

# Seeing Eye-to-eye: Evaluation of Family SEAL, a school-home learning partnership

Chris Downey – Lecturer in Education, University of Southampton  
Clare Williams – SEAL Consultant, Dorset Primary Strategy Team

Presented at ICSEI 2009  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2:45pm, Vancouver, Canada



# Introduction

## Introducing SEAL

- SEAL – Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
  - Self-awareness
  - Managing feelings
  - Empathy
  - Motivation
  - Social Skills
- “Social, emotional and behavioural skills underlie almost every aspect of school, home and community life, including effective learning and getting on with other people. They are fundamental to school improvement.” DfES (2005: 7)

## Introducing SEAL – universal provision

- “A broad range of evidence is now available to support claims for the effectiveness of work to develop children’s social, emotional and behavioural skills, in a number of areas:
  - greater educational and work success;
  - improvements in behaviour;
  - increased inclusion;
  - improved learning;
  - greater social cohesion.
  - ...improved academic performance.”

DfES (2005: 8)

## Family SEAL – a school-home learning partnership

- “Family SEAL is designed to make explicit links between the support parents and carers provide their children when they are developing the social, emotional and behavioural skills and school based work.”
- “Family SEAL is about collaboration and sharing ideas with recognition and respect for the beliefs and values of the participants while understanding that a child will need certain skills if he or she is to cope with the complexity of the social environment of the school.” (DfES 2006:5)

# The potential of school-home learning partnerships

- Desforges literature review for the DfES
  - “In these studies parental involvement accounts for at least 10% of the variance in achievement net of social class. This makes parental involvement a much bigger factor than school effects in shaping achievement.” (Desforges & Abouchaar 2003: 106)
- EPPE Effective Provision of Pre-school education
  - Home Learning Environment (HLE), after age, was the variable with the strongest effect on cognitive development (Melhuish *et al* 2001: 9)
  - 14 case study sites (Siraj-Blatchford *et al* 2002) “Our findings show that it is the (parental) involvement of learning activities in the home that is most closely associated with better cognitive attainment in the early years.”
  - Especially beneficial when parents and professionals negotiated a continuity of experience for the children.

## Family SEAL structure

- 2 part structure
  - workshop with parents/carers led by school based facilitators (1 hour)
  - structured interactive session with children and parents to apply principles covered in workshop (1 hour)
- Materials provided by DCSF SEAL programme
  - schools have autonomy over how the materials are used
- Dorset pilot of 6 primary phase schools
  - half-day training for facilitators (increased and links to experienced schools)
  - support from external facilitator trained in working with parents (not retained in most cases)

# Family SEAL Workshops

- Introductory Workshop



- New Beginnings



- Getting on and Falling out



- Going for Goals 1



- Going for Goals 2

- Good to be me



- Relationships



- Changes



# Parent workshop



# Interactive session



# Data analysis: Family SEAL impact

## Pilot evaluation

- Proximal and distal benefits (Humphrey 2008)
- Focus on proximal benefits only for pilot
- Evaluation of student social and emotional skills
  - parent and teacher evaluations
  - pre and post Family SEAL
  - for concern and non-concern students
  - ANOVA/t-test analyses (adjusted for gender)
- Survey of parent pre Family SEAL expectations and post Family SEAL evaluations

## Emotional Literacy Checklists

- Surveys developed by Southampton School Psychology Service (Faupel 2003)
  - Pre date SEAL but, like SEAL, based on similar five factor model of social & emotional competence
  - Self awareness (SA), self-regulation (SR), motivation (Mot), empathy (Emp), social skills (SSk)
  - 20/25 statements about the child
  - Respond on a 4 point scale (very true, somewhat true, not really true, not true at all)
  - Statements are linked to one of the 5 factors (construct validity via EFA, scale reliability via Cronbach's alpha)

# Pre Family SEAL mean scores for concern and non- concern children

**Descriptive Statistics**

|          | Concern | Mean  | Std. Deviation | N  |
|----------|---------|-------|----------------|----|
| PrePSA%  | 0       | .6638 | .11409         | 29 |
|          | 1       | .5525 | .09662         | 20 |
|          | Total   | .6184 | .11976         | 49 |
| PrePSR%  | 0       | .5707 | .16395         | 29 |
|          | 1       | .4400 | .11309         | 20 |
|          | Total   | .5173 | .15797         | 49 |
| PrePMot% | 0       | .6810 | .12984         | 29 |
|          | 1       | .5225 | .13424         | 20 |
|          | Total   | .6163 | .15220         | 49 |
| PrePEmp% | 0       | .7155 | .10947         | 29 |
|          | 1       | .7125 | .12657         | 20 |
|          | Total   | .7143 | .11547         | 49 |
| PrePSSk% | 0       | .8448 | .11208         | 29 |
|          | 1       | .8175 | .12904         | 20 |
|          | Total   | .8337 | .11876         | 49 |

**Descriptive Statistics**

|          | Concern | Mean  | Std. Deviation | N  |
|----------|---------|-------|----------------|----|
| PreTSA%  | 0       | .7708 | .12270         | 33 |
|          | 1       | .6587 | .09393         | 26 |
|          | Total   | .7214 | .12355         | 59 |
| PreTSR%  | 0       | .7917 | .16949         | 33 |
|          | 1       | .5841 | .19760         | 26 |
|          | Total   | .7002 | .20851         | 59 |
| PreTMot% | 0       | .8125 | .13532         | 33 |
|          | 1       | .6538 | .15636         | 26 |
|          | Total   | .7426 | .16417         | 59 |
| PreTEmp% | 0       | .8617 | .15528         | 33 |
|          | 1       | .6875 | .12748         | 26 |
|          | Total   | .7850 | .16709         | 59 |
| PreTSSk% | 0       | .9167 | .09716         | 33 |
|          | 1       | .8149 | .12560         | 26 |
|          | Total   | .8718 | .12085         | 59 |

**Pre Family SEAL parent evaluations  
 of students' emotional literacy scores**

**Pre Family SEAL teacher evaluations  
 of students' emotional literacy scores**

# Post Family SEAL mean scores for concern and non- concern children

**Descriptive Statistics**

|           | Concern | Mean  | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-----------|---------|-------|----------------|----|
| PostPSA%  | 0       | .7000 | .08515         | 21 |
|           | 1       | .6056 | .10130         | 18 |
|           | Total   | .6564 | .10335         | 39 |
| PostPSR%  | 0       | .6262 | .18750         | 21 |
|           | 1       | .5583 | .17678         | 18 |
|           | Total   | .5949 | .18346         | 39 |
| PostPMot% | 0       | .7167 | .14944         | 21 |
|           | 1       | .6222 | .12859         | 18 |
|           | Total   | .6731 | .14638         | 39 |
| PostPEmp% | 0       | .7262 | .12002         | 21 |
|           | 1       | .7250 | .12157         | 18 |
|           | Total   | .7256 | .11914         | 39 |
| PostPSSk% | 0       | .8619 | .13684         | 21 |
|           | 1       | .8111 | .13235         | 18 |
|           | Total   | .8385 | .13546         | 39 |

**Descriptive Statistics**

|           | Concern | Mean  | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-----------|---------|-------|----------------|----|
| PostTSA%  | 0       | .8233 | .11581         | 29 |
|           | 1       | .7418 | .10201         | 23 |
|           | Total   | .7873 | .11628         | 52 |
| PostTSR%  | 0       | .7909 | .19784         | 29 |
|           | 1       | .7283 | .17436         | 23 |
|           | Total   | .7632 | .18866         | 52 |
| PostTMot% | 0       | .8384 | .12994         | 29 |
|           | 1       | .7364 | .11610         | 23 |
|           | Total   | .7933 | .13304         | 52 |
| PostTEmp% | 0       | .8427 | .18193         | 29 |
|           | 1       | .8043 | .15688         | 23 |
|           | Total   | .8257 | .17075         | 52 |
| PostTSSk% | 0       | .9397 | .07920         | 29 |
|           | 1       | .8750 | .08839         | 23 |
|           | Total   | .9111 | .08869         | 52 |

**Post Family SEAL parent evaluations  
of students' emotional literacy scores**

**Post Family SEAL teacher evaluations  
of students' emotional literacy scores**

## Comparing mean scores for concern and non-concern children

- Pre Family SEAL (adjusted for gender)
  - Parents rate concern children sig lower (mean % score) for SA and Mot ( $p < 0.005$ ) and SR ( $p < 0.02$ )
  - Teachers rate concern children significantly lower (mean % score) for all 5 aspects ( $p \leq 0.002$ )
- Post family SEAL (adjusted for gender)
  - Parents rate concern children lower on SA only ( $p < 0.02$ )
  - Teachers rate concern children sig lower in SA, Mot and SSk ( $p < 0.03$ ). SR and Emp no longer significantly lower ( $p > 0.1$ )

# Paired t-test analyses: comparing differences in paired scores

## Non-concern children

- Parent surveys (N=21-23)
  - No sig diffs in mean pre-post FS scores for parents
- Teacher surveys (N=29-32)
  - Sig increase in mean score for SA ( $p < 0.005$ )

# Paired t-test analyses: comparing differences in paired scores

## Concern children

- Parent surveys (N=13-15)
  - post-pre FS mean scores for parents show mean increase largest for SR (nearly +10%) but only sig higher for Mot (+8%  $p < 0.05$ )
- Teacher surveys (N=22)
  - Sig increase in score for all aspects ( $p < 0.01$ ) – highest increases for SR and Emp (+10%)

## Paired t-test analyses: mean differences for non-concern children

|            | <b>Post – Pre<br/>Parent</b> | <b>Post – Pre<br/>Teacher</b> | <b>Pre T-P</b> | <b>Post T-P</b> |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>SA</b>  | +3.1%                        | +6.3%**                       | 10.9%**        | 12.8%***        |
| <b>SR</b>  | +4.3%                        | +0.8%                         | 24.0%***       | 17.6%**         |
| <b>Mot</b> | +3.0%                        | +2.9%                         | 13.8%***       | 12.1%***        |
| <b>Emp</b> | +0.9%                        | -1.9%                         | 14.4%***       | 13.4%*          |
| <b>SSk</b> | +1.4%                        | +2.1%                         | 5.6%*          | 7.3%*           |

\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

## Paired t-test analyses: mean differences for concern children

|            | <b>Post – Pre<br/>Parent</b> | <b>Post – Pre<br/>Teacher</b> |  | <b>Pre T-P</b> | <b>Post T-P</b> |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>SA</b>  | +6.5%                        | +7.1%**                       |  | 11.3%***       | 13.3%***        |
| <b>SR</b>  | +9.3%                        | +10.5%**                      |  | 13.8%**        | 21.6%***        |
| <b>Mot</b> | +7.7%*                       | +6.8%**                       |  | 11.6%**        | 13.2%***        |
| <b>Emp</b> | +4.7%                        | +9.4%***                      |  | -1.1%          | 10.5%*          |
| <b>SSk</b> | 0.0%                         | +5.1%**                       |  | -0.2           | 6.6%*           |

\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$

# Qualitative evidence: Pre Family SEAL expectations

- Better understanding of my child

“To identify differences in T’s behaviour between home and school” (Y1 Boy Concern)

- Linked to improved self-awareness in children

A greater understanding of J’s behaviour and in particular helping her to be aware of the impact of her behaviour on others. (Y2 G)

# Qualitative evidence: Pre Family SEAL expectations

- Quality 1-1 time together

“Having fun with C, learning to do things together. Having time with C without older brother being there. (Y3 B)

- Improved social skills

“...keen to improve and learn other avenues to support both my daughters at home and during school. For B, I feel it will give her confidence, especially socially. For myself the opportunity to work with B at school and a chance to work with other children and parents.” (Y3 G)

# Post Family SEAL feedback: What were the best things about the Family SEAL workshops?

## – Quality 1-1 time

“Spending more time together. Really opens your eyes to how much time you spend together. Fantastic experience.”

“One to one time with my son. A real life learning experience.”

“Time together having fun. Makes you think about your son/daughter in a different way.”

“Daughter enjoyed the fact that she had my one to one attention without any interruptions.”

# Post Family SEAL feedback

## What were the best things about the Family SEAL workshops?

- Social networking

“Getting to know other parents/teachers.  
Joining in with S at school.”

“I enjoyed my time alone with my daughter  
but also having time to socialise with other  
parents and it was nice to discover people  
have the same issues as me.”

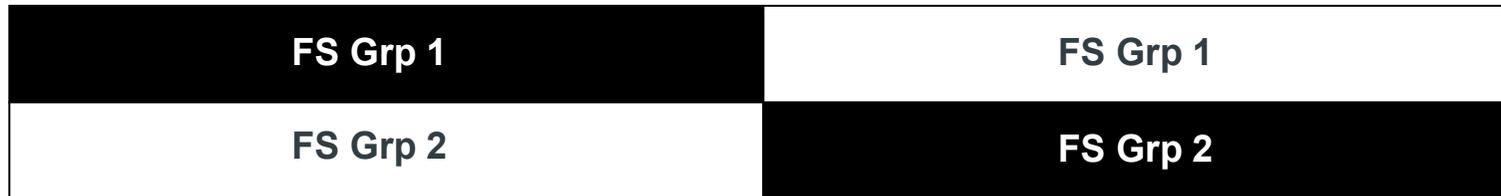
# Summary of evidence from pilot

- Evidence from Emotional Literacy Checklists:
  - FS may have significant impacts for all children
  - Impact likely to be greater for children identified as causing concern in their social and emotional development
  - Greater impact reported by teachers than by parents
  - Is Family SEAL therefore an ‘ideal’ means of school improvement ...?
- Evidence from parent surveys:
  - Parents gain from Family SEAL as well as children
  - They most appreciated the quality 1:1 time and a chance to network with other parents
  - Does it matter that it is Family SEAL...?
  - Parents reported some impact back at home especially in family relationships and greater self awareness of their children

# Limitations and lessons

- Lack of student voice
  - Social and emotional skills survey (Downey, Kelly & Brown 2008)
  - Sociograms (Ofsted 2007)
- Was it was Family SEAL that made the difference?
  - The need for “control groups” (Humprey 2008, Humphrey *et al* 2008)
- What was the lasting impact?
  - Does the impact of Family SEAL diminish over time?
- What was the wider school impact?
  - What impact did class teachers notice? (Halo effect)
  - The opinions of school leaders concerning Family SEAL?

# Proposed data collection



Group 1 start

**For Group 1 only**  
Pre EL checklists – parent  
Pre FS expectation q’naire  
for parents

**For Groups 1&2**  
Pre EL checklists – teacher  
ID of concern students

**For whole class**  
Sociogram nominations  
Online SEAL student survey

Group 1 end / Group 2 start

**For Group 1 only**  
Post EL checklists – teacher  
Post EL checklists – parent  
Post FS evaluation q’naire  
for parents

\*Parent and student focus  
groups - impact

**Group 2 only**  
Pre EL checklists – teacher  
Pre EL checklists - parents  
Pre FS expectation q’naire  
for parents  
Confirm ID of concern  
students

**For whole class**  
Sociogram nominations  
Online SEAL student survey

Group 2 end

**Group 1 only**  
Post EL checklists – teacher  
Follow up survey for parents

\*Parent and student focus  
groups – sustainability

**Group 2 only**  
Post EL checklists – teacher  
Post EL checklists – parent  
Post FS evaluation surveys  
For parents

\*Parent and student focus  
groups - impact  
\*Teacher interviews

**For whole class**  
Sociogram nominations  
Online SEAL student survey

# References

- Desforges, C. and Abouchar, A. (2003) *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment: A Literature Review*, Department for Education and Skills, Research Report 433.
- DfES (2005) *Primary National Strategy Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning guidance*, Department for Education and Skills.
- DfES (2006) *Primary National Strategy Excellence and Enjoyment: social and emotional aspects of learning Family SEAL*, Department for Education and Skills.
- Downey, C., Kelly, A and Brown, A. (2008) *Evaluating a programme to develop social and emotional skills in primary school students*, presented at The International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI), Auckland, NZ, 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2008.
- Humphrey, N. (2008) *Key issues in the evaluation of school-based SEL programmes*, presented at ESRC seminar series: *The school as a location for the promotion and support of mental health*, Southampton, June 2008.
- Humphrey, N., Kalambouka, A., Bolton, J., Lendrum, A., Wigelsworth, M., Lennie, C. and Farrell, P. (2008) *Primary Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL): Evaluation of Small Group Work*, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) /University of Manchester.
- Melhuish, E., Sylva, C., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I. and Taggart, B. (2001) *Social behavioural and cognitive development at 3-4 years in relation to family background. The effective provision of pre-school education, EPPE project (Technical paper 7)*. DfEE. London: The Institute of Education.
- Ofsted (2007) *Developing social, emotional and behavioural skills in secondary schools: A five term longitudinal evaluation of the Secondary National Strategy pilot*, (London, Office for Standards in Education).
- Siraj-Blatchford, I., Sylva, K., Muttock, S., Gilden, R. and Bell, D. (2002) *Researching effective pedagogy in the early years (DfES Research report RR356)*. Institute of Education, University of London.