

Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years

Conditions for learning

The Coalition Government took office on 11 May 2010. This publication was published prior to that date and may not reflect current government policy. You may choose to use these materials, however you should also consult the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk for updated policy and resources.

Excellence and Enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years

Creating a learning culture

Conditions for learning

Professional development materials





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Accompanying video

Creating a learning culture, 'Conditions for learning'

Clip 1 Talking about learning

Clip 2 Earthwatch: learning and teaching in the outdoors

Clip 3 Speaking from experience

Clip 4 Classroom routines

Clip 5 Using displays: Foundation Stage

Clip 6 Models and images

Clip 7 Teacher modelling

General introduction

Helping children to develop as confident, enthusiastic and effective learners is a central purpose of primary education. *Excellence and Enjoyment: a strategy for primary schools* affirms a vision for primary education that provides opportunities for all children to fulfil their potential through a commitment to high standards and excellence within an engaging, broad and rich curriculum. Ofsted reports show that the best primary schools and early-years settings achieve this. In these schools and settings children are engaged by learning that develops and challenges them and excites their imagination. The learning and teaching environment in these schools and settings is shaped by an understanding of what children can achieve and by teaching that meets their individual needs as learners.

A note about the units

This collection of continuing professional development (CPD) materials on conditions for learning is one of six units that focus on important aspects of learning and teaching in the primary years. The six units are organised into three themes:

- Planning and assessment for learning
- Creating a learning culture
- Understanding how learning develops

Although the content has been organised under the headings given above, it often overlaps across units. For example, questioning is one of the key teaching strategies explored in the *Conditions for learning* unit but it is also addressed in other units.

Learning and teaching is a broad and complex area of study. It is important to note, therefore, that **these units represent a starting point for whole-school investigation, action and reflection on**

areas for improvement identified within the school development plan or, within an early-years setting, as part of the management plan or quality assurance process. The introductory guides to *Learning and teaching in the primary years* (May 2004) offered advice and suggestions for identifying areas for development through self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation is an essential element of effective school performance management systems. Such systems make clear links between school improvement,

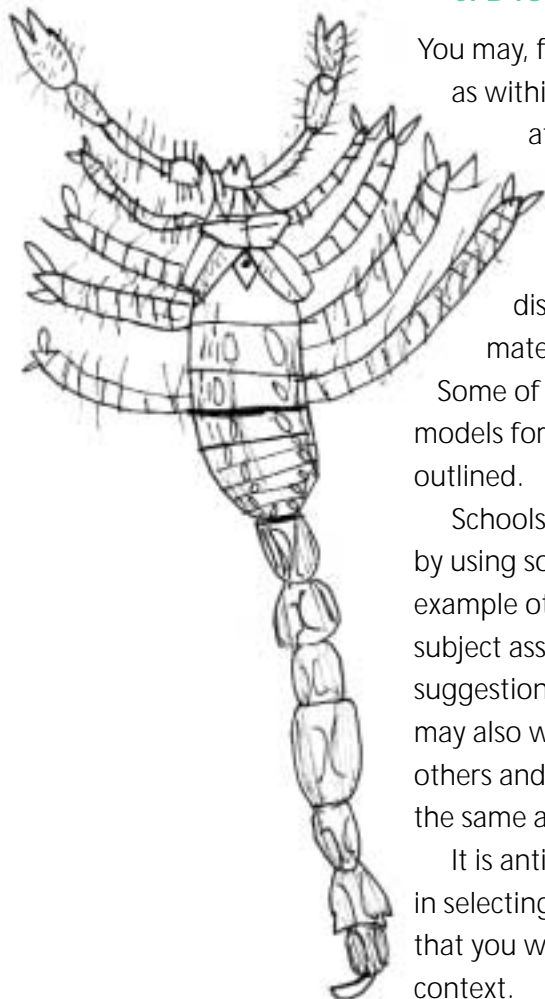




teachers' performance, management objectives and CPD plans and can therefore help to deliver personalised learning for all children. The CPD materials in these units provide opportunities for professional discussions about teachers' work which will support both individual and school development needs.

How to use the units

There is no expectation that schools and settings will use all of the materials in the units. You should use the materials flexibly, to support your school development needs and CPD focus.



You may, for example, decide to combine elements across units as well as within units, or select one or two sections within a unit for attention. In order to facilitate such cross-unit and within-unit usage, a chart itemising the content of each unit is given on the inside back cover of all the units.

Each section of a unit includes materials for staff study, discussion and reflection, along with ideas for how the materials could be used in professional development sessions.

Some of the suggested activities are developed fully to provide models for organising staff sessions; other suggestions are briefly outlined.

Schools and settings may go further than indicated in the materials by using some of the many excellent resources that already exist, for example other Primary National Strategy, QCA and DfES materials, subject association resources and readings and so on. Some suggestions for further resources are given in the units. Enquiry groups may also wish to draw on support from local authority colleagues or others and work with other schools and settings who are focusing on the same areas for development.

It is anticipated that a designated member of staff will take the lead in selecting and running CPD sessions based on these materials and that you will adapt and supplement these materials for your particular context.

While many of the materials are written with primary teachers and practitioners in mind, you will want to include teaching assistants, parents, carers and governors when appropriate.



Introduction to conditions for learning

Most teachers and practitioners would readily agree that helping children develop as confident, enthusiastic and effective learners is one of their major aims. This is because we recognise the central role of learning in our development as individuals and in the development of civilisation and society. Schools and settings can help children to learn specific skills (e.g. become better users of tools, become more fluent readers and so on) but we can also help children become better learners through helping them recognise their own learning strengths and areas for development.

There are many working theories about how children learn (and some of these are explored in the *Classroom community, collaborative and personalised learning* unit). Learning has both affective and cognitive dimensions and in this unit we will be looking at important physical, social and emotional factors that have a profound impact on our behaviour, our motivation and hence our learning. Humans can learn in adverse conditions but there are some fundamental conditions that must be in place if learners are to make the *most* of learning opportunities. At the most basic level of human needs, this means our physical needs for shelter, warmth, food and drink have to be met.

But beyond these basic conditions there are other factors to be considered if learning is to thrive. This unit explores some of the factors that help create the best conditions for learning.



Aims of this unit

The aims of the *Conditions for learning* unit are to consider:

- how different factors interact to create the conditions for learning;
- how schools and settings can create supportive conditions for learning.

CPD ACTIVITY

What factors influence the conditions for learning?

This introductory activity will be useful if you wish to create an overview of factors that affect conditions for learning before moving on to looking at some of these in more detail. Alternatively, you could go straight to any areas of focus that you have already identified in your development plan.

Aim

- To share current beliefs and practice on the factors that create the best conditions for learning.

Materials

- Poster paper.

Organisation

- At a staff meeting, form cross-year groups of three or four. Reflect individually for a few minutes on an occasion when you have been successful or unsuccessful at learning something new (e.g. using a new program on the computer, cooking a new dish for the first time, learning to drive, learning about the life of someone from a radio or TV programme). Think about:
 - the physical and social conditions you were in when you undertook this new learning and any impact these had;
 - what helped you to learn;
 - what hindered your learning;
 - what was easy about the learning;
 - what was difficult about the learning;
 - how you felt during and after the learning experience.
- Share these thoughts in small groups and come up with ten key principles or ideas that facilitate learning.
- Which of these can be applied to children's learning?
- Use the stem 'Children are more likely to learn successfully if:' to write a set of statements about children's learning. Here are some ideas created by a group of teachers doing this activity. How do these compare with the ones on your list?

Children are more likely to learn successfully if they:

- have their basic physical needs met (are not hungry, thirsty, tired, cold, etc.);
- feel unthreatened, secure, safe and valued;
- feel a sense of belonging to the group;
- are engaged and motivated;
- can see the relevance of what they are doing;

- know what outcome is intended;
- can link what they are doing to other experiences;
- understand the task;
- have the physical space and the tools needed;
- have access to the necessary materials;
- are not disrupted or distracted by others;
- can work with others or on their own, depending on the task;
- are guided, taught or helped in appropriate ways at appropriate times;
- can practise;
- can apply the learning in both familiar and new contexts;
- can persevere when learning is hard;
- can manage their emotions if things are not going well;
- recognise that all learners make mistakes and mistakes can help us improve.

- When you have made group lists, create a shared list and discuss any points that arise (e.g. the conditions might vary for different contexts, tasks or groupings). Identify areas where there is a consensus. You might like to write each item in your list on individual sticky notes so you can sort them into the following categories:
 - ethos;
 - physical environment and its organisation;
 - resources and their organisation;
 - emotions;
 - behaviour;
 - cognitive elements, such as understanding;
 - teaching and support;
 - systems and structures in the learning environment.

Next steps

- Creating the conditions for learning requires us to pay attention to all of these aspects, but you will need to identify priority areas if you have not already done so (see page 21 in *Learning and teaching in the primary years introductory guide: supporting school improvement*). You should move from this introductory CPD activity to the section or sections you have identified as your priority for continuing your investigations in this area.



The section on personal, social and emotional development from *Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage*, pages 28–31, and the *Personal, social and health education and citizenship at Key Stages 1 and 2 guidance* (QCA, 2000) should also be read if undertaking the CPD activities in this section.

Research has shown that paying attention to supporting the development of the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that are the focus of this unit can have a positive impact on:

- educational and work success;
- behaviour;
- inclusion;
- learning;
- social cohesion.



A summary of the research evidence for these claims is given in the *Learning and teaching in the primary years* CD-ROM.

This section considers:

- what these key personal, social and emotional aspects of learning consist of;
- why they are important;
- why giving attention to these key aspects of learning is an important element of creating the conditions for learning.

The CPD materials aim to support schools and settings in reflecting on their current practice and in deciding on their next steps in regard to these key aspects of learning.

In the units on 'Understanding how learning develops' we look at progression in these aspects of learning and give case studies showing how they are located within the whole curriculum.

Developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills: a whole curriculum approach has been trialled during 2003 and 2004. It will be available to all schools and settings from April 2005. It contains a wealth of practical teaching suggestions organised around themes such as 'Going for goals', 'New beginnings', 'Bullying' and 'Changes'.

Social, emotional and behavioural skills

Self-awareness

- We are aware that feelings, thoughts and behaviours refer to different things
- We are aware that our feelings vary in intensity
- We know that all feelings are acceptable but that not all behaviours are acceptable
- We recognise that context affects the acceptability of different behaviours
- We recognise we can have conflicting feelings
- We are aware that our feelings affect our behaviours
- We are aware that our thoughts affect our feelings and behaviours
- We can label and talk about feelings, using shared understandings
- We can recognise a feeling in ourselves from external and internal cues

Empathy

- We understand that all people can feel the same range of emotions
- We know that different people will feel different emotions in the same situation
- We understand that our actions affect other people – we can make them feel better or worse
- We can use ‘cues’ to guess other people’s emotions and to imagine how we would feel if we were them
- We can take on another person’s point of view
- We can distinguish between accidental and deliberate actions
- We are able to recognise situations in which we may need to hide our feelings to avoid upsetting others (and those where we should not)
- We are able to support other people, e.g. by making them feel happy and by using ‘good listening’ when they share their feelings – demonstrating the skill of ‘active listening’

Managing feelings

- We understand the difference between ‘impulsive’ and ‘thinking’ behaviour
- We are able to wait for what we want (delaying gratification)
- We know that our thoughts can alter our feelings and behaviour
- We know how to calm down / relax
- We can talk about / share our feelings
- We use positive self-talk / visioning (rehearsing events in the mind)
- We are aware of strategies to solve social and other problems which immediately affect us

Self-motivation

- We know what short- and long-term goals are
- We are able to break goals down into smaller steps
- We know our own strengths and what leads to good outcomes for us
- We recognise what is helpful/unhelpful to us in achieving our goals
- We practise sustained effort and learning
- We have the ability to anticipate obstacles and plan for them
- We are prepared to take responsibility where appropriate
- We are able to recognise excuses and the ways we sometimes try to absolve ourselves of responsibility
- We are confident enough to take appropriate risks
- We are flexible in switching goals when necessary
- We are able to tolerate frustration, e.g. by
 - keeping the big picture in mind
 - believing that we can get there
 - using positive self-talk and visualisation
- We have a range of strategies for 'bouncing back' from mistakes and setbacks
- We are able to enjoy and celebrate our achievements

Social skills

- We take turns and share
- We understand and use non-verbal communication effectively
- We are able to make our communication appropriate to the context
- We are able to talk about feelings effectively
- We respond appropriately to others' emotions
- We know how to be a good listener, using the skills of active listening
- We use 'I feel statements' instead of blame
- We use assertive language / assertiveness skills
- We use skills of negotiation with others
- We know how to compete fairly
- We can deal respectfully with confrontation and have conflict-management skills
- We know how to apologise and make amends (making up with people)
- We know how to be sensitive when giving feedback to others

(From the pilot materials *Developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills: a whole curriculum approach*)

CPD ACTIVITY

Barriers to learning

Aim

- To identify the social, emotional and behavioural skills that are needed for learning.

Materials

- Handout 1.
- Photocopies of *Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage*, pages 28–31.
- Blank paper.

Organisation

- In pairs, take a piece of paper and fold it down the centre. On the left-hand side, list the behaviours you are concerned about in your school or setting because they are barriers to learning.
- On the right-hand side of the paper, write a word to describe the alternative positive behaviour to each of the words you have written on the left.
- Look carefully at the words on the right. How do they relate to handout 1 and pages 28–31 from *Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage*?
- Reflect on the following questions:
 - What have you learned from talking together and completing the activity?
 - What implications does this learning have for what you might do in the classroom or setting?
 - What can you try out or apply in your work over the rest of the week?
- You might like to consider asking the children in your class to complete the same activity.

(From *Developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills: a whole curriculum approach*, training manual)



Part 1 Self-awareness

Self-awareness refers to the capacity we have to understand our own thoughts (cognitions) and emotions – what we think and feel and why we do things. It is a key component of human intelligence as it can influence all aspects of behaviour, including thinking and learning. Self-awareness enables us to reflect on ourselves and on our interaction with others.

The importance of self-awareness in creating the conditions for learning

Self-awareness is a key factor in becoming a successful learner and is also at the heart of social and emotional well-being. In schools and settings, self-awareness can have a number of benefits. It can:

- help children make sense of what they think and feel;
- help children develop the ability to manage, organise and direct their thinking, feeling and learning;
- support achievement and attainment.



Self-knowledge is particularly helpful in planning and decision making. Effective learners are able to plan their learning, and to anticipate what they might need and what obstacles they might meet. They can talk about the way they learn best, but they do so in the self-knowledge that this can be highly variable from topic to topic and from time to time. They also know that their preferred way of learning or 'learning style' is not fixed for life, but is open to change.

Self-awareness is important for self-motivation and for developing a clear sense of identity. Self-aware children understand themselves, their thoughts and feelings and can use this knowledge to make choices about how to behave, how to relate to others and how to initiate their own learning.



Strategies that foster children's self-awareness and self-regulation, develop their capacity for reflection and self-evaluation, and enhance their ability to think about their own thinking and learning in relation to themselves and others, include:

- being given formative assessment of their learning progress and needs;
- receiving feedback on their behaviour;
- being given opportunities to exercise personal choice;
- discussing their own and others' feelings, moods and emotions;
- discussing their own preferences and personal values;
- reflecting on their own learning and behaviour and how it impacts on others (e.g. using recording, their own drawings, ICT, learning logs, autobiographies or journals);
- being provided with an 'emotionally safe' environment in which to talk about their thoughts and feelings (e.g. circle time or community of enquiry);
- evaluating their own skills and abilities in working with others;
- identifying their own criteria for success;
- learning how to mentor and support the learning of others;
- personal goal setting (short-term learning goals, long-term life goals);
- planning how to use their time and resources;
- predicting what they will do well and what they will have difficulty with;
- recognising their own achievements, strengths and weaknesses;
- reflecting on learning styles and strategies – their own and those of others;
- reviewing and evaluating what they and others have done;
- specifying their own learning objectives.

There is a background paper on metacognition (thinking about your own thinking) in the *Learning and teaching in the primary years CD-ROM*.



CPD ACTIVITY

Self-awareness

Aim

- To audit ways to develop self-awareness in children.

Pre-meeting task

- Read the list on page 15 and add any ideas of your own. Identify and note the details of occasions, over one week, during which you have offered such opportunities within your classroom or setting.

Organisation

- At a staff meeting, share some examples of practice and any gaps you have identified in undertaking this 'mini-audit'. As a large group, identify the main areas of well-established practice and areas for development.

Next steps

- Decide on the main areas for further development and the activities you are going to undertake to support children in developing self-awareness.

Other possible CPD activities

- Watch the Conditions for learning video clip 1 'Talking about learning'. This shows children reflecting on how they learn. Discuss the potential for developing self-awareness through such explicit discussions. Try the approach used in the video with children and report back about what you found.
- Revisit the guidelines for PSHE and citizenship and the Foundation Stage guidance for PED. Discuss where self-awareness is included in these. Plan a unit of work that encourages children to engage explicitly with self-awareness.



- Watch the Conditions for learning video clip 2 'Earthwatch: learning and teaching in the outdoors'. This shows children discussing and compiling a record of achievement about their personal progress during a residential visit to an outdoor education centre. Discuss the value of this in developing self-awareness.



Teaching strategies for developing self-awareness

These are a few brief suggestions that you could try in the classroom. Such activities are best developed over time and should be revisited and revised at regular intervals.

What kind of learner are you?

Engage children in discussion about their own learning behaviour, during lessons or sessions and in plenaries. (See also the *Assessment for learning* unit.)

Questions that encourage children to reflect on themselves as learners include, for example:

Question	Self-awareness
What have you learned?	Reflection on learning
What have you achieved?	Reflection on achievement
What do you feel good about / proud of?	Identify reasons to feel positive
What do you like doing/learning?	Think about preferences
What do you do well?	Be aware of strengths
What do you find hard?	Be aware of difficulties/problems
What don't you know/understand?	Identify any obstacles to learning
What do you want to do/improve/learn?	Plan and set targets for the future
What do you need to do to make that possible?	Own responsibility for learning
What help do you need?	Reflection on help that is required or available
What ways helped you learn this?	Reflection on different ways of learning
What ways did you learn best / prefer?	Reflection on the most effective learning style
What do you think of yourself as a learner?	Self-assessment as a learner

Note: Before using such questions you will want to discuss what these questions mean for the children you work with. Does it vary with age? How would you make these ideas accessible to different age groups, and to children with special educational needs, children from different cultural backgrounds and children with English as an additional language (EAL)?

Feelings circles (FS, KS1)

Draw circles on the floor and label them with three feelings – happy, sad, angry. Illustrate the feelings by drawing faces with these expressions.

A child (or pairs if you think they would feel happier) places a teddy or other soft toy in the circle to show how it feels in a given situation. Allow the children some thinking time before giving the teddy to someone to place in the right circle. Example situations could be:

- Teddy loses his favourite toy.
- Teddy's friend goes to live in a new house a long way away.
- Teddy falls over and hurts his knee.
- Teddy's teacher says that he has done a good piece of work.
- Teddy's teacher gives him a big smile.
- Teddy is playing with friends.



(From *Developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills: a whole curriculum approach*, Theme 4 'Feels good')

Recording achievements in learning

Ask children to record their achievements in learning, to help them have a clear and positive view of themselves as learners and to identify key points in their progress. Such a record could be used for any area of the curriculum or area of learning. The example here is one used with a Year 4 class.

Record of achievement in learning

- 1 My target or goal.
- 2 How I know I have achieved it.
- 3 What I have done well.
- 4 What I have worked hard on to improve.
- 5 Who or what has helped me.
- 6 What I am pleased about.
- 7 My next target or goal.

Signed..... Date

Metacognitive challenge

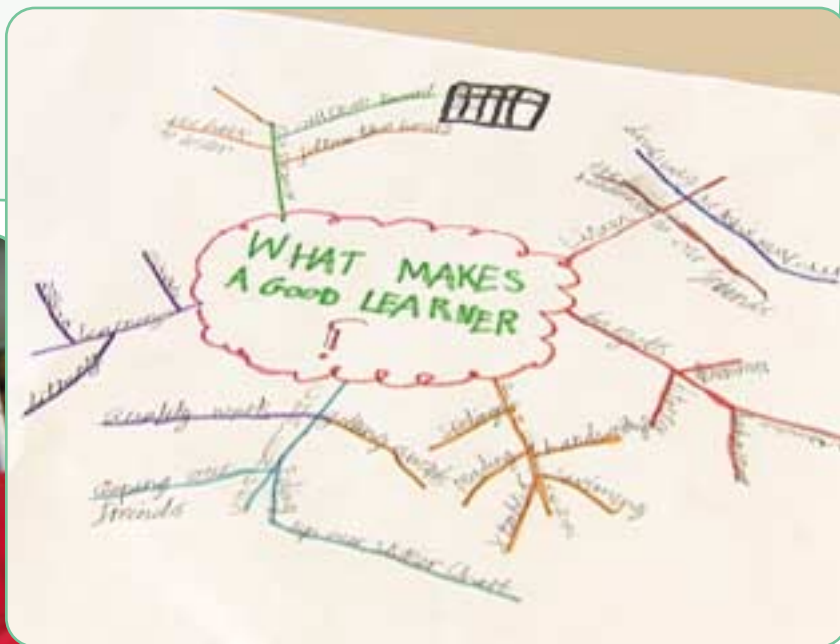
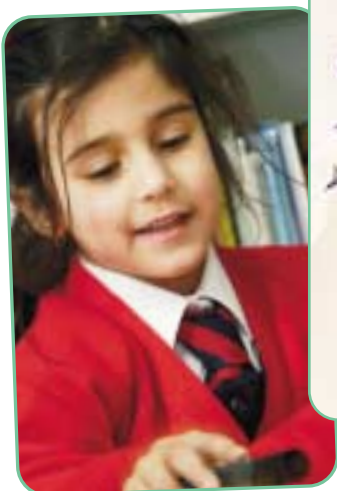
Choose an area of learning in which you want to challenge and foster children's self-awareness and understanding. Pose some challenging questions that involve evaluative thinking about:

- the purposes of learning;
- self as learner;
- the learning environment;
- strategies to improve learning.

The following are some questions that challenge children's understanding of a learning task at the cognitive

and metacognitive level:

- Why is it good for children to learn to ...?
- What kind of ... are you? (e.g. learner, reader, writer, artist)
- What five hints would you give to help a younger child learn to ...?
- What must you do to improve your learning of ...?



Part 2 Managing feelings

Self-awareness makes it possible for us to manage our own feelings and desires. Without self-awareness, we are prone to be more impulsive: to lash out or behave selfishly, for example, without seeing what the consequences might be. If we have some self-awareness, we are more able to recognise how we are feeling, which creates the possibility that we might pause, weigh up the situation more fully and remember what we really want, in the long term.

Understanding a little about strong negative emotions helps us to work with them rather than let them take over and impact on the classroom or setting. There are four key things to remember about feelings:

- Feelings build up over time. A series of small irritations can mean that one more minor upset leads to an over-reaction.
- Emotional memory is extremely powerful and non-specific. If we have had a very powerful emotional experience, an unrelated sight, sound or smell can be linked to the feeling; when we see, hear or smell this again, the same feelings might be elicited.
- If we feel a very strong emotion, such as fear or anger, it takes a long time for our emotional 'temperature' to cool. During this time it is easy to feel the same emotion again.
- Emotions are triggered very quickly, while rational thought is triggered more slowly. Sometimes we have responded to our feelings before we have considered the appropriateness of our actions.

For more information about this you might like to use the Primary Strategy CPD materials 'The importance of emotions in the classroom' (see the *Behaviour* materials detailed on page 86). Both adults and children benefit from learning about their feelings and how to manage them to ensure that feelings enhance learning rather than getting in its way.

The importance of managing feelings in creating the conditions for learning

Managing feelings and 'self-regulation' can work positively in the learning environment in a number of ways. Learning to manage feelings has a direct link with behaviour, which in turn impacts on the conditions for learning created within a classroom or setting. Equally, it



is important to recognise that feelings may be a response to an ethos or conditions for learning which are not sufficiently supportive for some learners.

Managing feelings can help learners achieve what they want by enabling them not to be thrown off course by passing distractions or temptations. Children with fragile self-esteem, for example, can easily be blown off course by a chance remark, and they may therefore have difficulty in bringing an activity to a conclusion or finishing a piece of work.

Children can be taught ways of calming themselves down – though unless they are also cultivating self-awareness, they won't remember to use their strategies in the heat of the moment. Knowing when to hold ground, when to walk away and cool down and when to seek support is very useful in creating a productive learning environment.



Managing feelings is integral to effective learning. Learning involves a range of feelings. There are positive ones, like absorption, satisfaction and pride at a successful conclusion. And there are unpleasant ones, such as frustration, confusion and even fear. Learning always happens at the outer edges of our zone of competence and control, where unexpected things are bound to happen, and where outcomes can be hard to predict. Building up children's resilience in the face of the 'downs' of learning is a vital part of primary education. Learning to regulate their own

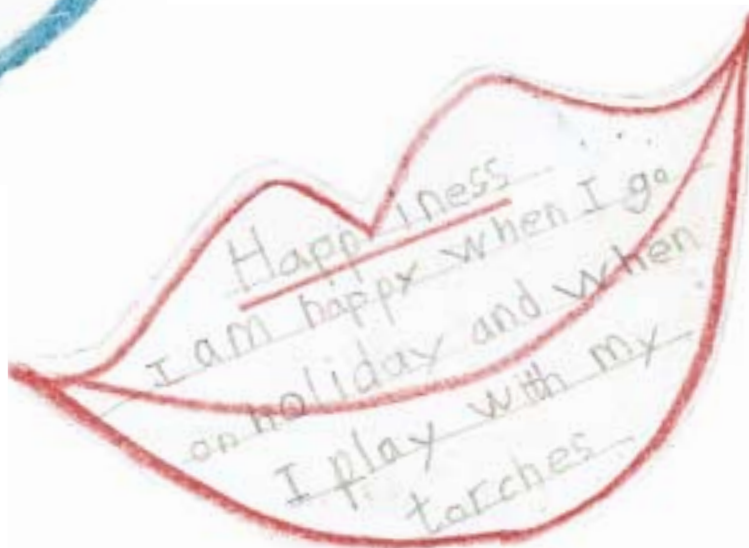
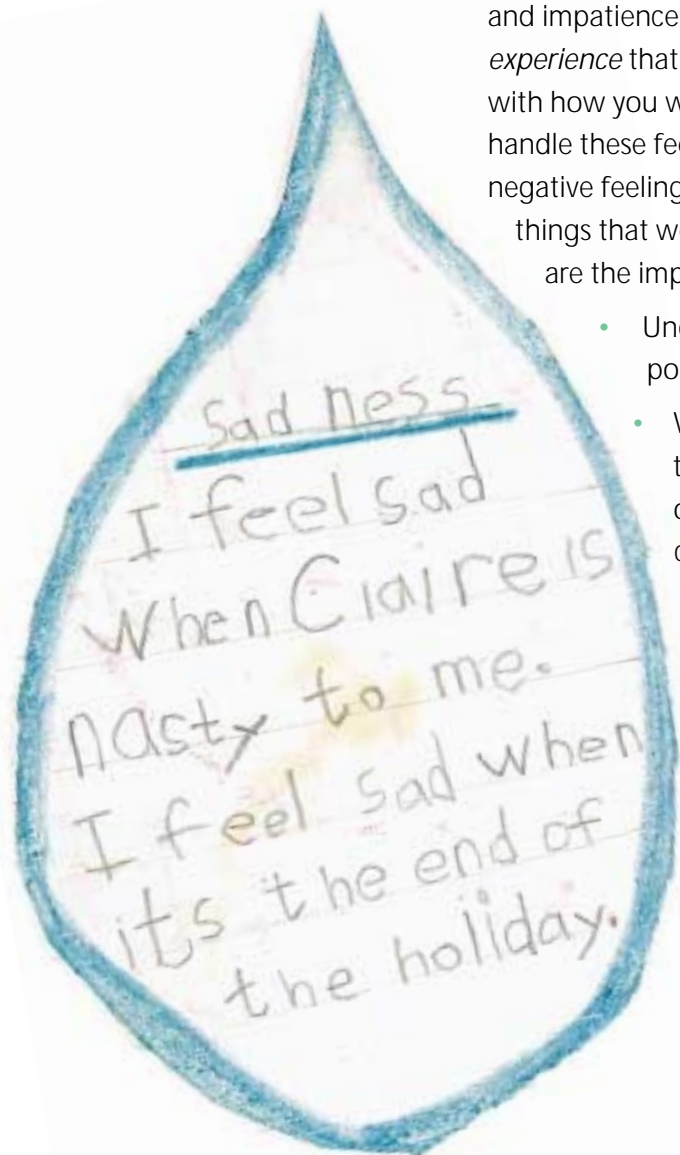
ability to push themselves – to trust their own self-awareness about when to persist and when to take a break – will help them develop as independent learners. Part of professional judgement is to gauge when to intervene and when to resist the impulse to check up on children, and when to refrain from moving learners on to some other task.





Possible CPD activities

- Focus on the feelings involved in learning, especially those usually considered to be 'negative': frustration, confusion, disappointment and impatience. In pairs, add other feelings *from your own experience* that are involved in learning. Compare yourself now with how you were 10 or 20 years ago, in terms of your ability to handle these feelings. Are you now more able to cope with negative feelings? What has helped you? Would it be the same things that would help the children, or are they different? What are the implications for the classroom?
 - Undertake the same activity, but this time focus on positive feelings involved in learning.
 - Watch video clip 2, 'Earthwatch: learning and teaching in the outdoors'. This shows children overcoming feelings of fear and apprehension about climbing and abseiling. Discuss the conditions which enabled them to manage their feelings.
 - Revisit the guidelines for PSHE and citizenship in the National Curriculum and *Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage* for personal, social and emotional development. Discuss where these guidelines include self-awareness. Plan a unit of work for each phase or key stage which encourages children to explicitly engage with managing emotions.







Teaching strategies for developing the ability to manage our feelings

These are a few brief suggestions that you could try in the learning environment. Such activities are best developed over time and should be revisited and revised at regular intervals.

Discussing distractions

Involve the children in discussions on 'How we can manage distractions'. Discuss what happens to them when they are trying to concentrate but get distracted. What kinds of things distract them? Where and when do they find themselves most distractible? Are they better able to concentrate in the mornings, the afternoons or the evenings? What can they do to make their environment less distracting? (Some things they can control; others they will just have to put up with.) Build up a list in the classroom of 'Ways we can keep our concentration'.

Recognising emotions

Get the children to identify feelings that they find difficult to manage. Encourage them to notice:

- *when* these feelings arise most strongly;
- *how* they express or deal with them;
- *what* the consequences are;
- *whether* there is a more effective way of expressing their feelings.



Explosion

This activity is taken from *Developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills: a whole curriculum approach*, Theme 2 'Getting on and falling out'.

Show the children that you have a balloon and a pump. Explain that you are together going to tell a story about a girl called Annie who could not control her anger.

Explain that you will start the story off and that each child will then contribute a sentence to the story that tells about something that goes wrong or makes Annie more and more angry.

Each time something makes Annie angry, you (or a volunteer child) will put more air into the balloon, which is Annie's 'anger store'.

Once upon a time there was a girl called Annie. Annie spent all her time being angry – everything in the world seemed to make her angry, even things that other people liked. One day Annie got out of bed and there were no cornflakes left ... She was ANGRY!
(Pump air into the balloon)

Then she went upstairs to get washed and the water was cold ...

The toothpaste all squirted out everywhere ...

She missed the bus ...

Her friend ignored her on the way to school ...

She was late because ...

The children take over the story, contributing one sentence each (it could be something that makes them angry) until the balloon bursts.

Teaching point

Anger is cumulative – sometimes it is one little thing that tips us over the edge.
Sometimes it is one big thing.



Part 3 Motivation

Intrinsic motivation involves knowing what you want to achieve and being willing to pursue those goals, even in the face of difficulties. To create high levels of intrinsic motivation, teachers and practitioners have to help build children's self-efficacy. Children with high levels of intrinsic motivation usually attribute failure to lack of effort rather than lack of ability on their part. Recognising that one can learn from setbacks and mistakes is important.

Self-awareness is the key that enables us to construct and pursue our personal goals with skill and with sensitivity to the goals of others. Resolving priority clashes between goals is an important skill to develop. Sometimes 'deferring gratification' is the intelligent thing to do, and having some techniques to help is useful. At other times, however, seizing an unexpected opportunity and being willing to reorder your goals as you go along is important.

The importance of motivation in creating the conditions for learning

Effective learners need to be able to identify the goals they want to pursue. Being good at regulating their own motivation helps children in school in at least three ways:

- The ability to remember *why* they are persevering with an externally set goal may help children achieve the understanding and strive for the outcome that they want.
- Children who are willing to reorganise their goals in response to adult suggestions or demands are easier to teach, and will achieve more in educational terms.
- Knowing when to stick with a difficult project that will achieve a goal and when to give it up because it is proving more trouble than it is worth is valuable in terms of children's emotional health and well-being.

Developing the habits of self-motivation is an essential ingredient of 'learning to learn'. If children are to become better at learning, they have to want to learn, which means they have to see the importance of learning to learn. They need to develop a certain independence, in which they *enjoy* setting and working towards their own learning goals, developing their own skills of research, and managing both time and resources. Above all, self-motivated learners are curious: they are not afraid of challenge, and they like asking questions to which they do not have a ready answer.



External motivation

The value of using external rewards to bolster motivation is a debatable issue. Some research shows that external rewards do not promote a learning culture. Rewards such as stickers may be enjoyed by the children, but a common effect is that they strive for the reward not the satisfaction of the achievement. Research also shows that although teachers and practitioners intend to distribute rewards fairly (and think they have), it is often gifted and talented children, children with special educational needs and disruptive children who receive a disproportionate number of rewards. There may therefore be a negative impact on many in the class who receive rewards relatively infrequently.

The issue may be somewhat different when it comes to rewarding appropriate *behaviour* that supports learning. Intrinsic motivation is what we seek to promote in children as it encompasses mature

emotional and/or social behaviour. An individual who is intrinsically motivated is either able to set long-term personal goals (e.g. 'I will practise my handwriting every evening as I want to be able to write neatly and quickly') or sees activities being worth while in their own right (e.g. 'I read about history because I find it really interesting'). Such motivation, however, requires the ability to defer gratification and as such is a behaviour which is linked to the stage the child has reached in the development of their social, emotional and behavioural skills.

Many of the children who find it difficult to behave appropriately in the classroom are still developing their social, emotional and behavioural skills and are therefore at a developmental stage when they may need the support of external motivators such as praise, notes home, stars, stickers, commendations in assembly and so on to help them learn and sustain appropriate behaviour for learning.



CPD ACTIVITY

Achieving goals

Aims

- To consider:
 - motivation towards goals;
 - the barriers to achieving these goals;
 - implications for learners.

Materials

- Sets of blank cards or sticky notes.
- Poster paper or flipchart.

Organisation

- At a staff meeting, each individual makes a list of about a dozen current goals for improving the conditions for learning in the school or their class and then writes a brief description of each goal on a card or sticky note.
- Next, rank these in the following different ways:
 - In order of importance. How much do you value attaining each goal?
 - According to their timescale. Which goals are the very long-term projects? Which goals have a definite end-point?
- Share your reflections with a partner and identify one goal each that you seem to be having trouble with.
- Then discuss with your partner the barriers to achieving this goal and make a plan for how to get there. This might include clearly stating the goal, identifying sub-goals and identifying ways to get started.
- Use the following question as a prompt for discussion:
 - What kinds of problem with prioritisation do we experience, and what structures are in place to help support and clarify such clashes?
- Discuss whether having the opportunity to explicitly identify and prioritise goals was helpful to you. What are the implications for your work with children?

Next steps

- As a group, identify key goals that you have set from this activity. You might like to write them on a large sheet of paper and display them in the staff room.
- Then agree some actions to achieve your goals over the next few weeks.
- At a subsequent meeting, discuss what you have done or found out. Discuss what helped you to keep working on your goals and what hindered you. How does this help you to understand more about children's motivation? Discuss what your next steps will be.



Other possible CPD activities



- To prompt discussion about the circumstances in which external motivators might be needed, share any examples of things you do because of external motivators and things you are intrinsically motivated to do. The point of the activity is to suggest that in some circumstances even adults may require external motivators for some activities, for example promising yourself a ‘treat’ of some kind for completing a difficult or unpleasant task (‘I’ll sit down with a glass of wine / cup of coffee / chocolate biscuit when I’ve finished doing my reports / bathing the dog / cleaning the oven’).
- Watch the Conditions for learning video clip 1 ‘Talking about learning’. This shows children involved in a discussion about how they learn. Discuss the potential for developing children’s awareness of motivation through such explicit discussions.
- Ask children in your class what motivates them. Share these insights in a staff meeting. Discuss how you balance external and intrinsic motivation and help children develop intrinsic motivation.
- Consider the complexity of the relationships between home and school or setting and how this impacts on your relationships with the children. Might this have an impact on their motivation and learning? What are the implications for you and your school or setting in developing links with families? Are there any particular implications for children who:
 - come from different cultural backgrounds;
 - and learning EAL;
 - are refugees or asylum seekers;
 - have profound or complex needs;
 - are engaged with a range of professional agencies?How can positive home–school relationships be used to strengthen a child’s motivation to learn?



- Watch the Conditions for learning video clip 2 ‘Earthwatch: learning and teaching in the outdoors’. This shows children as they prepare for, undertake and debrief on some challenging activities. Discuss the factors that supported their motivation to overcome the challenges posed during the climbing and abseiling session and also when coping with adverse weather conditions on the seashore.

Teaching strategies for developing motivation

These are a few brief suggestions that you could try in the learning environment. Such activities are best developed over time and should be revisited and revised at regular intervals.

Build the theme of 'Going for goals' into units of work (e.g. biographies of scientists, explorers and other individuals from diverse cultural, ethnic and gender backgrounds who have overcome great difficulties in achieving their goals). Discuss with children the things they would like to change, or the learning projects they would like to undertake, but which they don't get around to. Elicit their reasons. Too much effort? Not enough time? Fear of failure? Not enough support?

Invite a visitor who has achieved something that they can demonstrate to the children – for example, learning to juggle – to speak to the children. Ask the children to plan some questions to ask (e.g. 'Could you do it when you were little?', 'Is it hard to learn?'). Make sure the visitor is briefed in advance.

Key points to draw out might be that the skill took time to learn and that practice and persistence were necessary. Record the visit in photographs for a display or class book.

Make time at the start of the week for children to bring up questions they would like to pursue. What would they like to find out about? Make a 'wonder wall' of the things we are wondering about. Create time for a child to nominate their favourite question for the rest of the class to discuss. Ask children to research answers for homework.

Respond promptly and with genuine interest to children's shared discoveries, information and news. Provide a role-play area resourced with materials reflecting the children's family lives and communities, and give the children time, space and materials to collaborate with one another in different ways. Ensure that children and adults make opportunities to listen to each other and explain their actions. Ensure that planning provides children with opportunities to initiate their own learning and activities, and that adults respond sensitively to those child-initiated activities.



Part 4 Empathy

Empathy is the ability to step outside your own goals, habits and beliefs, and put yourself in other people's shoes. It is the ability to enrich your communication and perception by looking at the world from different perspectives. Very young children look at the world from their own viewpoint but they rapidly develop the ability to build models in their minds of how things look and feel to others. Just as their own actions reveal some of what they want, think and feel, so, they learn, do other people's. By picking up these clues, they find they are more able to link their own world with the worlds of others – including those from diverse backgrounds who may have differing beliefs, practices or priorities. With increasing sensitivity, they are able to detect other people's responses to what they are saying and doing, and thus to anticipate and defuse potential conflicts, and create more effective forms of collaboration and partnership. For some children, however, for example those on the autistic spectrum, this can be particularly difficult. It is important to be aware of these differences in the children we teach.

The importance of empathy in creating the conditions for learning

Empathy impacts on children's lives in schools and settings in a number of ways:

- It is a tool that enables children to play and work well with one another. Encouraging one child to imagine what another child felt like when experiencing an antisocial or prejudicial act is a familiar way of trying to resolve conflict and develop a harmonious working atmosphere.
- It plays a significant role in enabling young people to establish relationships. Instead of being at the mercy of others, children can be helped to see what they can do themselves to create more enjoyable friendships and relationships.

When it comes to learning to learn, empathy has an important role to play. In history, drama and literature, understanding a complex situation demands an empathic appreciation of the positions of different participants. In science, the ability to think what it might be like to be a hermit crab, or even (as Einstein famously did) to imagine what the world would look like if you were riding on a ray of light, enriches the learning experience and offers new insights into information.

One form of empathy is especially important for learners. It is the ability to pick up and reflect back the physical and mental habits of those around them. Neuroscientists have found that our brains are built to imitate, and it is this tendency that enables children first to mimic, and then to internalise, the ways of talking, arguing, remembering and thinking of more experienced people. Making good choices about who to accept as learning models enables young people to keep on expanding their repertoire of positive learning skills and dispositions.

Learning from others is fundamental to education. Empathy allows us to understand the intentions and meanings of other people as well as to predict what is likely to happen next. It also allows us to understand the value that others place on the different elements of learning.

Possible CPD activities

- Consider how the school or setting can improve the quality of its *listening* at all levels. In a staff discussion, try playing the game where each person who wants to speak has to restate what the previous speaker said, to that person's satisfaction, before they can have their say. It can reveal strikingly the extent to which we hear what we *think* people are saying and what we *want* or *expect* them to say, rather than what they actually said.
- 
- Watch the Understanding how learning develops video clip 1 'The launch of the SS *Great Britain*', which is a history lesson about the launching of the ship. What learning and teaching experiences enable the children to speak from the viewpoint of another person?
 - In small groups, explore the potential of different subjects or areas of learning to stretch children's powers of empathic imagination. Aim to come up with at least two suggestions for every year group and every subject. Consider any particular area of relevance to your school or setting (e.g. asylum, migration).



Teaching strategies for developing empathy

These are a few brief suggestions that you could try in the learning environment. Such activities are best developed over time and should be revisited and revised at regular intervals.

Foundation Stage example

Involve the children in identifying issues and finding solutions, and in so doing encourage the children to think about those issues from the viewpoint of others. This can be achieved through affirming and praising positive behaviours, and explaining that this makes children and adults feel happier.

Example

The group were discussing how they would rearrange the nursery to make it safe for a visually impaired child about to join them. Alex complained about having to move the block area to a smaller space but said 'I won't say that to Kirsty or she might think we don't want her to come and join our group.'

See *Speaking, listening, learning* for suggestions for activities such as conscience alley, thought tracking and hot-seating that can be used across the curriculum.

Briefly introduce a character to the children, giving a few traits such as 'generous', 'kind', 'awkward', 'scruffy'. Ask them to imagine what else they can say about the character. Have a discussion about the basis on which they made their predictions. When are we most likely to be right and when are we wrong? Is it a good thing that we sometimes jump to conclusions about other people? Ask the children if they can think of a time when they made a wrong assumption about somebody. What happened? Get them to write a story about someone who is always jumping to conclusions about other people, and the kinds of trouble it gets them into.



In 'circle time', play a game in which you ask a child a question and they have to answer as if they were the person on their right. Start with simple physical questions like 'What are you wearing?' Then progress to other information that the children would be expected to know about each other, such as 'Have you got any brothers or sisters?' Then try questions that they may not know the answers to, and get them to use their imaginations to make something up. When they understand how to play the game, get the children to ask each other questions.

Ask the children to envisage what the classroom would look like from a different viewpoint, for example if they were:

- a fly;
- a child newly arrived from another country;
- a visitor from another planet who had never seen Earth or humans before.

Get the children to set 'empathy challenges' such as this for each other.

Rounds

With all the children gathered on the carpet, explain that Teddy (or another soft toy) is feeling excited. Start by saying 'I think Teddy is feeling excited because his granny is coming to see him tonight' and then pass the teddy round the circle.

As the teddy is passed round, each child should try to think of a reason why Teddy is feeling excited.

I think Teddy is feeling excited because ...

When it gets back to you, ask Teddy why he is feeling excited and then choose one of the ideas from the group.

(From *SEBS*, Theme 4 'Comfortable feelings')



Part 5 Social skills

Each of the other four personal, social and emotional aspects of learning examined in this unit – empathy, self-awareness, motivation and managing feelings – contributes to the development of a broad, varied repertoire of social skills.

There are countless skills that enable us to work with and get along with others. Most children are supported to learn them by their family rituals of feeding, bathing, dressing and so on. They pick social skills up without thinking, simply because they are born wanting to know how to join the society that surrounds them. It is important to be aware of the variance in such norms among children from diverse cultural backgrounds and the need to work proactively with children, parents and carers, and the local community, in order to resolve any potential cultural clashes arising from differing expectations.

The importance of social skills in creating the conditions for learning



In the social situation of school or an early-years setting, children may need to be supported to learn more complex social interactions. For some children it will require a good deal of unlearning, and attempting to override previous learning. New skills, such as turn-taking and sharing, may have to be learned.



It is here that the deliberate naming and coaching of 'acceptable' social behaviour has its place. Educational achievement and social development may be jeopardised for those who have difficulty making this adaptation. Explicit attention to social skills enhances the emotional well-being of anyone who has to mix harmoniously with others.

Broadening the range of social skills is also important in the context of learning to learn. Much learning, though not all, takes place in social situations, and effective learners need



to possess the social skills that allow them to learn in public and develop as learners. These include:

- knowing the local rules of argument and debate;
- having the courage and the skill to articulate and defend a minority opinion;
- knowing when to talk, and what to talk about, and when to hold back and listen;
- being able to share information and ideas clearly;
- knowing how your strengths complement those of the team you are working and learning with;
- being able to take feedback without getting upset, and to give feedback without causing offence;
- choosing the right people to learn with, and therefore *from*;
- being able to join or lead a group;
- being able to apologise;
- knowing how to take turns fairly;
- knowing when and how to interrupt someone else's conversation;
- knowing how to resolve conflict;
- being able to take part in a reflective discussion on the processes and methods of learning that are being used, to take stock and to change tack if necessary.

All of these social skills of learning are capable of being developed in classrooms. Adults can model ways of talking, thinking and acting. The skills of turn-taking, explaining and listening can be modelled and explicitly encouraged in 'circle time', for example. By varying the kinds of learning groupings that children take part in, their repertoire of social skills becomes broadened.

CPD ACTIVITY

The hidden curriculum

Aim

- To consider any hidden curriculum gaps between the social skills we value in theory and the social skills we practise.

Materials

- Copies of the values and/or principles of your school or setting.
- Sets of blank cards or sticky notes.
- Poster paper.

Organisation

- At a staff meeting, consider the social skills that are mentioned explicitly or implicitly in policy and/or curriculum documents. Write on sticky notes some ways in which these are manifest in your school or setting and ways in which they may be denied or undermined. For example, 'We say we value careful listening as a social skill. We practise this by having well-developed speaking and listening activities in the classroom, but I don't think we, as adults, always listen to the children very well. We encourage children to work collaboratively but do we model this in our work with other adults?'
- Share initial thoughts as a whole group and discuss any disparities between the social skills that are valued in theory and those that are reinforced in practice.
- Decide how you will find out if these impressions are true. As a whole staff, you might decide to do some observations of the way staff talk to children as they interact with them during breaks and mealtimes. Or you might decide to ask the children. The important thing is the thinking and questioning you will do, as a group of professionals, as you try to generate more detailed 'self-awareness' about your social norms and practices.
- When you have collected evidence, return for further discussion on:
 - What are the social skills that we model?
 - Are there any areas where we could reduce any slippage between our rhetoric and reality?
 - What 'social skills' would we like the children to develop further?
 - How will we do this consistently?

Next steps

- As a group, identify key ideas that you have discussed during this activity. You might like to write them on a large sheet of paper and display them in the staff room.
- How might you apply the ideas you have learned in your work over the next few weeks? Agree some practical steps and how you will monitor and share the impact of these. Some brief suggestions and further resources are given on the next few pages.
- When you next meet, discuss what you have done or found out and what you will do next.



Other possible CPD activities

- Giving and receiving feedback are important social skills for professionals, especially those who want to learn. If you do not do this already, arrange visits to other classrooms, preferably a different age group, to observe how social skills are supported and discover any areas for possible development. This should be followed by a conversation about the visit between the people involved. In a meeting beforehand, work in fours to produce guidelines that will ensure that such conversations will be of maximum benefit to both partners. What is it you are trying to achieve? What kinds of observation are best avoided? Should the observer offer all their perceptions, or should they hold back and just ask questions? Agree a set of guidelines as a whole staff. After the peer observation has taken place, report back to the staff as a whole. Decide what form this report should take.

Background reading 2, 'What research and practice tell us about peer coaching', on pages 27–29 of the introductory guide *Continuing professional development* may be helpful when undertaking this activity. You could follow this activity by discussing how you develop children's skills in giving and receiving feedback with one another and the kind of guidelines and ground rules you have in place in classrooms. There are examples of these on pages 64 and 65 of the *Assessment for learning* unit.

- Track a small number of children throughout the day, observing when they use social skills to good effect and when they seem to lack the social skills to deal with a situation. Do any patterns emerge? What are the implications of this and what can you do about it?
- Watch the video clip of Year 4 children having a 'jigsaw group' discussion after they have undertaken group research into different aspects of Celtic life. (This is on the video that accompanies *Speaking, listening, learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2, professional development materials*.) As you watch, concentrate on the range of social skills the children are using, such as giving feedback in a positive manner. Consider what experience the children need to have had to encourage these skills.

Teaching strategies for developing social skills

These are a few brief suggestions that you could try in the learning environment. Such activities are best developed over time and should be revisited and revised at regular intervals.

Children learn different social skills in different kinds of group – so deliberately vary the kinds of group that they do their learning in: friendship pairs, non-friendship pairs, first-language pairs, same or different gender, larger groups and so on. Get the children to report back on how they found each way of working and reflect on any difficulties they had in collaborating. They can keep a record in their 'learning journal' if they are keeping one.



Regularly ensure 'random pairs' work together, so that over time everyone has an opportunity to get to know everyone else in the class. Use pictures cut in half, sentence halves that match up or games like 'Find someone who also ...' occasionally to add a sense of fun to the pairing process.

(From *SEBS*, Theme 1 'Ongoing activities')



Discuss with your children the possibility of setting up a 'buddy stop' in the playground, where children can wait if they don't have anyone to play with. Discuss different ways of approaching children at the buddy stop (e.g. 'Shall I sit with you?', 'Would you like to play?', 'How are you feeling?'). Emphasise the importance of including everyone and how nice it feels to be included and to include.



Secret friends

- Remind children of the class charter and the importance of 'being kind to each other'.
- Write the names of each child on a strip of paper. Put them in a tub and ask each child to draw out one name. The children should keep the name secret. (If a child draws their own name you will have to swap it with someone else's name.)
- Explain that this is a very special guessing game. Explain that the name they have drawn is special and that they are going to be that person's secret friend. They should do three kind things for their secret friend over the week. The children must keep their names secret.
- At the end of the week the children should tell the class who they think their secret friend was and why they think this.

(From *SEBS*, Theme 1 'Ongoing activities')

