol;
- byddwch yn deall pwysigrwydd llunio hyfforddiant medrau cymdeithasol fel bo'r medrau cywir yn cael eu dysgu'n gyntaf;
- byddwch yn gyfarwydd â chynnwys adnoddau 'Talkabout' a
- byddwch yn deall rhai o'r ffyrdd y gallwch ddysgu medrau cymdeithasol.

Rhaglen y dydd

09.30	Cyflwyniad i fedrau cymdeithasol Cynllunio ble i ddechrau – ymarfer ymarferol trwy fideo Y ddamcaniaeth y tu ôl i hierarchiaeth medrau Asesiad o fedrau cymdeithasol
12.30	Egwyl i gael cinio – dewch â chinio pecyn gyda chi; bydd diodydd yn cael eu darparu
13.30	Ymyriad effeithiol – rhedeg grwpiau, storïau cymdeithasol, cefnogaeth cymheiriaid, yr amgylchedd Enghreifftiau ymarferol o ffyrdd o fynd ati i ddysgu medrau Unrhyw gwestiynau?
16.00	GORFFEN

I neilltuo lle cysylltwch â:



The first two training days were facilitated in South Wales which were held in Cardiff & Torfaen on 9th & 10th January 2012 respectively.

School	Local Authority	Date	MEDIUM
Croesyceiliog	Torfaen	Jan-12	English
Abersychan SNRB	Torfaen	Jan-12	English
Lantarnam Comp	Torfaen	Jan-12	English
Fairwater High	Torfaen	Jan-12	English
West Mon	Torfaen	Jan-12	English
St Albans	Torfaen	Jan-12	English
Abertillery Comp	Blaenau Gwent	Jan-12	English
Brynmaur Comp	Blaenau Gwent	Jan-12	English
Ebbw Vale Comp	Blaenau Gwent	Jan-12	English
Penycwm Special School	Blaenau Gwent	Jan-12	English
Rhymney Comp	Caerphilly	Jan-12	English
Oakdale Comp	Caerphilly	Jan-12	English
Heolddu	Caerphilly	Jan-12	English
Caldicot Comp	Monmouth	Jan-12	English
Monmouth Comp	Monmouth	Jan-12	English
Chepstow Comp	Monmouth	Jan-12	English
King Henry	Monmouth	Jan-12	English
Mounton House	Monmouth	Jan-12	English
Caerleon Comprehensive	Newport	Jan-12	English
Lliswerry High	Newport	Jan-12	English
Duffryn High	Newport	Jan-12	English
PRU Newport	Newport	Jan-12	English
Cantonian High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Cardiff High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Cathays High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Corpus Christi Catholic High	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Greenhill Special School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Llanederyn High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Llanishen High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Llanrumney High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Radyr Comprehensive	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Rumney High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Bishop of Llandaff CIW	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Whitchurch High School	Cardiff	Jan-12	English
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf	Cardiff	Jan-12	Welsh
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr	Cardiff	Jan-12	Welsh

37 different schools attended the training day in which Alex Kelly discussed assessing and teaching social skills. As a result of attending the training day **20** schools agreed to run Social Skills groups – each supporting a maximum of **6** young people.

Hence we exceeded our 1st year target to run 6 groups for 48 young people – we ACTUALLY ran 20 groups for 120 young people.

During the course of the interactive training day, Alex discussed the HIERARCHY approach to teaching schools and illustrated that these skills **need** to be taught in a particular order

Self-awareness



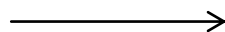
Non-verbal behaviour



Verbal behaviour



Assertiveness



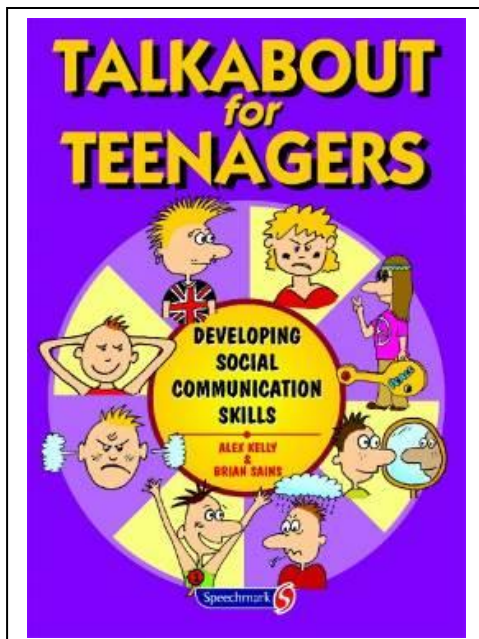
Body language

The way we talk

The hand-outs in each delegates training pack referred to all aspects of assessing & teaching Social Skills thus would enable and support staff to set up and run groups at their schools.

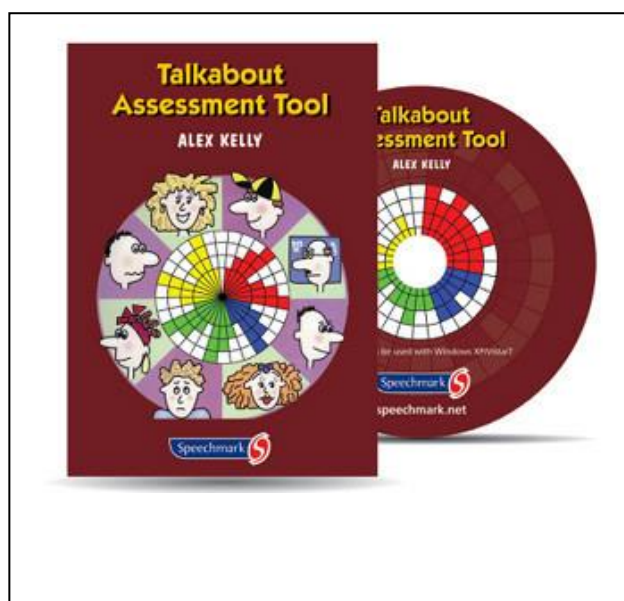
Each school agreeing to run a Social Skills group/s within their school were given the necessary resources to support the running of the group & also a toolkit of EXCEL spreadsheets & an assessment tool in order to collate pre and post data of each of the children in order to evidence & illustrate the improvement & progress each individual child & group had made.

Resources were supplied by Alex Kelly at a discounted rate for this project.



A complete group work resource offering a hierarchical approach for teaching social and relationship skills to teenagers. Designed specifically for teenagers, this practical workbook provides ready-made material for running social and relationship skills groups with older children and young adults. Divided into five hierarchical modules: 1. Self-awareness & Self-esteem 2. Body language 3. Conversational skills 4. Friendship skills 5. Assertiveness

Each module includes a teaching plan with worksheets and photocopiable resources. It includes a short assessment to highlight the module that is most appropriate to teach and the skills within that module that are relevant. Provides a short guide to running successful social skills groups, for example, the numbers for each group, group rules, developing group cohesion and how to set up a role play session.



The 'Talkabout Assessment Tool' is an assessment of social skills.

It provides a visual summary of a person's non-verbal, verbal and assertiveness skills. This can be used to plan where to start any intervention using the 'Talkabout' social skills hierarchy, and is ideal for both initial assessment of social skills and any subsequent re-assessment. The completed assessment can be printed out or saved as a PDF document.

Templates of EXCEL spreadsheets can be found as Appendix 1

Feedback from delegates attending Alex Kelly's one day training to assess and teach Social Skills within Secondary Schools. Each delegate completed an evaluation form at the end of the training day. The evaluation included the following the question.... **Presenter – did Alex retain your interest/keep you involved?** Here are a small selection of comments made about Alex's presentation skills

Alex was quite humorous and discussed each strategy very clearly.

I found Alex very interesting. I thought the content and the delivery was excellent

The training session was fast paced and also easy to follow. Kept it interesting and informative.

Very interesting and knowledgeable. A good balance of talk and activities.

Outstanding

Good use of humour. Made all participants feel at ease – knowledgeable and engaging.

Absolutely. She involved us from the start

Very interesting. Different methods to engage audience.

Here are a small selection of comments made with regard to the **Content of the training day– did it increase your knowledge and understanding of Social Skills?**

It outlined a lot of areas that I wasn't completely confident with.

I have developed further understanding and appreciate the need for intervention.

It certainly has increased my understanding of the meanings behind social skills.

Starting new groups and can implement new ideas from today

Definitely!

Most definitely have a clear understanding of how to assess.

Learnt a lot & increased my understanding.

Clear explanation and information.

Here are a small selection of comments made with regard to the **Content of the training day– will you easily implement the ideas and information that you have been given today?**

I am looking forward to working with these resources and ideas

The assessment and resources are easy and understandable – easy to follow.

The starter work is easy to follow and there are lots of games and activities to carry on with.

Very excited about starting a social skills group.

I hope so – time will be an issue.

The ideas were simple and easy to follow

Yes feel much more confident with the resources.

Resources are easy to follow and user friendly.

Schools attending training day in Year 2 from Wrexham, Flintshire, Cardiff, Vale, Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouth, Torfaen & Newport

Hawarden High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Connah's Quay High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Holywell High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
St Richard Gwyn High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Maes Garmon High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Argoed High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Elfed High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
John Summers High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Castell Alun High	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Ysgol Maes Hyfryd	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Hawarden House PRU	Flintshire	08.10.12	
Alun Resource PRU	Flintshire	08.10.12	
St Christophers	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Ysgol Clywedog	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Ysgol Rhiwabon	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
St Josephs	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Ysgol Morgan Llwyd	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Ysgol Rhosnesni	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Ysgol Bryn Alun	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Darland High School	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Maelor School Penley	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Ysgol y Grango	WREXHAM	09.10.12	
Bryn y Deryn	Cardiff	Oct-12	English
Cathays High School	Cardiff	Oct-12	English
Fitzalen High School	Cardiff	Oct-12	English
Glyn Derw High School	Cardiff	Oct-12	English
Michaelston Community College	Cardiff	Oct-12	English
St Teilos CIW School	Cardiff	Oct- 12	English
Ebbw Fawr	Blaenau Gwent	Oct-12	English
Pen Y Cwm	Blaenau Gwent	Oct-12	English
PRU	Blaenau Gwent	Oct-12	English
Tredegar Comp	Blaenau Gwent	Oct-12	English
Heolddu	Caerphilly	Oct-12	English
Lewis Girls School	Caerphilly	Oct-12	English
Lewis School	Caerphilly	Oct-12	English
Oakdale	Caerphilly	Oct-12	English
St Cenydd	Caerphilly	Oct-12	English
King Henry VI	Caerphilly	Oct-12	English
Caldicot	Monmouth	Oct-12	English
Bassaleg	Newport	Oct-12	English

Cylchdroi Centre	Newport	Oct-12	English
Llanwern high school	newport	Oct-12	English
Lliswerry High	Newport	Oct-12	English
Newport LA	Newport	Oct-12	English
St Julians	Newport	Oct-12	English
Abersychan SNRB	Torfaen	Oct-12	English
Educational Psychology Service	Torfaen	Oct-12	English
Fairwater	Torfaen	Oct-12	English
Llantarnam High	Torfaen	Oct-12	English
Torfaen CBC	Torfaen	Oct-12	English
Torfaen PRU	Torfaen	Oct-12	English
Abersychan	Torfaen	Oct-12	English
YGG Llangynwyd	Bridgend	Oct-12	Welsh
Y Dderwen	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
Brynteg Comp	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
Bryntirion Comprehensive	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
Pencoed Comp	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
Maesteg Comp	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
Archbishop McGrath	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
Cynffig Comp	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
Porthcawl Comprehensive	Bridgend	Oct-12	English
St Richard Gwyn	Vale	Oct-12	ENG
Bro Morganwg	Vale	Oct-12	Welsh
Barry Comp	Vale	Oct-12	ENG
Cowbridge Comp	Vale	Oct-12	ENG
Stanwell	Vale	Oct-12	ENG
Kings Monkton	Cardiff	Oct-12	ENG
Ashgrove	Vale	Oct-12	ENG
Llantwit Comp	Vale	Oct-12	ENG

Year 2 – schools ran 40 Social Skills groups with a max of 6 young people attending each group – total 240 young people

Feedback from a few young people about attending Talkabout sessions



After doing
the group I
feel happier.

When I go back to
lessons I am more
confident and feel
better.

I liked been in
the group I felt
safe

I know that the
others in the
group will not
laugh at me.

I get time to
think about my
day and how it
makes me feel.

Feedback from a few young people about attending Talkabout sessions



I can say what I want in group and that makes me feel good.

Things I learnt in the group I remembered and would think about them when I needed to.

I like coming to the group everyone is friendly.

I fit in here – I've got friends now

It's fun!

Feedback from a few young people about attending Talkabout sessions



It makes me understand that some kids feel the same as me; I am not the only one.

To start with I was embarrassed about been in the group & I didn't know anyone else – but then it was ok

This group is the best bit of school.

Year 3 – schools ran 38 Social Skills groups with a max of 6 young people attending each group – total 228 young people

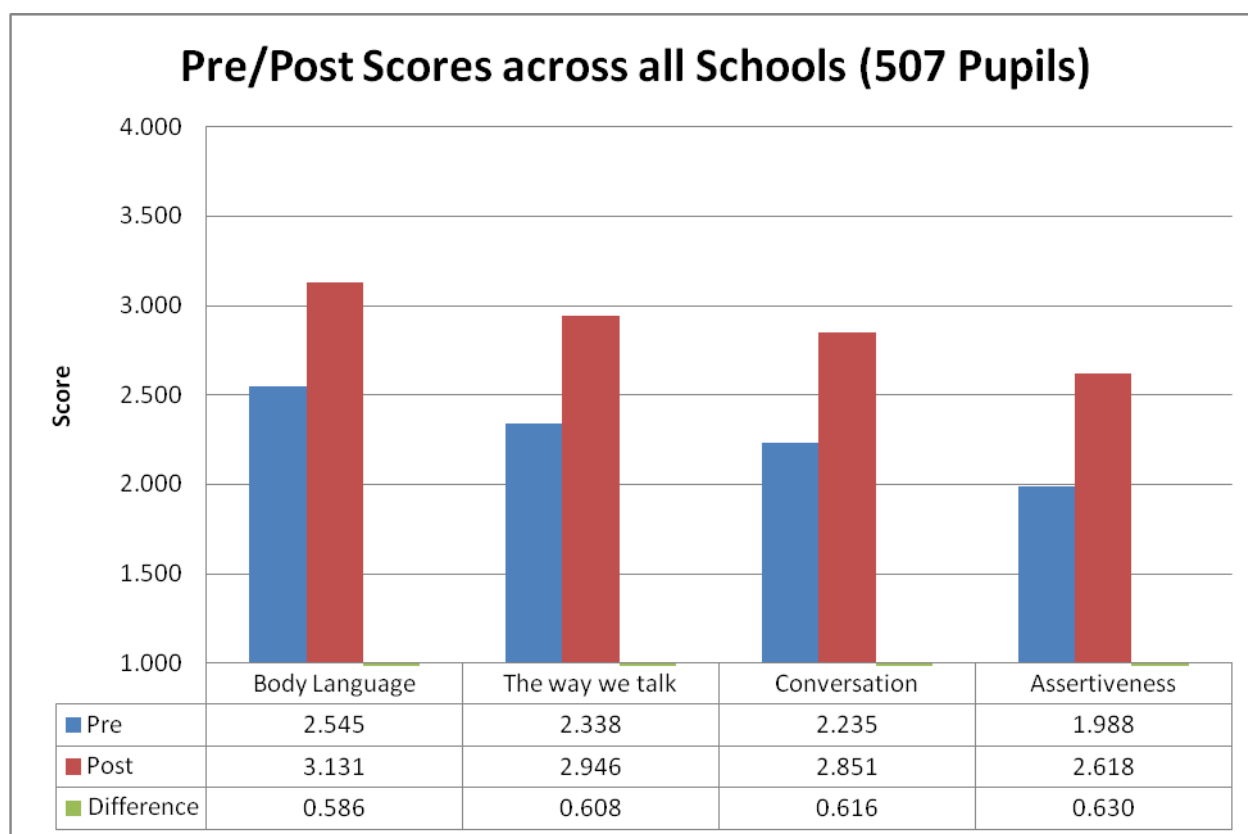
Ysgol Uwchradd Llangefni	Ynys Mon	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol David Hughes Porthaethwy	Ynys Mon	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Uwchradd Tywyn	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol y Berwyn	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol y Moelwyn	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Tryfan	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Bryn Elan	Conwy	Mar-13	English
Eirias	Conwy	Mar-13	English
Dyffryn Conwy	Conwy	Mar-13	Welsh
Emrys Ap Iwan	Conwy	Mar-13	English
John Bright	Conwy	Mar-13	English
Go Garth	Conwy	Mar-13	English
Blessed Edward Jones	Denbighshire	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Gro Gwaun	PEMBS	Mar-13	English
Sir Thomas Picton School	PEMBS	Mar-13	English
Ysgol y Preseli	PEMBS	Mar-13	English
Pembroke School	PEMBS	Mar-13	English
Greenhill School	PEMBS	Mar-13	English
Milford School	PEMBS	Mar-13	English
Aman Valley School	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Bro Myrddin	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Bryngwyn School	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Coedcae Comprehensive School	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Dyffryn Tâf School	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Garreg Lwyd	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Glanymor School	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Heol Goffa School	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Gyfun Maes-yr-Yrfa	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Gyfun Pantycelyn	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Q E High School	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Ysgol y Strade	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Tregib	CARMS	Mar-13	English
Birchgrove CS	S	Mar-13	English
Bishop Gore School	S	Mar-13	English
Bishop Vaughan RC	S	Mar-13	English
Bishopston STF	S	Mar-13	English
Bryncoch PRU	NPT	Mar-13	English
Cefn Saesons	NPT	Mar-13	English
Cwmtawe ASD Unit	NPT	Mar-13	English

Cwrt Sart Comp	NPT	Mar-13	English
Duffryn School	NPT	Mar-13	English
Dwr Y Felin	NPT	Mar-13	English
Dylan Thomas	S	Mar-13	English
Glan Afan	NPT	Mar-13	English
Gowerton Comp	S	Mar-13	English
Llangatwg Comp	NPT	Mar-13	English
Morrison	S	Mar-13	English
Olchfa School	S	Mar-13	English
Pentrehafod	S	Mar-13	English
Penyrheol	S	Mar-13	English
Pontaddulais CS	S	Mar-13	English
Sandfields	NPT	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Bryn Castell	BNP	Mar-13	English
YG Ystalyfera	NPT	Mar-13	English
Velindre Community School	NPT	Mar-13	English
YOT	NPT	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern	Ynys Mon	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi	Ynys Mon	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Thomas Jones Amlwch	Ynys Mon	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Glan Y Mor,Pwllheli	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Uned Ty Meirion [SEN UNIT] – Ysgol Y Gader	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Friars	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Ardudwy	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Brynrefail	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Eifionydd	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Ysgol Botwnnog	Gwynedd	Mar-13	Welsh
Creuddyn	Conwy	Mar-13	Welsh
Denbigh High School	Denbighshire	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Plas Cefndy	Denbighshire	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Plasbrondyffryn	Denbighshire	Mar-13	English
Rhyl High School	Denbighshire	Mar-13	English
Ysgol Dinas Brân	Denbighshire	Mar-13	Bilingual
Ysgol Brynhyfryd	Denbighshire	Mar-13	Bilingual

As illustrated in the table below – all targets set have been exceeded.

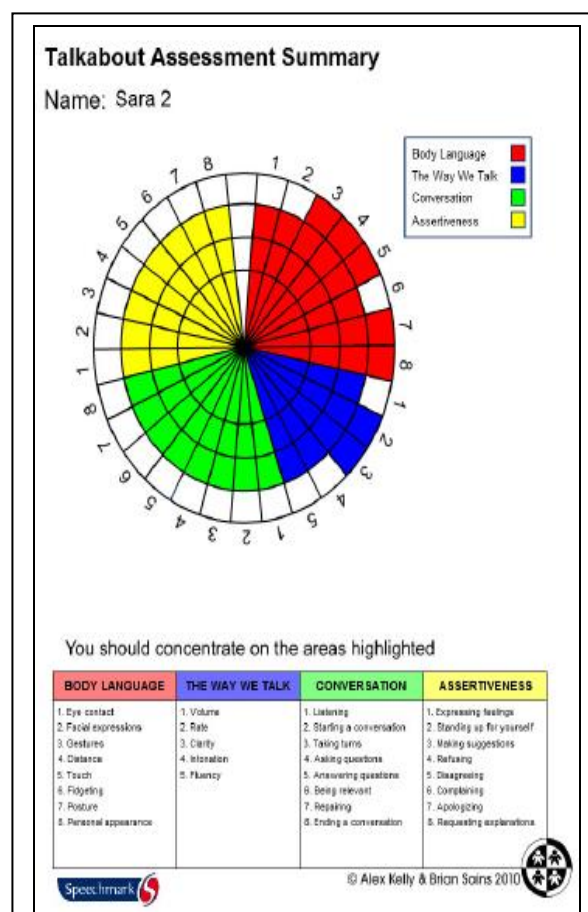
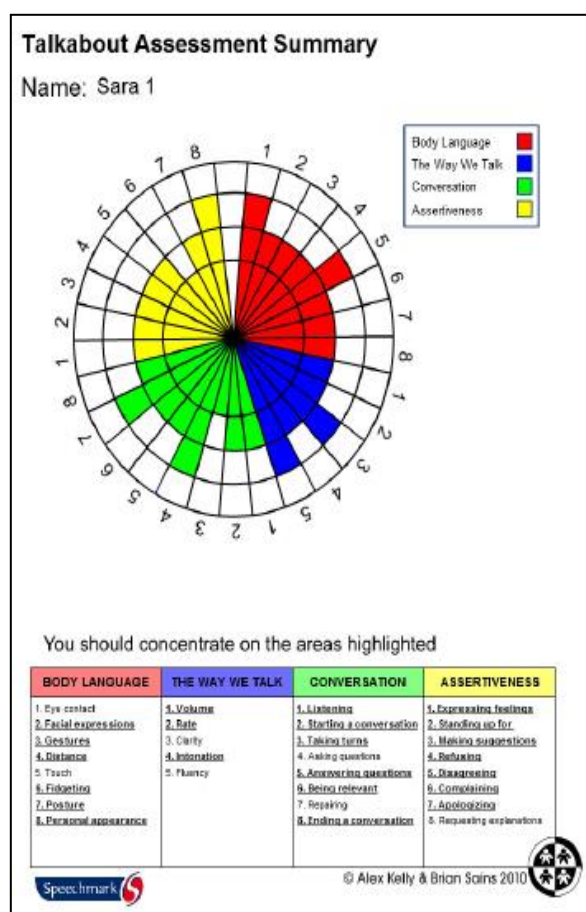
	TARGET No. of groups	ACHIEVED No. of groups	TARGET No. of young people	ACHIEVED No. of young people
YEAR 1	6	20	48	120
YEAR2	12	40	72	240
YEAR 3	12	38	72	147
Pilot Project in Primary Schools	0	38	0	127
PROJECT TOTAL	30	136	192	634

The table below illustrates pre & post scores of all young people attending Social Skills groups in Secondary Schools

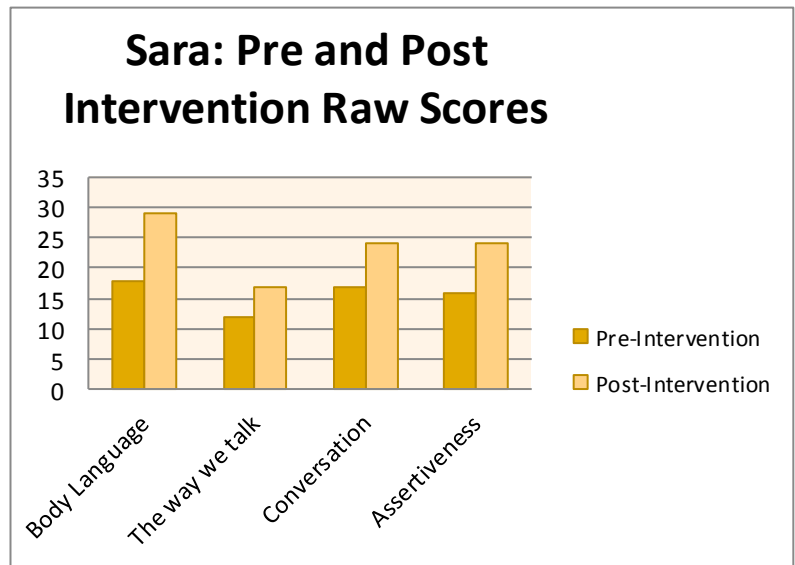
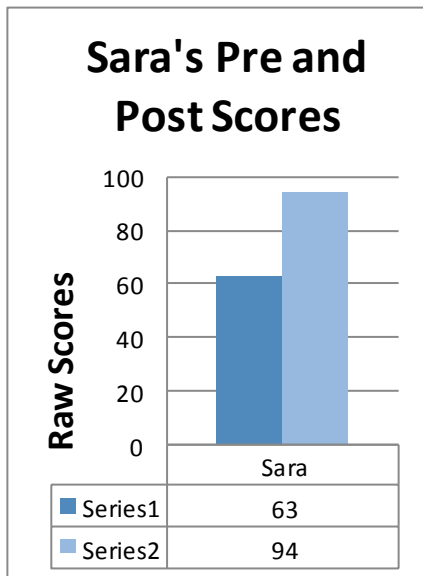


One story of success: SARA – a secondary school pupil

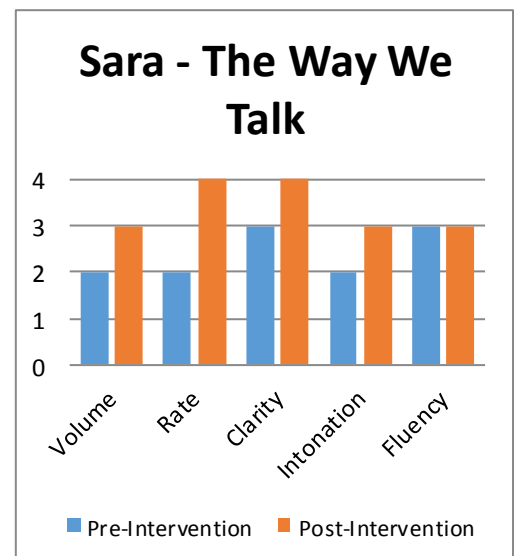
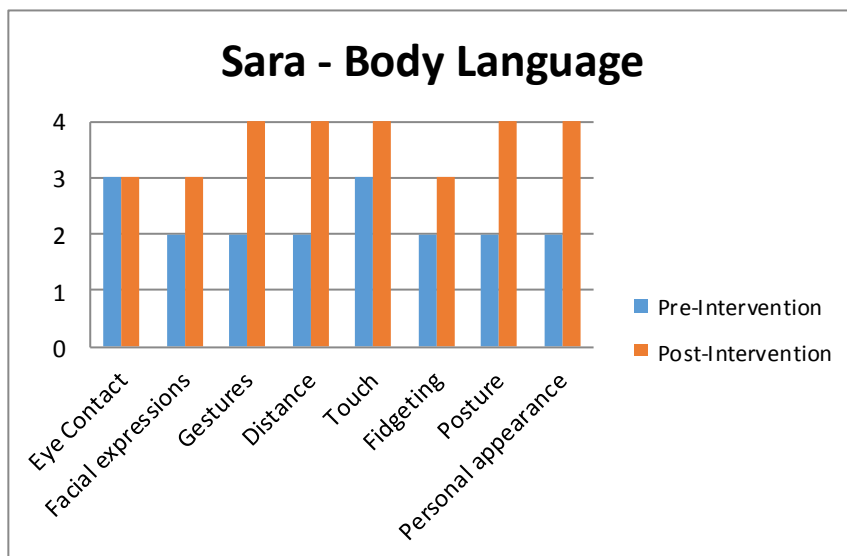
Sara (not her real name), a year 9 pupil attended a Talkabout group for 2 terms covering topics 1 and 2 of the Talkabout programme developing self-esteem and body language. Her social skills were assessed pre and post work using the Talkabout assessment tool (2010)



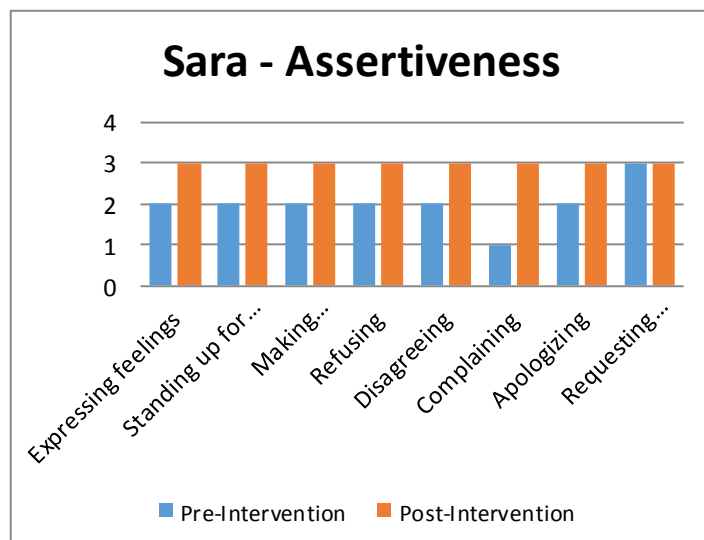
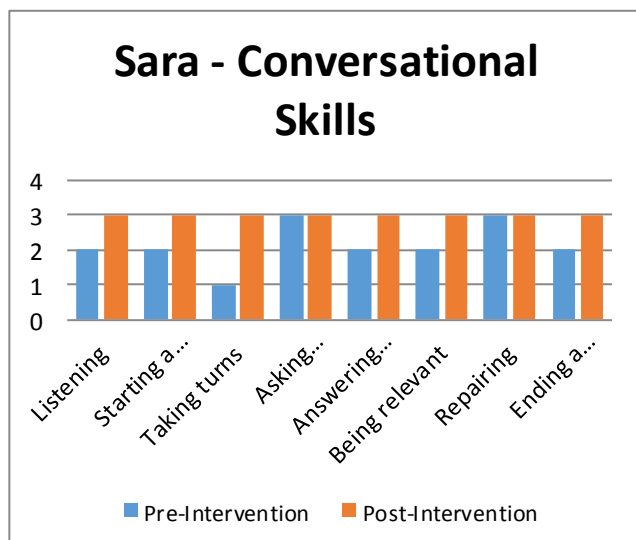
Overall Sara's social skills improved from **63** to **94**. Raw scores can also be identified as percentages so 63 becomes 54% socially skilled and 94 becomes 81%, so her raw score can be seen to have improved by 27%. Sara improved in **all 4 areas** but they saw most improvement in her body language which is to be expected as it is an easier skill to learn than assertiveness.



Her body language has gone from mostly 2 (not very good) to 4 (very good) and most improvement can be seen in her gestures, distance, posture and personal appearance (her ability to adapt her appearance appropriately). This would be expected after work on her self-esteem. The way she talks has improved from mostly 'not very good' to 'quite good'.



Improvement was also seen in her conversational skills and her assertiveness.



Comments from her school have been very positive following the intervention. Sara's English teacher said:

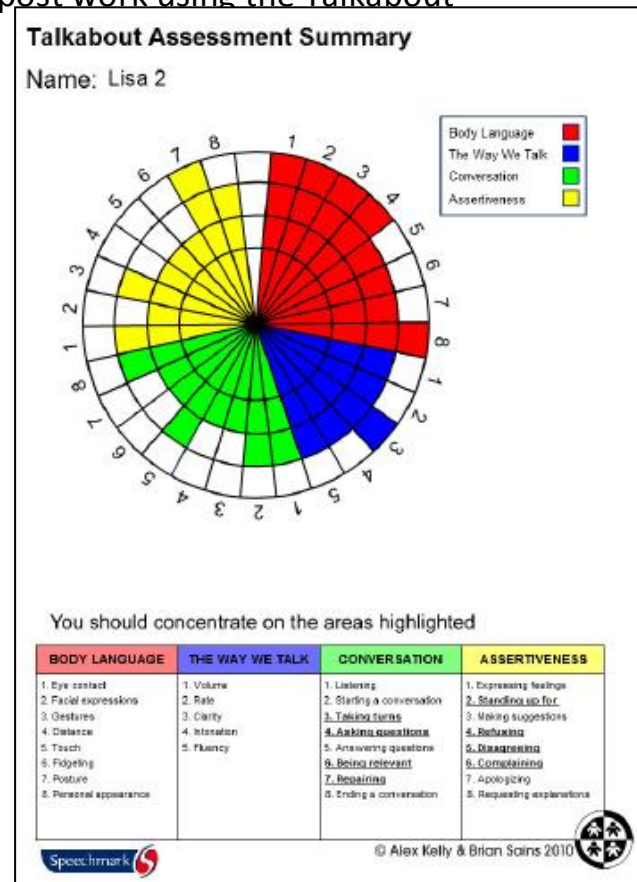
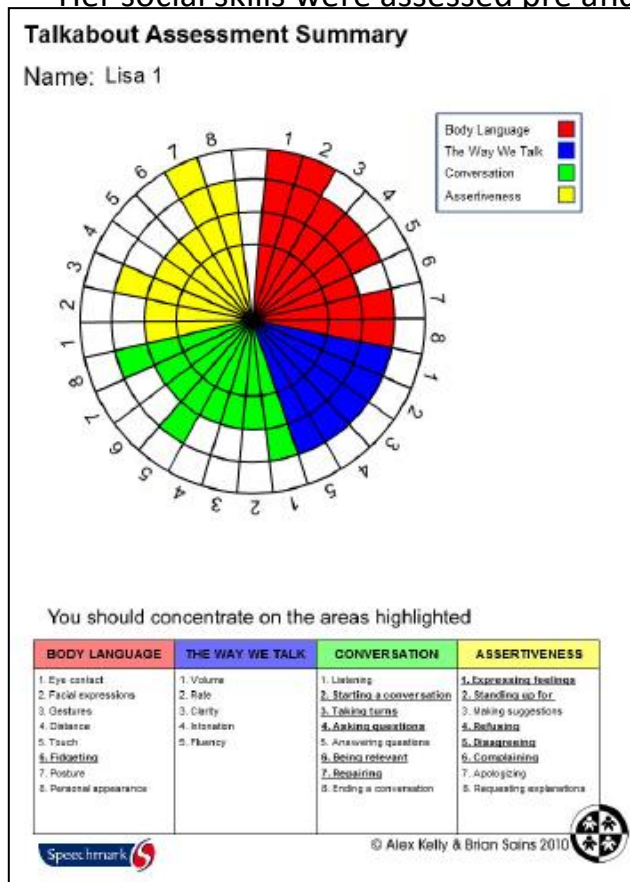
'Last year I found her behaviour in the classroom to be challenging towards myself and to other pupils. She was constantly arguing with other pupils over perceived slights and seemed to be unable to accept reasonable requests from teachers. Outside of the classroom, she found herself isolated from other pupils due to her social and emotional difficulties related to her family circumstances.'

'Since beginning the Talkabout group session I have seen a marked improvement in her attitude and behaviour around school. She is more co-operative with members of staff and is less prone to getting into disputes with other pupils. She has told me that she is now aware of when she is likely to lose her temper and is able to distance herself from situations where a conflict is likely to take place. She is able to discuss her emotions and behaviour with teaching assistants in class, which is a sign of great progress for Sara.'

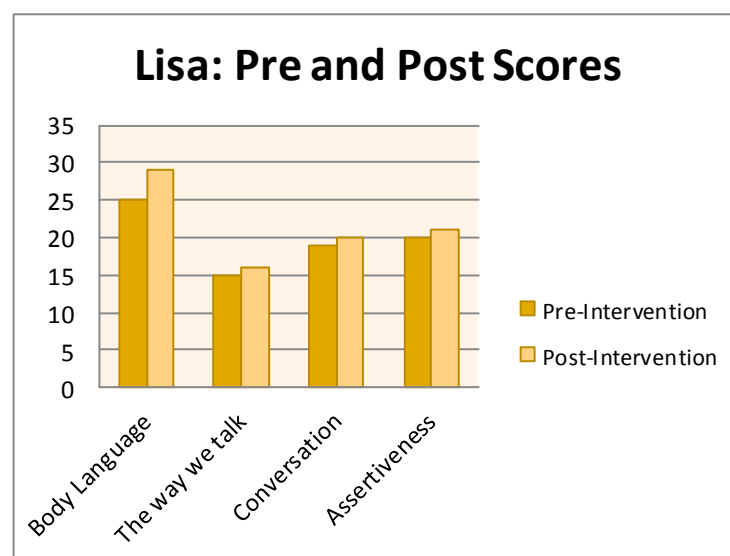
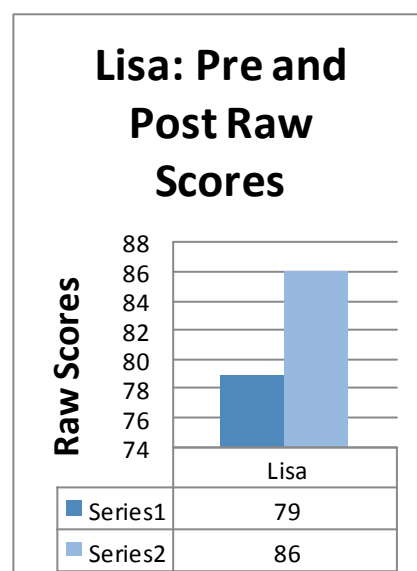
'Other teaching colleagues have also noticed a positive change in Sara's attitude since attending Talkabout sessions and have commented that she has developed a more mature and self-reflective attitude in school'.

In addition, the school have noticed a reduction in the number of times she has been sent to 'Remove' (behaviour support room) and the detentions she has now are usually because of punctuality to classes and not related to her behaviour.

Another story of success, Lisa – a year 10 child Lisa (not her real name), a year 10 pupil attended a Talkabout group for 2 terms where they covered topics 1 and 2 of the Talkabout programme developing self-esteem and body language. Her social skills were assessed pre and post work using the Talkabout



Overall Lisa's social skills improved from 79 (or 68%) to 86 (74%) so her raw score can be seen to have improved by **6%**. Sara improved in all **4 areas** but they saw most improvement in her body language.



Children were identified in this school through discussion between the Form teacher, Senco and TA. A group of year 10 children were prioritised in this school as they were felt to be children who had 'slipped through the net'.

Parent strategies were also given as well as the weekly programme being delivered.

The SENCOs comment was that the group *'provides the pupils with a nurturing setting where their voice is heard'*. Lisa's comment about the Talkabout programme was *'we talked about how we are and how we can improve on making friends. It's really good and we would like more Talkabout. Your advice is brilliant Miss'*.

The majority of schools taking part in this project have submitted data on EXCEL spreadsheets, there is also a collection of data using the coloured wheels (assessment tool) and feedback forms. Due to the lack of storage space and to adhere to the Data Protection guidelines - all data supplied by schools will be held at Afasic Cymru's office for 3 months it will then be returned to schools for their records.

Some comments from parents as a result of their child attending the
“Talkabout” Social Skills Groups

There has been a change in his self-esteem; he is more settled & confident – so is happier

We have noted a marked difference in his willingness to discuss & listen to both sides, his attitude has improved.

He tends to be outspoken at the best of times but it has helped to improve/understand social skills

He didn't know how to interact with children his own age; he now has lots of friends. Thank you for letting him take part.

We are sure that taking part in this group has contributed to his overall improvement in school & feeling he now belongs

He has enjoyed and looked forward to the group – being in a small group is good for X

Ongoing process – would like it to continue

His self esteem has improved – he now talks to his peers

He is more willing to ask questions when unsure of situations now

I would like to say that she has enjoyed the group and looks forward to it. Although she still has a few problems, I have noticed a change in attitude towards school for the better

In addition – this project funding enabled us to run a short pilot project to offer the same training to Primary school teachers and support staff.

Pilot Project – an unexpected outcome

Over the course of the 3 year project, it was requested by a variety of sources, which included teaching staff, LEA's and Speech & Language Therapy Departments that we roll out the Social Skills training to Primary School staff. This would provide on-going support for children & young people from an earlier age & offer a more joined up approach between Primary feeder schools and Secondary Schools. The intervention at an earlier would also aid the transition of pupils from Primary to Secondary School – which is often a difficult transition for ALL children but even more so for those with SLCN.

We discussed this with the Big Lottery Grant Officer and since it meant no additional funding would be required it was agreed that we could run a 10 week (1 term) Pilot Project, where teachers & support staff would attend the 1 day training free of charge in order that their school participate in the Pilot Project working on the basics of Social Skills i.e. enhancing the self-awareness & self-esteem of pupils. The pilot project could run for 1 term only in order that we collate pre and post data of each of the children identified as having needs in these areas. All children attending the groups showed signs of progress in the short time allocated.

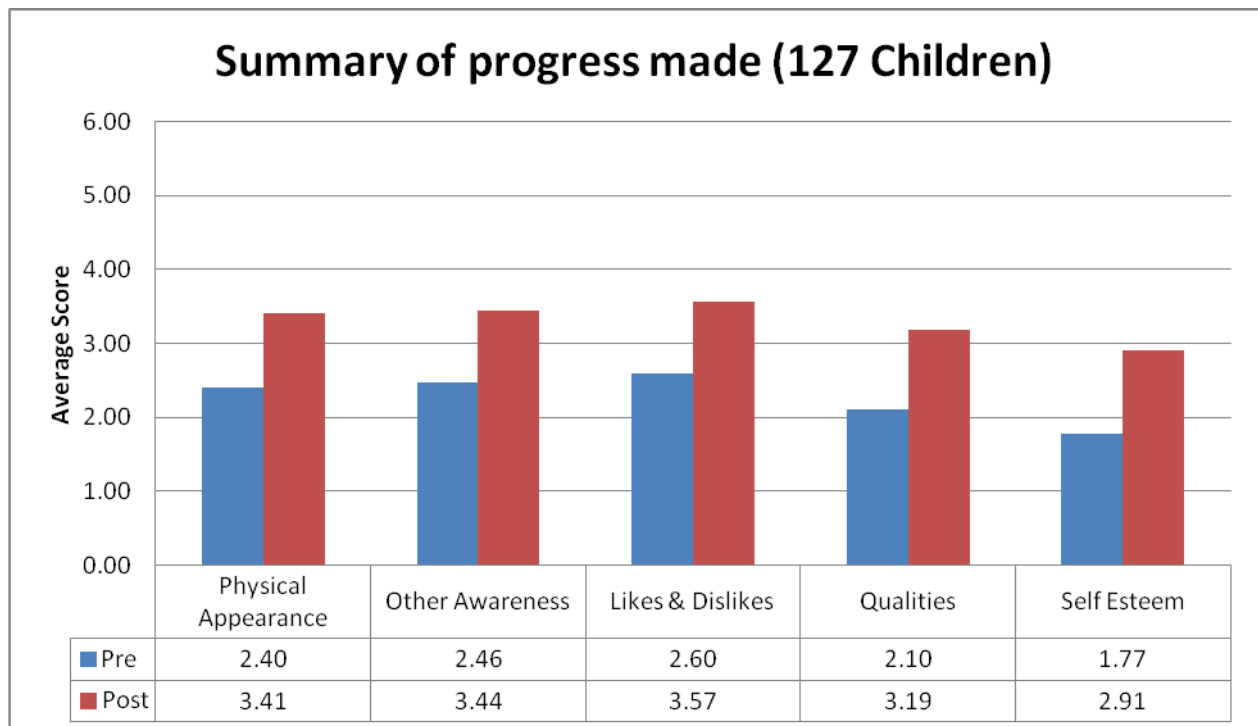
38 Schools from Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen, Monmouth, Caerphilly & Blaenau Gwent took part in the Pilot Project as listed on the next page with an average of 4 children attending each of the groups. Some schools ran more than 1 group but for the purpose of this evaluation we collected data from 1 group from each school.

This data has formed part of our recent funding application to The Big Lottery requesting a further 3 year grant to “roll out” this training across Wales.

Primary Schools participating in Pilot Project.

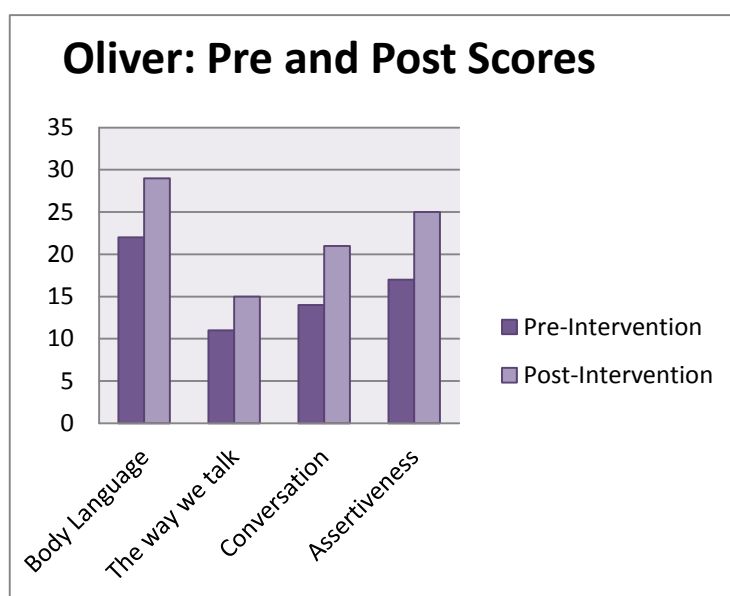
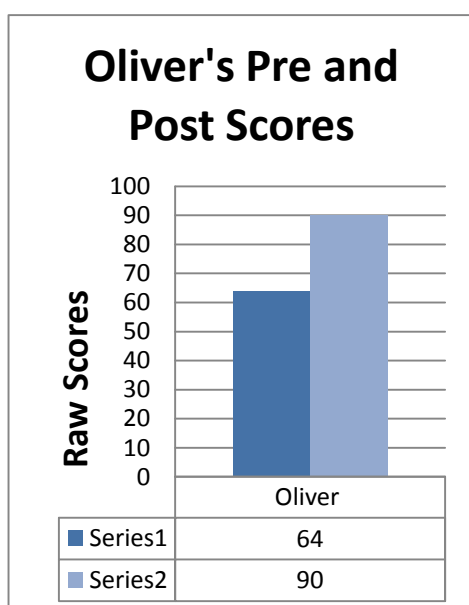
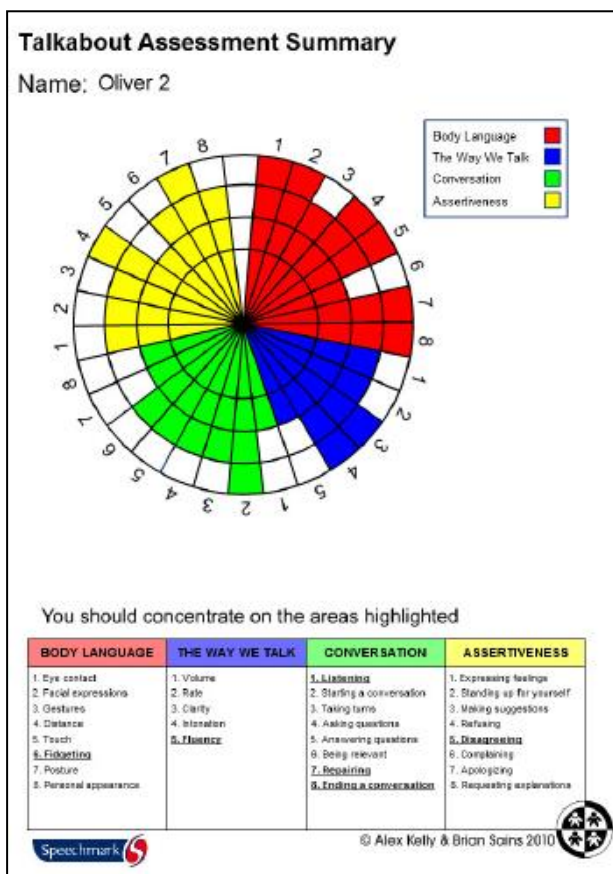
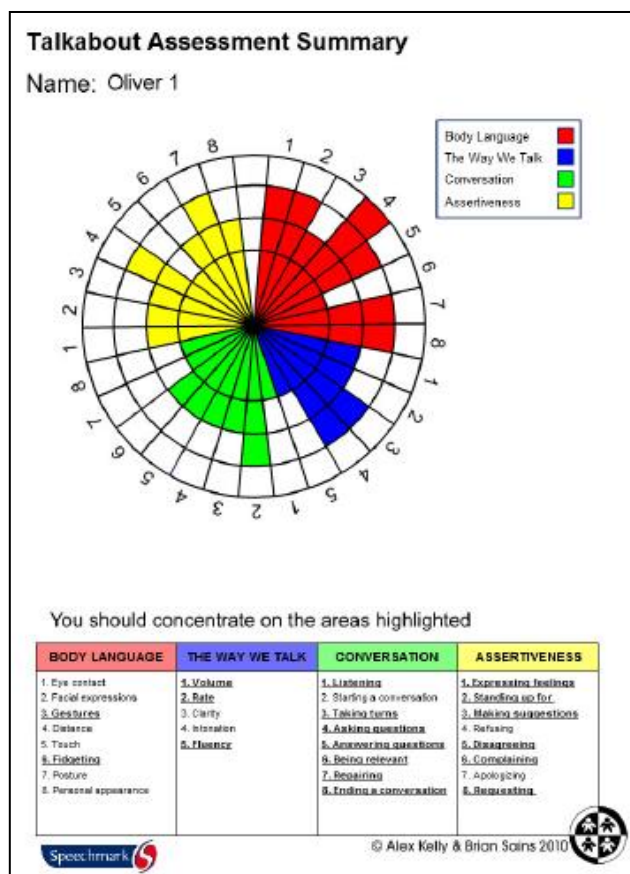
St Davids	Cardiff
Tongwynlais	Cardiff
Marlborough	Cardiff
Rhydypennau	Cardiff
Y Berllan Deg	Cardiff
Stacey	Cardiff
St Paul's	Cardiff
Pentrebane	Cardiff
Moorland	Cardiff
Christ the King	Cardiff
Birchgrove	Cardiff
All Saints	Cardiff
Hawthorn	Cardiff
Lakeside	Cardiff
Llanedeyrn	Cardiff
Windsor Clive	Cardiff
Y Nant Caerau	Cardiff
Georgetown Primary	Blaina Gwent
Bryngwyn Primary	Blaina Gwent
Briery Hill	Blaina Gwent
Coed y Garn	Blaina Gwent
Cwnfelinfach	Caerphilly
Bryn Awel	Caerphilly
Ysgol Bro Sannan	Caerphilly
Pontllanfraith	Caerphilly
Tiryberth	Caerphilly
Overmonnow	Monmouthshire
Cross Ash	Monmouthshire
Our Lady St Michaels	Monmouthshire
Marshfield	Newport
High Cross	Newport
YG Ifor Hael	Newport
Monnow Primary	Newport
Cwmbran RC	Torfaen
Pontymoile	Torfaen
Penygarn	Torfaen
Garnteg	Torfaen
Llantarnam	Torfaen

Below is a table summarizing the progress made by children taking part in the Primary Pilot Project



OLIVER – a primary school pupil

Oliver is year 1 pupil who took part in the pilot study for Talkabout groups in primary. He attended a 12 week group on developing self-awareness and self-esteem. He was assessed using the Talkabout Assessment Tool (2010) pre and post intervention and made good progress as can be seen below:

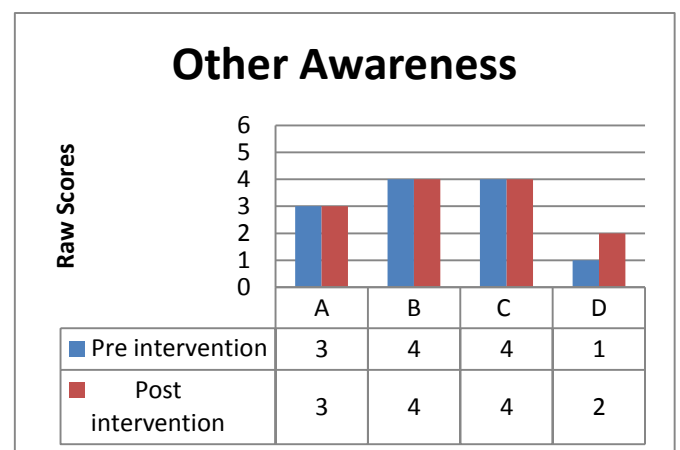
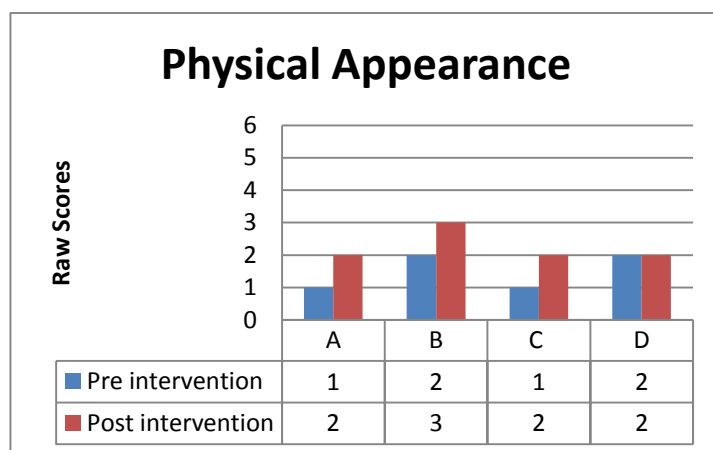


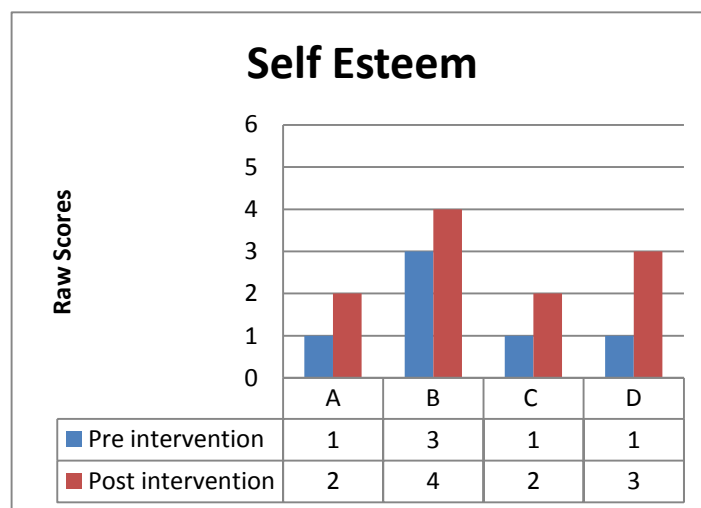
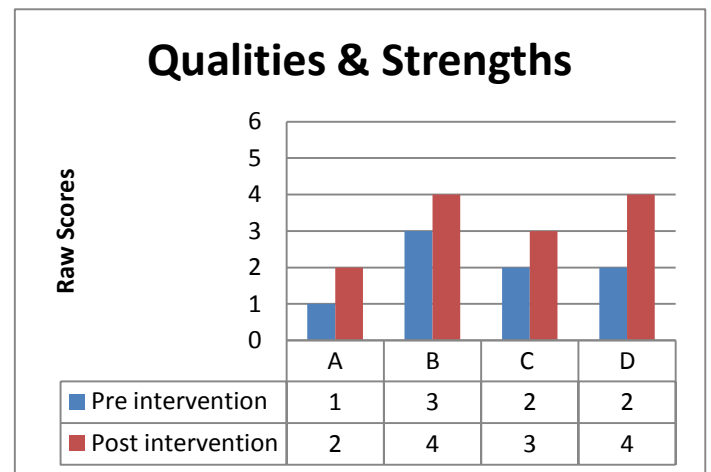
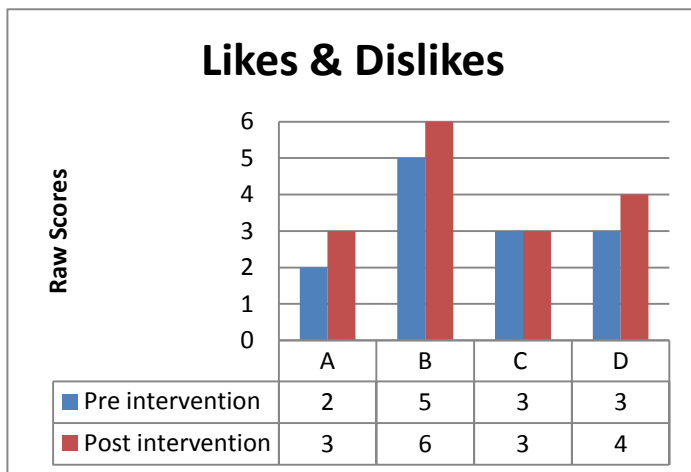
Oliver was also assessed using the Assessment of Self-awareness and self-esteem (2011). The difference between the 2 assessments is remarkable as can be seen from a few of his answers below:

Question asked	Pre assessment	Post assessment
Can you describe your best friend?	<i>'Sam – play with me on yard'</i>	<i>'Sam – blonde short spikey hair which he gels, kind to me, lets me play with him'</i>
Why do you think your friend likes you?	<i>'Forgot'</i>	<i>'We play good games together – we share our toys, we both like racing'</i>
Can you think of something you find difficult?	<i>'Rugby'</i>	<i>'Working on school work. Being lonely – I like to have friends all the time, get bored'</i>
What kind of person are you?	-	<i>'Brave boy, happy, good'</i>

Group of 4 primary school children – year 6.

Children's progress was also assessed within their group. The following 4 children were seen for 12 weeks and pre and post assessment of their self-awareness and self-esteem showed the following results:





Child D showed some good progress in his awareness of his strengths and qualities and his self-esteem. His teacher commented that he was *'very matter of fact about how sad he is'* when he joined the Talkabout group.

He was assessed using the Assessment of Self-awareness and self-esteem (2011) and the difference between some of his answers on the 2 assessments is remarkable:

Question asked	Pre assessment 24/04/13	Post assessment 15/07/13
What kind of person do you think you are?	<i>'I do get nervous at times and I like to play alone'</i>	<i>'I did win fair play award. Most boys fight and I don't. I think I am kind of a good person'</i>
Do you like talking to people?	<i>'Difficult – because if I talk to someone I might say something and it might hurt someone'</i>	<i>'Still a bit difficult but it is getting a bit easier for me'</i>

Conclusion

This Social Skills project has been a resounding success, we achieved & exceeded original targets set.

All schools running the groups & collating data to substantiate the evidence of need & the progress made, now have the resources & knowledge to continue running the groups within their schools for existing & new groups of children & young people.

Training has been delivered to both English & Welsh medium schools. All resources are available in English (as author & trainer is English) however she has agreed that Welsh medium schools can translate and adapt the resources for use in Welsh medium schools.

During the second year of this Project, Afasic Cymru celebrated its 10th Anniversary. To recognise this anniversary an event was held at the Senedd, where we celebrated the success of our work to that date. Presentations were given on the success of the Social Skills groups & acknowledgements were made to recognise that The Big Lottery had funded this successful project.

We have recently submitted a further funding application to the Big Lottery to roll out the teaching of social skills in Primary Schools – the pilot project evidenced improvements in all children attending the groups even though the duration of the pilot was only for 10 weeks, hence greater improvements will be evidenced over a longer period of time.