



SUPPORTING A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING

An evaluation of myHappyMind

Rachel Perowne and Adetola Obateru

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT


myHappyMind is a positive wellbeing programme designed for early years to year six and delivered by teachers across five modules. myHappyMind is currently commissioned in 45 places across the UK and in more than 2000 schools. This report provides an overview of previous reports conducted for myHappyMind alongside our detailed review of data from two of the locations in which myHappyMind is being delivered in early years setting and primary schools in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (HIOW) and Bradford. This case study analysis is based on myHappyMind data from surveys completed by teachers before, during and after delivery of the programme as well as return on investment (ROI) surveys completed by headteachers and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs). It includes both quantitative closed-question responses and qualitative free-text comments. These insights are supplemented by a small number of interviews with stakeholders, including headteachers, a teacher and a commissioner across both localities, to enhance the credibility, clarity and influence of myHappyMind's impact data.

WHAT WE FOUND

In both locations, and regardless of their demographic differences, across the modules, teachers consistently reported strong pupil engagement, enjoyment and enthusiasm for the programme. Children were described as highly motivated to participate, responding well to interactive elements such as songs, characters, journalling, quizzes and practical tasks. Teachers also reported improvements in children's emotional regulation, confidence, kindness and readiness to learn. Many staff noted children's application of their learning, increased conversations about wellbeing and mental health in classrooms, and, in some cases, reported that parents noticed changes at home.

Across each module (see p6), teachers reported the following specific impacts:

- ⊙ Meet Your Brain was seen as contributing to consistent and significant increases in understanding of the brain and self-regulation techniques, with over 94% of teachers reporting that their classes had benefited from Happy Breathing (see glossary for definition)
- ⊙ Celebrate strengthened children's ability to identify and discuss character strengths, with over 95% of teachers reporting increased awareness of strengths among children, both in themselves and in others
- ⊙ Appreciate led to marked rises in children expressing gratitude, with around 90% of teachers observing increases
- ⊙ Relate was reported to have improved listening skills in over 75% of classes and higher levels of understanding about positive relationships
- ⊙ Engage was seen as increasing children's enthusiasm for goal-setting, resilience, and perseverance, with over 85% of teachers reporting improvements.



The return on investment (ROI) and interview findings showed that myHappyMind is valued by headteachers for improving school culture, staff understanding of mental health, and children's self-regulation, with positive impacts also identified on metrics such as attendance and referrals. Further benefits were reported for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Teachers also identified some areas for improvement, including increasing accessibility at either end of the age ranges, adapting delivery for some pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and addressing minor system and platform issues. myHappyMind has reported that they are in the process of addressing these minor issues to improve the customer experience with their new platform launching in July 2026.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, findings across the two localities suggest that myHappyMind is widely valued, shows strong consistency with earlier validation findings, such as a real-world validation carried out by the University of Chester, and is perceived by school staff as having a positive effect on children, staff and school climate. The evidence also highlights some areas for consideration which could help further demonstrate impact as well as opportunities for stronger and more consistent data collection and delivery to ensure that the recommendations lead to meaningful improvement in future practice.

Recommendations include:

For policymakers

- ⦿ Embedding whole-school approaches to wellbeing, including considering the role of interventions which incorporate aspects of positive psychology and neuroscience. These should be supported and monitored to gather further evidence on the impact of these types of interventions
- ⦿ Improving links between schools, providers and Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)
- ⦿ Investing in interventions which can be tailored for children with additional needs.

For myHappyMind

- ⦿ Although only raised by a small proportion of teachers, addressing minor delivery issues and incorporating suggested further adaptations to improve accessibility could be considered in future developments of the programme.



INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

myHappymind is an NHS commissioned award-winning provider, delivering a universal, whole-school mental health and wellbeing programme in early years settings and primary schools, spanning early years to year six. It aims to build pupils' emotional literacy, self-regulation and resilience through structured, age-appropriate lessons, interactive tasks and practical strategies delivered in class, with a parent and carer app and staff wellbeing programme. The approach is preventative, supports early intervention and is designed for all pupils, including those with special educational or social, emotional and mental health needs, within the classroom, so that skills and techniques can be learned and habits can be developed.

myHappymind has undertaken several evidence-based activities prior to this evaluation, including being a fellow of the NHS Innovation Accelerator programme, with a robust, multi-stage assessment process involving a college of expert patient, clinical and commercial assessors (NHS England, n.d.) as well as a real-world validation from the University of Chester and an independent study by Portsmouth Council. They were also recognised with the King's Award for Enterprise for Innovation, the BETT Award for Transformational Impact (2026), and the BESA Award for Impact and Evidence (2025).

POLICY ALIGNMENT

myHappymind describe the programme as being designed and delivered to support current national policy agendas including:

- ⦿ Government guidance **"Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing"** (HM Government, 2021) which details eight principles of a whole-school or college approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing
- ⦿ **The NHS 10 Year Health Plan for England** which aims to take a more preventative approach to health, provide support in the community and make use of digital tools, to extend support and widen access
- ⦿ **Mental Health Support Teams** which have been rolling out across schools since 2018/19, working towards national coverage by 2029/30. The teams provide early intervention for young people who are starting to struggle with their mental health
- ⦿ **Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework** which now includes assessment of schools' approaches to children's personal development and wellbeing
- ⦿ **The Schools White Paper 2026: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reform** which sets out a plan to build a more inclusive, consistent system that identifies needs earlier and strengthens mainstream support

- ⦿ **The Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities)** which promotes a whole population, prevention focused approach to improving mental health and wellbeing through coordinated cross sector action
- ⦿ **NICE guideline NG223: Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education** which recommends universal, whole-school approaches to promoting social, emotional and mental wellbeing and preventing mental health problems among children and young people.

DELIVERY MODEL AND PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

- ⦿ **Universal application:** Five modules per year, typically 20–25 lessons (~20–25 minutes each), with onscreen teacher-led content, interactive activities, storybooks and characters for younger children and journals for all children to support learning
- ⦿ **Inclusivity:** Materials and lessons are designed to support all children, including neurodivergent pupils and others with special educational needs (SEN) or social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH), within the classroom
- ⦿ **Whole-school approach:** The programme is designed to be embedded across the whole school – across year groups, with different stakeholders engaged and brought in. It includes a school readiness programme for early years pupils and a year six transition programme. It also includes specialist toolkits covering topics such as emotionally based school avoidance, sleep, grief, speech and language, neurodiversity and more
- ⦿ **Parent app:** The parent app reinforces what is taught in the classroom and provides guidance on common issues (e.g. sleep, separation anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance) and encourages consistent language and strategies across contexts
- ⦿ **Staff resources:** Along with training resources to support implementation and delivery, additional resources and a wellbeing programme are provided for staff to use to support children with confidence.

THE FIVE MYHAPPYMIND MODULES



Understanding how your brain works and how to ensure we look after it so that we can manage our emotions and be at our best.



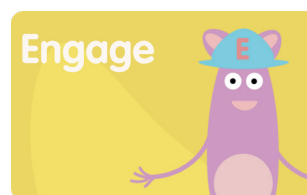
Understanding your unique character strengths and learning to celebrate them.



Understanding why gratitude matters and how you can develop gratitude as a habit.



Understanding why positive relationships matter and how to build them.



Understanding how to set meaningful goals that matter and how to keep resilient in times of challenge.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

myHappymind incorporates aspects of positive psychology and concepts from neuroscience. Five core modules, Meet Your Brain, Celebrate, Appreciate, Relate and Engage, are delivered through a 'spiral' curriculum that revisits and builds concepts and practices as children progress through school. These modules align with the five elements of the PERMA model of wellbeing: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Evidence shows that PERMA elements are positively connected to wellbeing, resilience and mental health, including in younger children (Turner *et al.*, 2023). myHappymind features some of the evidence-based techniques which accompany the PERMA model such as identifying character strengths and showing gratitude to others.

myHappymind also incorporates learning about the brain for children – helping them to understand what the different parts of their brain (amygdala, pre-frontal cortex, hippocampus) are called, their functions and how they affect thoughts, feelings and actions. There is evidence that teaching primary school children about the brain can positively impact their growth mindset (Fitzakerley *et al.*, 2013).

WIDER EVIDENCE FOR POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Emerging research across early years and primary schools provides promising evidence that positive psychology, including the PERMA model, offers a valuable framework for supporting children's wellbeing, resilience, social and emotional development and mental health.

Although studies with young children remain limited, the available evidence suggests that well designed positive psychology programmes can positively influence wellbeing outcomes in early educational settings (Benoit and Gabola, 2021). Programmes such as whole-school positive education initiatives and gratitude activities are reported to improve positive emotions (such as empathy and gratitude), engagement with and enthusiasm for learning, and overall wellbeing. However, the length and quality of programme delivery can affect outcomes, with longer-term programmes delivered by trained teachers, unsurprisingly, producing stronger results. Another programme for 9 and 10 year olds, which included gratitude journaling, gratitude visits, acts of kindness as well as assessment and use of character strengths, demonstrated improvements in children's wellbeing, including positive emotions and satisfaction with self-contentment (Suldo *et al.*, 2015).

Taken together, this evidence suggests that positive psychology approaches show promise in supporting primary school children's wellbeing, but effectiveness depends strongly on programme quality, duration, developmental appropriateness and adult training.



EXISTING EVIDENCE

Commissioned and internal reviews of the myHappymind programme have previously been conducted. A summary of these reports including quotes from them is provided here for background context.

UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER REVIEW

In 2023, the University of Chester conducted an independent Real-World Validation of the programme. They used existing myHappymind quantitative and qualitative data, from pre- and post-module teacher-reported feedback at the class level, finding that the programme had positive impacts on children, including on resilience, self-esteem, self-regulation and overall mental wellbeing (University of Chester, 2023). Across 36 participating schools, teachers reported that before the programme many children lacked basic knowledge about how their brains work and how to manage emotions. The programme resulted in an increase in time spent on mental health and wellbeing-related topics. Children's confidence, emotional regulation, gratitude, listening skills and ability to identify their character strengths were also reported to have improved.

Additionally, teachers reported increases in pupils' ability to support their own wellbeing (95%) and to understand how their brain works (98.5%). In their feedback, teachers highlighted children's independent use of techniques like 'Happy Breathing' and improved emotional regulation, both in school and at home. The review concluded that the programme was financially viable, scalable and aligned with national education and health priorities. Schools of varying sizes and budgets adopted the programme, with no correlation between budget and impact, and a separate independent return on investment analysis by Health Innovation Manchester suggested the programme generates substantial long-term savings for the NHS.

The review also compared myHappymind with competitors at the time, and concluded that myHappymind offered a unique and comprehensive package, including a parent app, staff wellbeing training and an adapted curriculum, building from early years to year six.

Overall, the University of Chester report found the programme to be an effective, affordable and widely valued approach to fostering positive mental health, with potential for broader adoption across local authorities and integrated care systems.

PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Portsmouth City Council conducted an independent study examining attendance and behaviour data from schools across the area. This report also suggested potential benefits associated with myHappymind (myHappymind and Portsmouth City Council, 2025).

Using two years of existing school data, the case study compared attendance and suspension data between schools that had implemented myHappymind with those that had not. The analysis covered a period where persistent absence and suspensions increased across both groups, in line with national trends.

The summary of findings reports that, for schools using myHappymind, rises in severe persistent absence were significantly lower and there were substantially fewer suspensions over the period examined. Although not a controlled trial, these reported differences could indicate an association between this type of whole-school wellbeing provision and improvement in some indicators of engagement and behaviour.

MYHAPPYMIND INTERNAL FEEDBACK REVIEW

myHappymind also collects stakeholder feedback internally which they regularly collate and analyse. The following themes have been generated by myHappymind's data team from stakeholder quotes and comments, to provide further context for the programme's impact over the period September 2024 to July 2025, covering Bradford and HIOW.

Development of emotional literacy and self-regulation: A dominant theme of the feedback is children's improved ability to understand, articulate, and manage their emotions. The use of shared, neuroscience-informed language enables pupils to explain their behaviour and apply strategies to regulate themselves. This underpins reductions in low-level disruption and supports more positive behaviour overall.



"Since starting myHappymind, children talk more about feelings and use calming strategies like Happy Breathing, which has reduced behavioural incidents. It really helps them understand emotions and build resilience, with the biggest impact being their confidence in asking for help. For children with SEMH needs, it's been especially useful in preventing meltdowns and helping them calm down more quickly." - Head of School, Dixons Music Primary School

Increased confidence and self-esteem: Many quotes highlight notable gains in confidence, particularly among pupils with SEMH needs or lower self-esteem. Children are better able to recognise their strengths, express themselves, and engage in discussions about their wellbeing. This contributes to a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging within the school environment.




"myHappymind has had a great impact on my class. Many of the children in my class struggled with low confidence and self-esteem and didn't value themselves and their unique attributes. We have just finished the Celebrate module and they have been able to identify strengths that they value about themselves, but also what other people see in them too. It's been really lovely to see." - Class teacher, Crossley Hall Primary School.

Preventative impact and reduced escalation to specialist support: The programme is consistently described as proactive rather than reactive. Pupils are equipped with strategies early, enabling schools to address emotional and behavioural needs before they escalate. This suggests a reduction in the need for external referrals, interventions, or crisis support.



"I wanted to take a moment to share some insights regarding the positive changes we've observed since implementing myHappymind in our school. Firstly, we've noticed a remarkable improvement in the children's ability to manage their mental health and wellbeing. Many students are now using the tools they've learned to regulate their emotions and handle stress more effectively. This initiative has significantly contributed to boosting their self-esteem, promoting greater self-regulation, and enhancing their resilience. It's heartening to see our pupils facing challenges head-on with a newfound confidence. Moreover, myHappymind has seamlessly integrated into our overall approach to mental health and wellbeing. It provides a comprehensive framework that has redefined our practices, making mental health awareness an integral part of our school culture."



Its inclusive nature ensures that every pupil, regardless of their background, finds value in the programme, creating a united community focused on wellbeing. On a more practical note, we have indeed seen a reduction in the number of referrals to external mental health support services, including CAHMS. While it's a gradual process, the decrease has been notable, indicating that our children's needs are being addressed more effectively within the school environment and children are able to talk about what is happening and why it is happening. If I were to convey the impact of myHappyMind to another Headteacher, I would certainly highlight how the programme empowers students with practical skills to navigate their emotions and challenges. It's not just about individual improvement; it's about cultivating a supportive and nurturing atmosphere in our school, fostering a sense of belonging and wellbeing for all our pupils." - Headteacher, St Winefride's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Improved engagement, focus and readiness to learn: Teachers reported that pupils are calmer, more settled, and more prepared to engage in learning. As stigma around discussing emotions reduces, pupils participate more openly and purposefully. This improved engagement supports both academic access and, indirectly, attendance.



"Since starting myHappyMind, we have seen an improvement in reflection and calm response to situations which do not require such a reaction. This is due to the children's awareness of the amygdala and cortisol which we have learnt about in the Meet my Brain unit. For those with the most significant SEMH needs, it has been incredibly useful in understanding why they have certain feelings in an informative and fun way. The children have enjoyed journaling and focusing on the positive aspects of themselves, including what they are good at and what they enjoy, and learning how they can succeed with aspects they find more challenging. The relationships within the classroom have improved between children and the environment is much calmer as we are experiencing fewer explosive behaviours. For one child, who often struggles being in the classroom, myHappyMind has been fantastic. He enjoys being in the classroom for the myHappyMind sessions, actively attends and links his experiences to the learning. This means he (and others around him) are now ready to learn and are more successful in school and at home." - Class teacher, South Wonston Primary School

Inclusive support for diverse and complex needs: The programme is shown to be effective across a wide range of pupil needs, including those with trauma, SEN, and complex backgrounds. It supports differentiated delivery (e.g. small group or 1:1), enabling all pupils to access the content and benefit. This reinforces whole-school inclusion and reduces behavioural challenges linked to unmet need.



"The programme is being taught regularly and effectively. Staff are enjoying delivering the lessons, and it is clearly valued by our team. The children have shared how much they love the sessions. We have a high level of SEND, with an increasing number of SEMH needs. Many of our children should probably be accessing specialist provision, but they are engaging with the programme incredibly well. It is highly inclusive, and they are able to access the learning and journal at their own level, which is lovely. We recently had a visit from Ofsted, which was actually a really positive experience. One of the areas they explored in depth was our support for SEN. It was great to be able to share this aspect of learning with them. Both teachers and children spoke positively about the programme to the inspectors, and the children shared their knowledge and were able to talk articulately about what they had learnt. The inspectors were really impressed." - Headteacher, Brockhurst Primary School



WHAT WE DID

THIS REPORT

This evaluation and summary evidence review follows the 2023 independent University of Chester validation with the aim of updating the picture, using data from two of the 40 localities in which myHappyMind operates. It covers 269 schools and over 70,000 children, although this still only represents a small sample of myHappyMind's coverage. The report examines the impact of the myHappyMind programme across these two geographic locations and offers practical recommendations, both for myHappyMind to support ongoing programme improvement and maximise impact, and for policymakers responsible for mental health provision in schools.

This report has been created using data collected by myHappyMind directly from schools across the two locations – Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, and Bradford. The Centre also conducted three interviews with four stakeholders, including commissioners and headteachers from the two locations, to enhance the credibility, clarity, and influence of myHappyMind's impact data. Please note that the original wording of all quotes has been retained verbatim, to preserve the accuracy of respondents' comments.

THE TWO STUDY LOCATIONS

Hampshire is a large county in South East England. It has a mix of major urban areas, including Southampton and Portsmouth, as well as extensive rural landscapes such as the Hampshire Downs and parts of the South Downs. With just under two million residents, it is one of England's most populous counties and features both densely populated conurbations and significant rural areas extending across eleven districts and two unitary authorities. The Isle of Wight, across the Solent from Portsmouth, is a separate island county and unitary authority with a population of about 140,000, with demographic characteristics including a largely white population (97% in 2021) and a higher median age than national averages. Together, these two areas present a diverse socio-geographic context, combining dense urban centres, rural areas and distinctive island communities.

Bradford is a city in West Yorkshire, situated in the foothills of the Pennines and forms the core of the wider City of Bradford metropolitan borough, which had a population of over 500,000 at the 2021 census, making it one of the most populous districts in England. Demographically, Bradford is recognised as one of the UK's most ethnically diverse cities: the population includes a large Pakistani community, accounting for 25.5% of residents, while 63.9% identify as white British, and other minority groups make up the remainder of the population. Bradford's population profile is notably younger than the regional and national averages, with a median age of 36.8 years, reflecting its growing and diverse communities.

DATA

Raw data from teacher completed surveys comprised of a number of surveys exploring the experiences and perspectives of teachers delivering each module of myHappyMind both before the programme delivery commenced and then immediately after each module had been completed. We were provided with data at location level, not individual school level and therefore it was not possible to track changes at individual school or class level. The surveys included a number of closed, scale-based questions and the surveys after each module also included space for a free-text comment. Some teachers added their own comments, whilst some appear to have asked for quotes from pupils, which they then included in the free-text boxes.

A second survey exploring the return on investment (ROI) of the programme was completed by headteachers and SENCOs at the end of the academic year, once schools had completed at least six months of the programme. These surveys asked teachers to estimate, using a scale (and in some cases quantify), the impact of the myHappyMind programme across a number of areas, including pupil attendance, referrals, and the ability of children to self-regulate. The survey included the option to add free-text comments at the end. We analysed free-text comments by looking for common themes and key issues in the data, rather than having a strict cut off for the number of times specific points were mentioned. Comments were included where they helped illustrate themes, including views shared by many people, points expressed particularly strongly and important minority or contrasting perspectives.

Before analysis, we cleaned, standardised and, in some cases, converted the data to make the key comparison and analysis easier. For example, the questions in the pre-delivery survey did not align perfectly with the questions at the end of each module, so these were mapped to best fit the pre- and post-delivery questions. For example, the pre-survey question 'What proportion of your class do you think can talk articulately about their character strengths?' was mapped to 'Are your class now more able to talk about their character strengths?' to show the change in context. Additionally, questions asked in the return on investment survey for Bradford were slightly different to those in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, at the request of local commissioners, so further mapping was needed to allow ease of reporting across both locations. Where free-text number estimates were allowed, these were turned into bands to allow the data spread to be shown. Finally, where the number of categories of data did not align across surveys or were too extensive, these were standardised or collapsed for ease of reporting.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Recruitment of stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, and commissioners) was facilitated by the myHappyMind team. The aim of these stakeholder interviews was to enhance the credibility, clarity, and influence of myHappyMind's impact data, and to further explore the programme's impact and delivery, as well as value for money. The online interviews were carried out in February 2026. We spoke to one commissioner from NHS Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB), one headteacher and teacher from a school in Bradford, and one headteacher from a school in Hampshire. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. We provided participants with an information sheet and signed a consent form in which they were assured of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. The participants were also allowed to express themselves as freely as they desired.

During the interviews, we asked questions such as:

- ⊙ What impact has the programme had on children in your opinion?
- ⊙ Which groups of children do you feel benefit the most? Are there groups who benefit less (this could be different age groups, those with lower parent engagement)?

- ⦿ How well does the programme work for children with additional needs (neurodivergence, language/literacy needs)? Have you made any adaptations? What were they, and what impact did they have?
- ⦿ Do you feel the programme has delivered sufficient impact to justify the investment made? Why/why not?
- ⦿ What specific outcomes or improvements were you hoping to see when the programme was commissioned?
- ⦿ Is there anything you think would increase the impact of the programme for the children in your area?

ANALYSIS

The approach to analysis used different methods (count-ups, thematic analysis) to examine data from teacher experience surveys across both locations (HIOW and Bradford), the different year groups and at different time points (before delivery and after each module). The ROI analysis compared the two locations with data collected at the end of the academic year. Analyses were carried out separately for closed question survey data and free text responses, as outlined below.

We analysed the data from the interviews using thematic analysis. Due to the small number of interviews (three), we grouped the data together regardless of site location, and the findings were interwoven into relevant themes from the quantitative data analysis with additional relevant quotes included.

TEACHER EXPERIENCE SURVEYS

Closed question data

We analysed closed question responses to explore changes over time and to identify patterns by year group and location, following these steps:

Response rates over time: Response rates and the volume of comments were examined across survey waves, from the start of year survey through to the Engage module survey, to identify changes in engagement across the programme

- ⦿ **Pre-post mapping:** Equivalent questions in the pre and post surveys were mapped to enable direct comparison of scores before and after programme participation
- ⦿ **Data tables:** Scores for each question were collated into tables separately for each location, year group and module
- ⦿ **Category simplification:** Response categories were collapsed where appropriate to simplify interpretation and enable more direct comparison between HIOW and Bradford
- ⦿ **Year group comparisons:** Pre- and post-survey responses were compared by year group to identify year group specific trends or differences
- ⦿ **Presentation:** We produced charts to illustrate before and after changes by programme module (e.g. Meet Your Brain, Celebrate, etc.). Charts were not broken down by year group due to the large volume of data.



Free text data

We analysed all free text comments and grouped them into themes. Analysis was conducted separately for each location and year group. Key themes were identified and quotes selected to illustrate themes. Suggestions for improvement and negative feedback were also recorded to support programme improvements.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT SURVEYS

Closed question data

Because the survey questions and scales differed between HIOW and Bradford, and in some cases category boundaries overlapped, we first organised the data in a way that allowed comparison between locations and reduced the numbers of categories whilst maintaining meaningful results.

Question and response mapping: We matched equivalent questions across the two locations to allow comparison across locations. Where response options differed, categories were aligned or collapsed where possible to improve consistency and comparability.

Theme categorisation: Some questions were grouped into themes to make presentation simpler.

Charts: For each theme, a single combined chart was created that incorporated the relevant questions from both HIOW and Bradford to show where there was consistency in outcomes across the programme.

Free text data

We analysed free text comments from both locations together due to the relatively lower volume of comments (167 in total), compared to the end of module surveys (2786 in total). Although the questions varied (with just one free-text question in Bradford and two in HIOW at the request of HIOW commissioners), responses were grouped into themes. We developed summaries for each theme to highlight common experiences, perceptions and areas for improvement.



WHAT WE FOUND

Findings are presented by first outlining survey response rates across all time points. This is followed by an overview of common themes that were seen across all modules, age groups and both locations. Each module is then explored in detail, including both quantitative and qualitative data, with selected quotes to illustrate key themes and an outline of programme feedback. Finally, the reports from the ROI surveys are summarised, again drawing on both quantitative and qualitative findings.

TEACHER REPORTED EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Response samples

Teachers completed surveys before starting delivery of the myHappymind programme and then again at the end of each module, immediately after delivering the final lesson. The end-of-module surveys included both closed questions (such as yes/no or rating scale items) and optional free text questions. All respondents completed the closed questions, 62% of respondents provided comments at the end of the first module and 47% at the end of the final module. Over 95% of free text comments in the end of module surveys were positive.

The number of completed surveys at each stage can be seen in Table 1. myHappymind have provided several contextual reasons for the lower figures in later modules, including that some schools started the programme partway through the year and had not reached later modules at the point final data was compiled.

Location		Initial survey	Meet Your Brain	Celebrate	Appreciate	Relate	Engage
HIOW	Completes	1574	1161	950	709	498	218
	Comments	NA	709	561	374	251	101
Bradford	Completes	582	425	337	290	205	85
	Comments	NA	270	212	161	105	42

It is noted that no inferences should be drawn about levels of engagement from this data, but it provides context in terms of sampling sizes.



CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

When looking at quantitative responses and free text comments as well as findings from the interviews, a number of themes were apparent across all modules, age groups and in both locations. This section will explore the findings from each myHappyMind module.

Enjoyment and interactivity

Teachers consistently reported that children enjoyed taking part in the myHappyMind modules across all year groups and settings. Staff described children as enthusiastic and engaged, frequently showing excitement about lessons and responding positively to activities such as songs, characters, brain hats, journalling, quizzes and other interactive tasks. Teachers also noted that children appeared motivated to participate, with some children sharing their learning at home or using what they had learnt in their play and interactions with classmates and teachers. Some teachers commented on their enjoyment of teaching the programme.

Positive impact

According to teachers, the programme had a range of positive effects, including on pupils' wellbeing, confidence, emotional awareness and behaviour. Staff reported that children appeared calmer, more reflective, and better equipped to talk about their feelings. Teachers also noted increased kindness, peer support, and improved readiness to learn. In some cases, parents reportedly observed changes at home, such as children using techniques and talking about what they had learned. This was supported by accounts from the teachers we interviewed. Teacher responses for Bradford were, on the whole, slightly more positive than HIOW but this was minimal and not consistent across all questions, modules or year groups. It should also be noted that Bradford schools have been delivering the programme for two years longer than HIOW schools.

Application of learning

Teachers reported that children applied what they had learnt from the programme throughout the school day and beyond. This included using breathing strategies at times of stress, translating learning to other lessons and using scientific terminology, such as parts of the brain, in everyday conversation. Teachers also highlighted instances of children supporting peers by reminding them to use the strategies.

Emotional regulation and calming

A strong cross-module theme was teachers' reports that children were using myHappyMind strategies, especially Happy Breathing, to regulate their emotions. Teachers noted that many pupils appeared calmer during lessons, used breathing techniques in response to stress or dysregulation, and increasingly recognised when they needed to pause and reset. Some staff reported establishing dedicated areas for emotional regulation, while others commented on parents noticing improved calming strategies being used at home. Teachers also described children articulating their emotional responses through a brain-based lens, which appeared to support regulation.

Use of scientific language

Teachers consistently reported that children were highly engaged with the scientific terminology about the brain used in the modules. Pupils were observed using words such as amygdala, prefrontal cortex, hippocampus, neural pathways and neuroplasticity, not only during myHappyMind sessions, but also in other lessons and across school. Staff comments included that children seemed proud of their ability to use 'big words' and that this was helpful in children understanding themselves.

Accessibility and age-appropriateness

Across modules, a small number of teacher comments related to the accessibility of aspects of the programme for different ages and needs. Some staff reported that younger children and some pupils with special educational needs and disabilities found particular elements challenging. For example, learning complex brain language, the journalling or the focus required for breathing exercises. Older pupils were sometimes described as finding aspects repetitive or less engaging. Hence while the programme was positively received overall, teachers identified differences in ease of access depending on maturity and individual needs and mentioned that both their schools and myHappyMind had made adaptations as a result.

Systems and programme feedback

Across the modules there were a small number of consistent comments from teachers (more so from HIOW than Bradford, although the sample size was smaller in Bradford) about practical aspects of programme delivery. These included technological challenges (e.g., difficulty navigating the platform, repeated questionnaires, sound balance on videos) and timings. Some teachers also suggested including a wider range of calming strategies or adapting certain tasks for older groups. Two interview participants reported that they were able to provide feedback on myHappyMind resources which were then implemented (For example, the story book for one of the characters).



MEET YOUR BRAIN

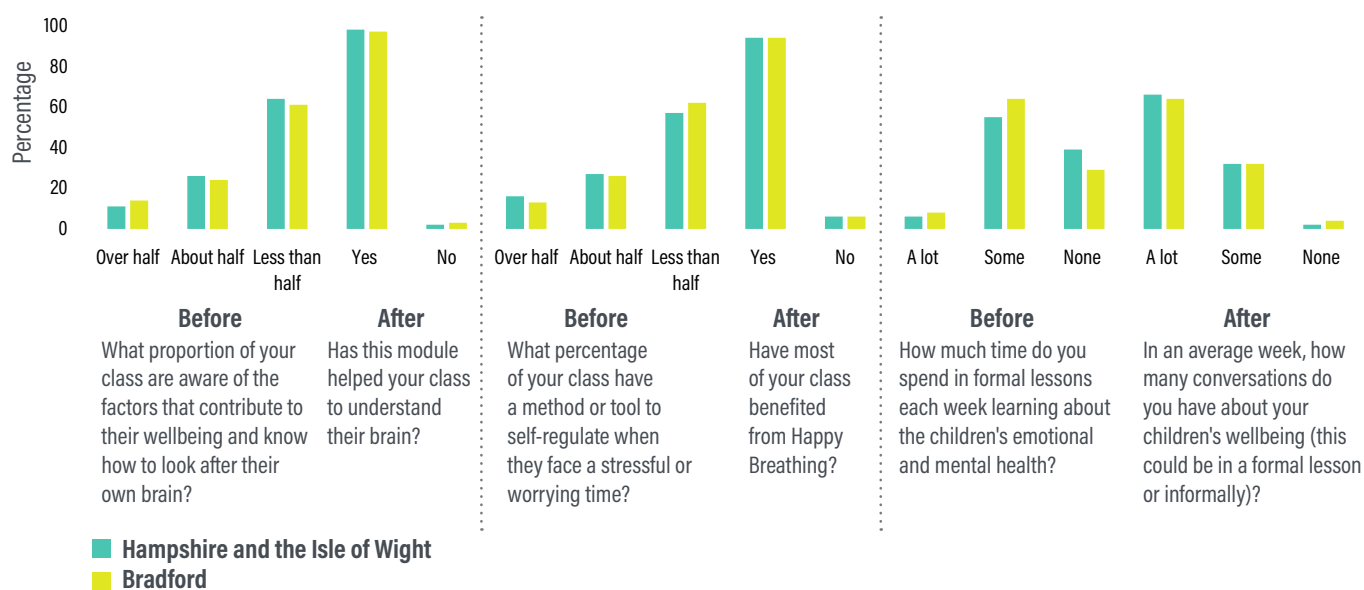
SUMMARY

Teachers reported that:

- ⦿ The module helped the children know more about how their brains work and helped them gain a better understanding of their emotions, almost all teachers said that it helped their pupils
- ⦿ Pupils became better at calming themselves and supporting their peers using the Happy Breathing technique, parents also noticed clear benefits
- ⦿ There was a big rise in wellbeing conversations in class after the module.
- ⦿ Younger children (especially year two) showed the strongest enthusiasm and understanding, and enjoyed the interactive activities
- ⦿ Year six pupils benefited from the module but found some materials less suited to their age
- ⦿ Trends were similar across both locations, with only minor differences.

Responses to the Meet Your Brain module survey questions in both sites are shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Meet your brain



OVERALL TRENDS

Awareness

Across both locations and across year groups there were clear increases in children's understanding of the brain with almost all teachers reporting that the module had helped their class understand their brain (HIOW 98%, Bradford 97%) whereas before the module, in most classes, less than half of pupils were reportedly aware of wellbeing and brain care. A headteacher that was interviewed expressed similar sentiments:



"...So, they're on their third year of learning about their brain. They kind of really understand what that feeling is, that they're feeling and they can articulate it better as well."

Self-regulation

Before the module, most teachers reported that less than half of their class had a way of self-regulating stress and worries, but afterwards, teachers reported that most of their class had benefited from the Happy Breathing technique (94% in both locations). The headteachers that were interviewed shared similar sentiments:



"Likewise, we've got a little boy in year six who, he's a looked after child, he has a lot of insecurities, you know, himself and low self-esteem. He is very much about fairness and what is, you know, everyone listening to him and the other people. He will come down here [headteacher's office] and again, give him some time, let him have a think about what's happened. And then I'll say to him, you know, what might help. He will do some kind of Happy Breathing and we can have that conversation then in a really calm manner. So I, as the headteacher, I see it probably when I'm dealing with more challenging behaviour."



"One of the things was about using some of the Happy Breathing. This is what the parents reported that they were using the Happy Breathing with their child before they went to bed at night because it was helping them to feel calm. So that was really nice feedback that we got."



"I think the main things when I talk to children about myHappymind, they do talk about the breathing, that's a big thing. They talk about a sense of feeling calm."


Headteachers who took part in the interviews also told us that autistic children in their schools have learnt how to regulate their emotions as a result of myHappymind. The staff adapted to their needs by carrying out lessons at their pace and using the myHappymind resources tailored to children with special education needs and disabilities.

Wellbeing conversations


Teacher responses suggest that across both locations, there had been a turnaround in the amount of discussion taking place in the classroom about wellbeing and mental health. This shows an increase from around 10% of teachers reporting talking a lot about the topics before the module to around two thirds after the module.

Qualitative themes

Comments repeatedly highlight Happy Breathing, and in particular it's calming effects and impact on self-regulation and children's enthusiasm for brain learning and the scientific vocabulary, as well as wider application of the knowledge and techniques across school and beyond. (This includes in assemblies, other lessons and at home, and in general, more frequent informal wellbeing conversations taking place.)




For example, a year one teacher in HIOW explained:

 "We invited parents in to share a lesson with their children so that they could also practise the Happy Breathing at home too. The children enjoyed showing them that they knew the parts of their brains and the jobs that they do!"

AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, CONTRASTS AND SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS


Year two classes report an exceptionally high level of understanding of their brain (100% in both locations) and the benefits of Happy Breathing (99% in HIOW and 100% in Bradford). One year two teacher in HIOW reported that

 "The children have shown a real fascination with how Team H-A-P works and absolutely love the Team H-A-P class teddy. They can recite what each part of the brain is and their functions and what happens in our brains when we are feeling scared and when we are feeling calm and content. It has been lovely to hear children emotionally supporting each other too! For example, if a friend is feeling worried about something, their friend will say 'it's okay, some of your brain has gone to sleep. We can wake it up again with Happy Breathing!'"

Year six classes show lower, but still high, benefits from Meet Your Brain, and Happy Breathing in particular (HIOW 83%, Bradford 85%) with a small number of free text comments about the age-appropriateness and structure of the module and material for this age group. Although, interestingly, even in cases where children may not perceive as positive an impact, it can still be helpful, as one teacher of year six classes comments "We practiced the Happy Breathing daily at times when we thought it would be helpful but they all claim it to be of no value, even though I noticed that it was calming."

There is a lot of consistency in trends across the two locations with just very small differences in free text comments across the two, with HIOW identifying more areas for improvement or feedback (although the sample in HIOW is much larger).

The module appears to be very well received overall, with years one to four showing the most positive responses to the module. A small number of teachers note that younger years might struggle with attention through the whole lesson but that activities such as songs, stories, characters and other interactive activities such as brain hats and making the brain, are well received. One early years/nursery teacher in HIOW commented:

 "The 2 year olds in our setting LOVED making the brain hats! They went home wearing them, telling their parents "I got a brain!" They now all know where their brains live and what they do (and how we can look after them)."

Teachers reported noticing children supporting each other to use the techniques such as happy breathing. For example, a teacher of year one in Bradford reported that "The children have loved myHappyMind My Happy Brain lessons, they cheer when we have them. I have heard them suggest to friends who are sad to try Happy Breathing."

A small number of teachers mention system and process issues such as the balance of sound, system glitches, having to click through lessons and surveys multiple times. Some of the issues identified could be due to internet or other external issues (school technology infrastructure) and further exploration of these comments with the participants would be required in order to validate this.



CELEBRATE

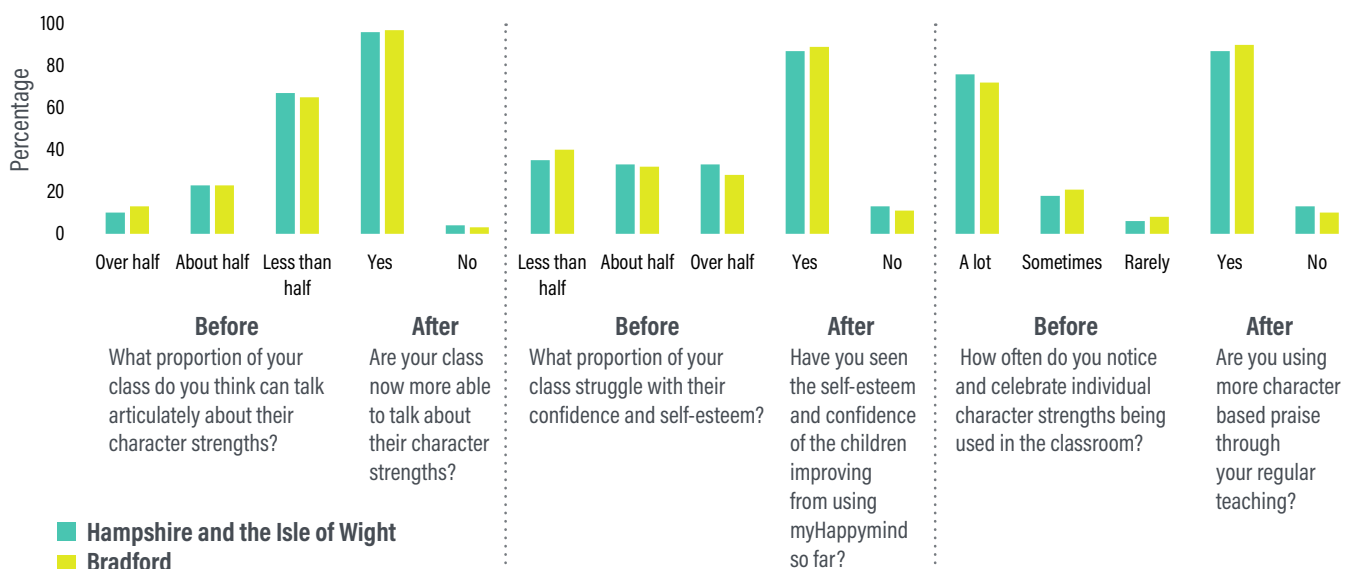
SUMMARY

Teachers reported that:

- Children showed a big increase in recognising and talking about their character strengths after the module
- There were improvements in confidence and self-esteem, though this was slightly lower than the high proportions of reported increased awareness
- They gave more character strength-based praise in the classroom, although many already did this before the module
- A strong theme in the survey free text comments was children identifying strengths in themselves and in others, and using this throughout the school day in playgrounds, assemblies, and clubs
- Some children found parts of the module challenging (23), especially younger pupils who struggled with the terminology and more complex content
- Children in younger year groups (Reception to Year two) generally responded very slightly more positively than older pupils
- Early years pupils enjoyed practical activities (e.g., friendship bracelets), which helped them understand the ideas
- Special/SEN schools saw particularly strong impacts, with all teachers reporting improved ability to talk about strengths, though sample sizes were small.

Responses to the Celebrate module survey questions in both sites are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Celebrate



OVERALL TRENDS

Character strengths

The closed response questions indicate a consistent picture of increased awareness and ability to recognise and discuss character strengths. Beforehand the majority of teachers reported that less than half of children could talk about their strengths but after the module over 95% of teachers in both locations agreed that this ability had increased. The headteachers interviewed also highlighted the character strengths activities:



"...and they talk about the character strengths. I would say they're the ones that really stick with them. They love the character strengths."



"And the other thing the children love, they absolutely love character strengths. And what's wowed me about this age group is the fact that they can recognise their own character strengths. They do know what they're good at and what they're not so good at. And then they like the idea that they then can ask their friend, 'oh, I think actually, I think you're really good at this.' And then their friend will say, yeah, 'I think you're really good at this.' And then they realise that other people notice their strengths in them as well."

Confidence and self-esteem

Teacher reported impact on self-esteem through the closed response questions indicated an improvement of approaching 90%. This was slightly lower than the very high proportions of reported increased awareness which were over 95%. A number of teachers reported improvements in children being able to talk confidently about their strengths and a small number of teachers noted improvements in general confidence or self-esteem in their free text comments.

Strength-based praise

Impacts were reported not only on children themselves but also in the approaches of teachers, who reported giving more character strength-based praise in the classroom (87% HIOW, 90% Bradford). This was supported by teachers' free text comment with one year one teacher in Bradford commenting that "It is helping me as a teacher refer more to these strengths to point out lots of positives." Although levels were not as high as those reported for children's increased awareness of character strengths, this could be because noticing and celebrating strengths already had a high baseline with 76% of teachers in HIOW reporting that this happened a lot and 72% in Bradford.

Qualitative themes

The most prominent theme within the free text comments was that many staff observed pupils not only identifying strengths in themselves but also, importantly, recognising strengths in others. One year five teacher in HIOW noted that "It's lovely to hear children comment positively about others' strengths - there's a noticeable 'lift' on both sides." Teachers reported that children enjoyed noticing and commenting on their classmates' strengths, not just during myHappyMind sessions but also throughout the wider school day, for example, in the playground, assemblies, and clubs. However, three comments indicated that some children found this module challenging compared with the Meet Your Brain module. This appeared to be partly because some of the terminology was harder for some younger children to understand and apply.

AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, CONTRASTS OR SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Responses to the module were fairly consistent across locations with years reception to year two showing slightly more positive responses. A year two teacher in commented that "My class have loved recognising Character Strengths in themselves and their friends too. It has changed the way I praise the children in my class too, with instead being clear on what strength they are demonstrating." This also demonstrates that for some teachers this module did change their teaching practices. Free text responses suggest that these differences across year groups could perhaps be due to the youngest, pre-school children finding some of the concepts difficult and the older children feeling an element of repetition and finding it hard to relate to the strengths as presented.

Closed text responses suggest that over the course of the module, improvements in knowledge were greater than either the translation of this knowledge into children's confidence or teachers' use of character-based praise, although all were still highly positive. This may be due in part to there being higher baselines for use of character-based praise which could be of interest to explore further. This is illustrated by some of the free text comments. One year one teacher in HIOW observed that "I think I already give mainly character based praise so this hasn't been so different for them." And another year three teacher in HIOW who explained that "As we already practise positive framing and positive affirmation within our school, this celebrate module is simply adding to our existing provision - hence changes are not massively apparent." This area could be of interest to explore in further research.

There were comments by a number of teachers across both locations that, for the nursery/early years, some of the concepts and content were difficult for children to understand while feedback on the activities such as making friendship bracelets were well received by children. One teacher commented that "Our Toddlers (2 year olds) really enjoyed making the friendship bracelets! Whilst making them, we talked about friendship and who they were going to give their bracelet to and why. This activity really helped the 2 year olds grasp what makes a good friend!"

Special/SEN schools reported the biggest impact on ability to talk about strengths. Although sample numbers were very small (Bradford, 4 and HIOW 7), 100% of teachers responded positively to children being more able to talk about their strengths. One teacher commented that children had "started to spot each other's strengths and encourage each other."

APPRECIATE

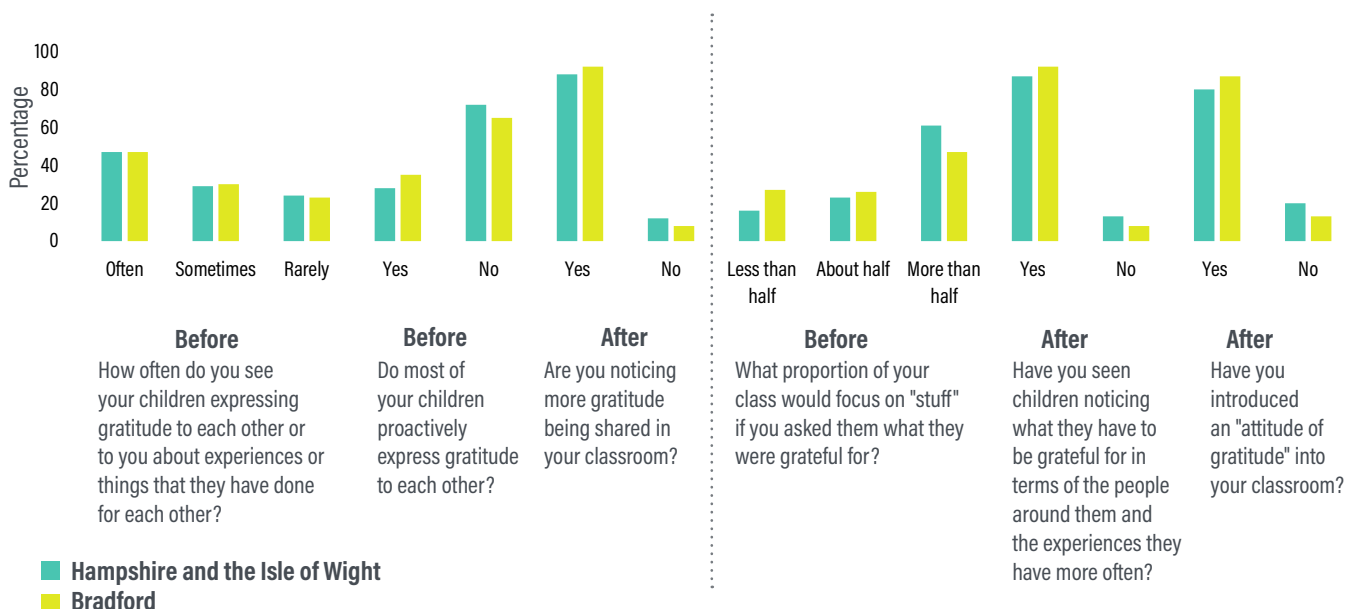
SUMMARY

Teachers reported that:

- Most staff saw a big rise in children showing gratitude, with around 90% noticing more grateful behaviour after the module
- There was a shift in children's understanding of gratitude, from material possessions to appreciation of people and experiences
- Younger children (reception and year one) showed the strongest positive changes, often using gratitude language at school and at home
- A small number of teachers (18) found it harder to embed gratitude consistently with some older pupils, especially around self-gratitude and maintaining kind behaviour.

Responses to the Appreciate module survey questions in both sites are shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Appreciate



OVERALL TRENDS

Expressing gratitude

From a fairly modest starting point of less than half of staff noticing children expressing gratitude to others, after the module around 90% of staff across the two locations noticed an increase in gratitude within the classroom. Teachers also report a shift in children's understanding of gratitude, from material possessions to appreciation of people and experiences (87% Bradford, 92% HIOW).

Embedding gratitude

A high proportion of teachers reported having introduced the 'Attitude of Gratitude' ethos into their classroom (80% in HIOW and 87% in Bradford), which involves emphasis on expressing gratitude for self, others and experiences, rather than gratitude for material possessions. One year two teacher in HIOW explained "The children my class are much more able to say why and what they are grateful. I taught a PSHE lesson and they were all able to say five things they are grateful for. Things like family, food, love, support, kindness, homes. They were so sensible and had genuine reasons. Before myHappyMind they would have said only X Box etc."

From the interviews, a headteacher and teacher also highlighted the benefits of expressing and embedding gratitude in both children and staff: "...then the gratitude, yeah, the attitude, gratitude, our children... It's great. I use it all of the time now, that, you know, when you're having a really bad day and you think... What am I grateful for today? I use that phrase so much with the children because even if they're having a really bad day, there is still something grateful in the day. And I think because we're talking about it all of the time, it's good for our [staff] mental health as well..."

Qualitative themes

Teachers' free text comments focused on the increased awareness and understanding about the importance and feel-good factors associated with expressing and receiving gratitude. A year two teacher in Bradford commented "The children said that when others share gratitude with them it makes them feel happy and wonderful." Some staff noticed increased expressions of gratitude and others were very positive about the range of activities that formed part of the module, with a number of mentions of thankfulness trees in the younger years in HIOW.

AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, CONTRASTS OR SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

There were many teacher comments describing the different activities and techniques used successfully to help children express gratitude, from the thankfulness trees, to cards, classroom displays and school practices which contributed to the embedding of gratitude. This is illustrated by a comment from a reception teacher in HIOW who explained that "The children have really thought about who and what they are thankful for in this unit and it has made us think as a school how we do not do enough around appreciation and gratitude. As a result we are actually going to relaunch one of our school values in September as Appreciation."

Reception and year one classes report the most significant positive changes in children expressing gratitude, across both locations, with well over 90% of teachers noting more gratitude being shown. A year one teacher from HIOW commented that "Children have shown a greater awareness and understanding of gratitude and how to express gratefulness." In fact, parents/carers have also informed me that their children is using the language of gratitude at home! and a reception teacher in Bradford wrote "The children have taken it upon themselves to praise each other for showing things they are thankful for and it has been really lovely to see."



For older age groups teachers also notice positive changes. A year four teacher in Bradford collected pupil comments which included: "It made me think about who I am grateful for."

Although the vast majority of teachers indicated that children were positively impacted by the module, a small number (18) commented that applying learnings around gratitude and kindness behaviours consistently may require further reinforcement and support. This is demonstrated by this quote from a year three teacher in Bradford "Children understand gratitude but keep reverting back to their default of spreading unhappiness by being mean and rude to others."

A small number of teachers, across years 3 to 5, noted that some children found expressing gratitude to others easier to get to grips with than thinking about self-gratitude. For example, a year three teacher in Bradford commented that children "find being grateful to themselves challenging but we have been working on this."



RELATE

SUMMARY

Teachers reported:

- Clear improvements in children's active listening after the module, with around 80% noticing positive changes in both locations
- An increase in understanding of positive relationships, with majority of teachers in both sites reporting that pupils grasped their importance
- Closed questions at the end of the module did not measure actual changes in relationship behaviour but free text comments sometimes gave an indication of whether the teachers observed changes
- A number of examples where they have noticed changes in children's efforts to understand others.

Responses to the Relate module survey questions in both sites are shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Relate



OVERALL TRENDS

Active listening

Before the module delivery, most teachers reported levels of active listening to be moderate to low among children but almost 80% of teachers across both locations reported a difference in children's active listening after the module, with some differences between age groups. A reception teacher in Bradford noticed "a big increase in children's active listening skills. They now understand the importance of active listening both in their learning and in their friendships."

Relationships

Almost 60% of teachers across Bradford and HIOW reported that at least half their class had challenges with classmate relationships before the module. The post module survey indicated very high levels of children understanding the importance of positive relationships and how to build them, with 95% of teachers in HIOW and 96% in Bradford reporting this. Although the closed-text questions did not ask teachers about actual changes in children's relationships, some commented on this in their free text comments. For example, a year four teacher in HIOW reported seeing "an improvement in children seeing conflict from other people's perspective."

Understanding others

Children's ability to appreciate others' perspectives were considered by teachers to be relatively low before the module with about 70% of teachers across locations reporting that at least half of their class struggled with this. Questions in the post module survey did not seek to identify changes in these levels but rather asked teachers whether they were using the 'Stop-Understand-Consider' approach within their teaching. Overall, around 80% of teachers were doing so, with teachers tending to use this technique particularly across older age groups. A year five teacher in HIOW described that "When dealing with friendship difficulties, STOP, understand and consider has become the script that has helped children to maintain friendships and build understanding of different perspectives."

Qualitative themes

The predominant theme of the free text comments was children's increased understanding and use of listening. This comprised over half of the teachers' comments across the locations and years, with many referring specifically to active listening as a technique and discussing how they had applied these within the classroom and the impact they had seen. A second major theme was teachers mentioning ways in which they had encouraged children to consider others' feelings, through Stop-Understand-Consider as well as other techniques.

AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, CONTRASTS OR SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

There are positive and consistent improvements to listening across the years. The level of improvement is greatest in younger years, and slightly less, although still positive, in years 4 and 6. Teacher comments do not provide insight in to why this could be as teachers reported good examples of children putting active listening into place in these age groups. A year four teacher in HIOW commented that "The children have definitely taken in the need to listen to each other more in order to sort out problems. They have understood how annoying and uncomfortable it feels when someone isn't really taking in what you have said, and how amazing it feels when someone is."



Reception classes showed slightly less improvement in understanding others compared to other year groups, but the sample size is very small in early years so hard to see how that year group fits in to the trend. One reception teacher in Bradford reported that, "They now understand the importance of active listening both in their learning and in their friendships."

Use of 'Stop-Understand-Consider' increases across the years, up until year five. Year three HIOW teacher gave an example how the technique is being used "Two children who had a falling out were reminded to use stop understand and consider, and they managed to make amends. We refer to it all the time in our classroom. Boys use it when they have had disagreements over football."

Teachers reported a number of examples where they have noticed changes in children's efforts to understand others. A year three teacher in Bradford observed that "It has started the conversation around seeing things from another person/child's point of view, as this is something my class find challenging and is often the root of conflict." However, some children found it harder to master the understanding others' perspective, perhaps unsurprisingly this was especially the case for younger pupils, even when listening was reported to increase. A year one teacher in HIOW described the challenge as the module being "really hard for Year one children as they are still very much focused on themselves and often can't look at different situations from another's point of view."



ENGAGE

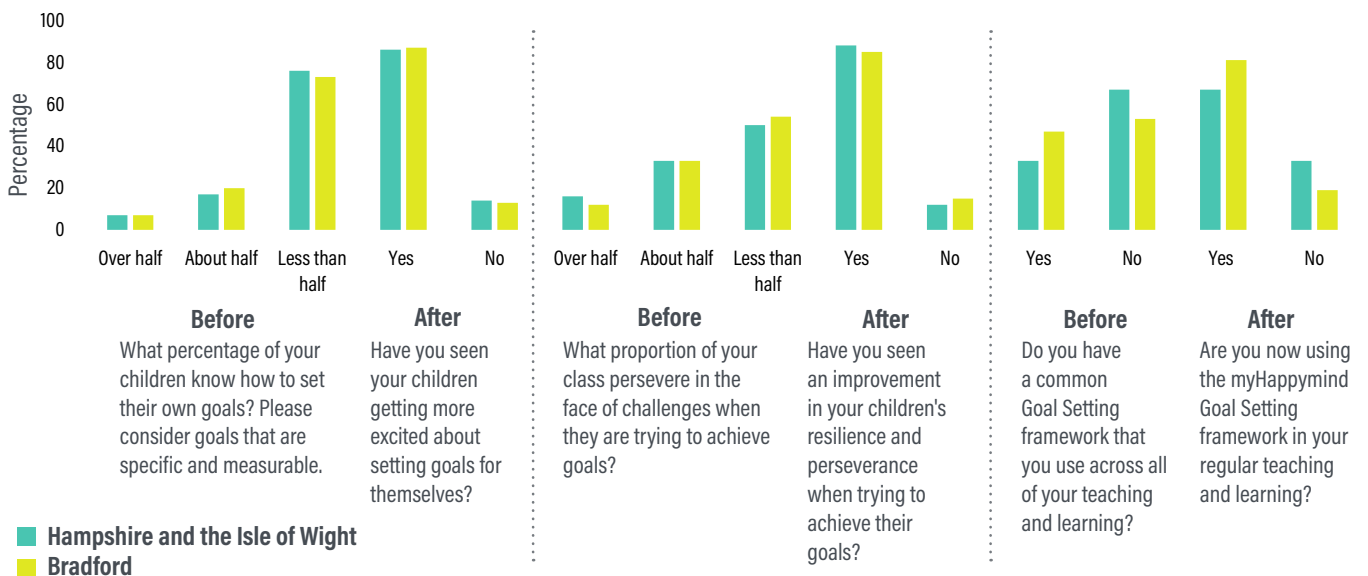
SUMMARY

Teachers reported that:

- ⦿ Before the module, less than half of their class knew how to set goals. After the module, over 85% said children were more enthusiastic about goal setting
- ⦿ There were strong improvements in perseverance and resilience, with around 85–88% noticing progress after the module
- ⦿ Regular use of the myHappyMind Goal Setting framework increased, especially in Bradford, though uptake was lower in HIOW
- ⦿ Many teachers said children enjoyed the activities and felt more confident in goal setting abilities, but a minority of younger and older pupils found parts of the module less engaging or age-appropriate
- ⦿ A few teachers (11) suggested improvements, such as better tailoring for very young and older year groups, and more engaging content for the upper year groups.

Responses to the Engage module survey questions in both sites are shown in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Engage



OVERALL TRENDS

Goal setting

Before the Engage module, most teachers (over 70% across both HIOW and Bradford), reported that less than half of their class knew how to set goals for themselves. This was a theme across year groups, with particularly low levels in early years to year one. Although the end of module survey did not ask teachers about their children's ability to set goals, in the post module survey, over 85% of teachers in both locations reported children becoming more enthusiastic about setting goals. For example, a year three teacher in Bradford commented that "I love how specific some goals are from children and how they have started planning out how they will achieve this goal in the future."

Perseverance and resilience

In the pre-programme survey less than 20% of teachers indicated that more than half of their children displayed perseverance when facing challenges in pursuing their goals. Following the module, 85–88% of teachers reported improvements in children's perseverance and resilience in pursuing goals. This pattern appeared across most year groups.

Goal setting framework

Prior to the Engage module, only around half of teachers in Bradford and one third of teachers in HIOW used a common goal setting framework. After the module, over two thirds of teachers in HIOW reported regular usage of the myHappyMind goal setting framework and 81% in Bradford.

Qualitative themes

The majority of comments focused on children's enjoyment, increased ability and confidence in goal setting, with examples provided by teachers of the kinds of goals children were setting. A number of teachers referred back to previous myHappyMind modules and how children's learning had carried through the programme. One year three teacher in HIOW shared that "Lots of children have set themselves goals of active listening, as this is a target my class agreed on as part of their class charter."

AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, CONTRASTS OR SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Across both locations, excitement and perseverance relating to goal setting post-module is high with between 85 and 90% of teachers agreeing that there has been an increase. Positive teacher comments about the module, across year groups include an early years teacher from HIOW comment that "We have really loved this module! Especially the song - our 2 year olds have ADORED singing it and repeating the words back during the song. They also enjoyed the perseverance challenges and how they made them push themselves to do something tricky. At the end of this, the children decorated a medal and they were SO proud of themselves for completing the challenges." A year five teacher in Bradford reported that "A child in our class has said that they are more able to achieve their goals as they are more resilient."

Take up of the myHappyMind goal setting framework is lower in HIOW (67%) than Bradford (81%) – this is despite HIOW having a lower baseline for use of a goal setting framework than Bradford before starting the programme. There were no teacher comments relating to this, making it difficult to know why this might be the case, although, as noted previously, Bradford has been teaching the programme for longer which could be a factor.



A small number of teachers (11) of the upper and lower age groups commented that the Engage module has been less well received than other modules. This was reportedly due to a range of factors including material being less engaging, learning not sticking as well and children finding it hard to understand goal setting. One reception teacher in HIOW commented “Songs have too many words for this age group - the children aren't remembering them. The language used in this unit also felt inappropriate for the age group.” At the upper age range a teacher in HIOW commented that “It would be lovely to see some content to relate to older children a bit more and to help keep them engaged. In year six, they are starting to disengage with a lot of the learning, especially towards the end of the year, so adding in things to keep them intrigued or interested would be amazing.”



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

SUMMARY

- ⊙ The data reported by headteachers across HIOW and Bradford indicates that myHappyMind generates a range of benefits for schools, pupils, staff and families
- ⊙ The data collected by myHappyMind was categorised by headteachers and SENCOs in terms of estimates of number of children impacted rather than financial benefit
- ⊙ myHappyMind's separate ROI publications calculate financial returns of 14.4x in Bradford and 46x in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, based on the headteacher and SENCO impact estimates reported which were applied to standard NHS, education and local authority unit costs. Independent economic modelling or validation of this work was outside the scope of this analysis
- ⊙ The ROI survey findings suggest that headteachers and SENCOs view myHappyMind as having broad benefits for school culture
- ⊙ Strong impacts, where headteachers more often identified a "great" or "somewhat" of an impact, were seen in areas such as whole-school approach, staff understanding of mental health and children's self-regulation with additional positive impacts on metrics such as attendance and referrals
- ⊙ At the same time, several areas such as impact on school attendance and school engagement, safety and inclusion show more modest change but still positive results, with headteachers more often reporting "somewhat" or "a little" impact. Variation between schools or particular implementation challenges may influence return on investment
- ⊙ A commissioner interview highlighted strong impacts of myHappyMind on embedding the whole-school approach as well as emotional health and wellbeing.

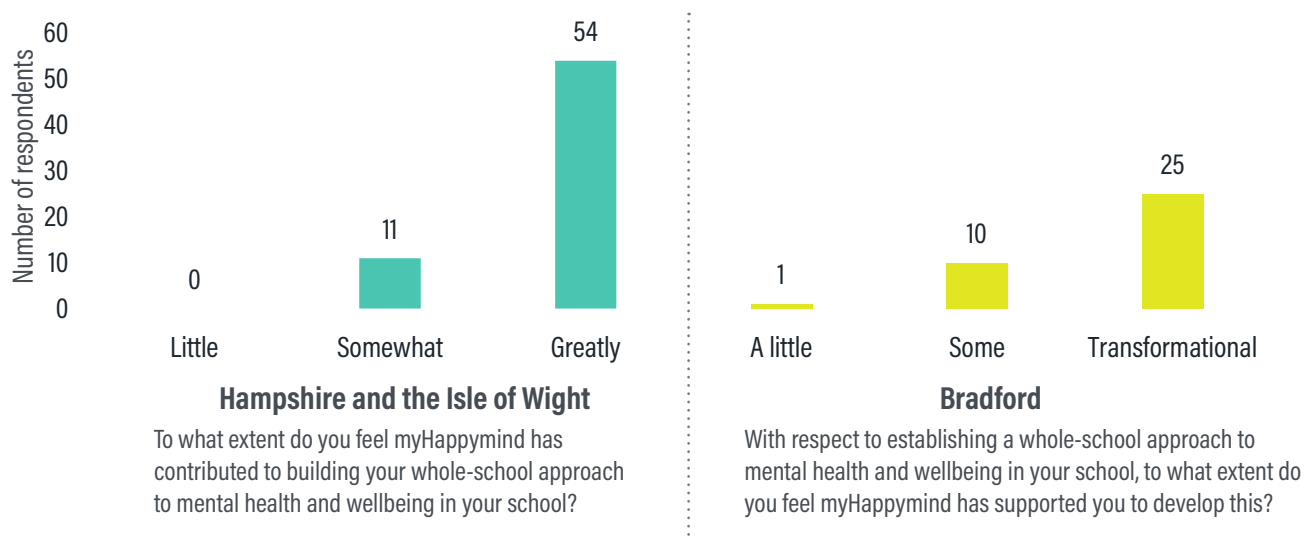
COMPLETION NUMBERS

65 complete surveys were received from headteachers in HIOW with all respondents providing closed, scaled-based responses as well as free text comments in response to two questions. The first question asking for positive feedback on the programme and the second question asking to report any challenges. In Bradford, 36 headteacher responses were received, with respondents providing closed, scale-based responses as well as comments in response to one free text question asking for any further comments but with a focus on impact on waitlists and children with special educational needs. Respondents in Bradford were not specifically asked to comment on challenges which may lead to a positive skew for some of Bradford free text comments.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH, STAFF AND PARENTS)

This section includes responses to questions relating to how myHappyMind has been embedded as a whole-school approach and includes perceived changes to teaching practice and engagement of parents. This section also includes stakeholder feedback from interviews.

Figure 6: Whole-school approach



The responses to these questions demonstrate that respondents believe that myHappyMind has permeated throughout the schools with a significant contribution towards mental health and wellbeing, with almost 100% of respondents answering positively. This is supported by the free text comments. One Bradford respondent commented that “these programmes enhance staff understanding of mental health and wellbeing, benefiting the entire school community. The impact of initiatives like myHappyMind cannot be overstated; they play a critical role in supporting our most vulnerable children. Without them, providing the level of care and support that our pupils need would be far more challenging.”

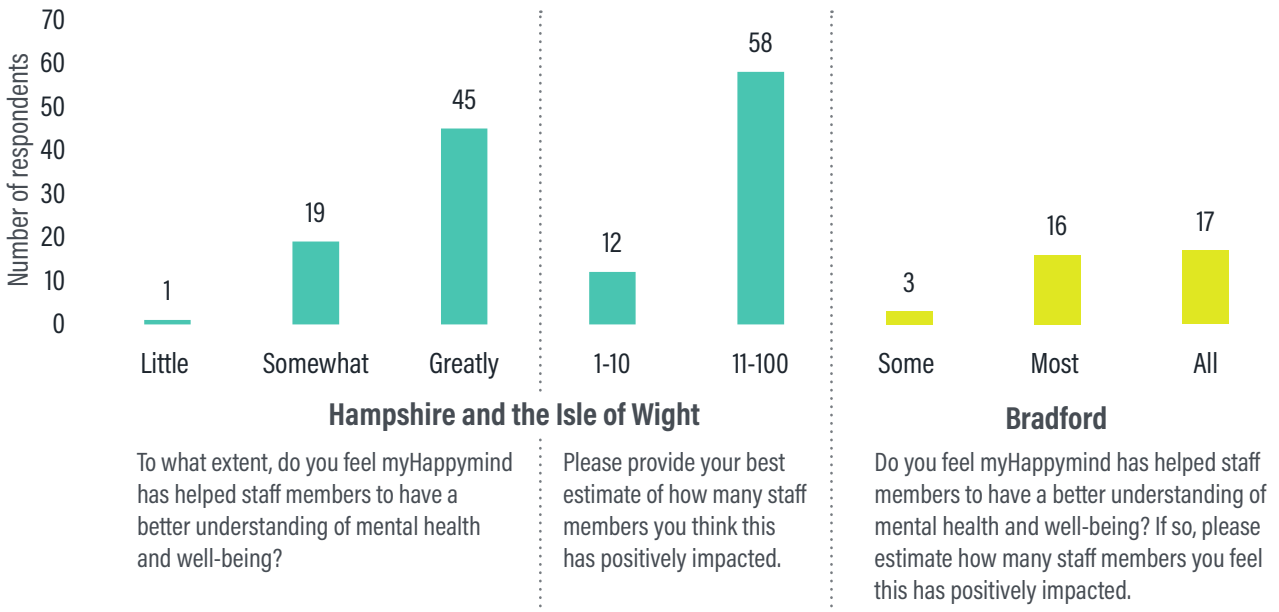
Nineteen of all the free text comments specifically refer to a whole-school approach. Comments include how different stakeholders’ engagement with the programme, learning has been embedded into the ethos throughout the school. This is illustrated by this HIOW respondent’s comment: “The enthusiasm from all stakeholders. Parents, children, staff and governors are all fully in support of the programme and feel it is an essential part of our school. New parents who are starting in September have commented that myHappyMind swayed them to choose our school!”

In addition, an interview with a commissioner from HIOW highlighted the positive impact of myHappyMind on the culture of schools and the whole-school approach:



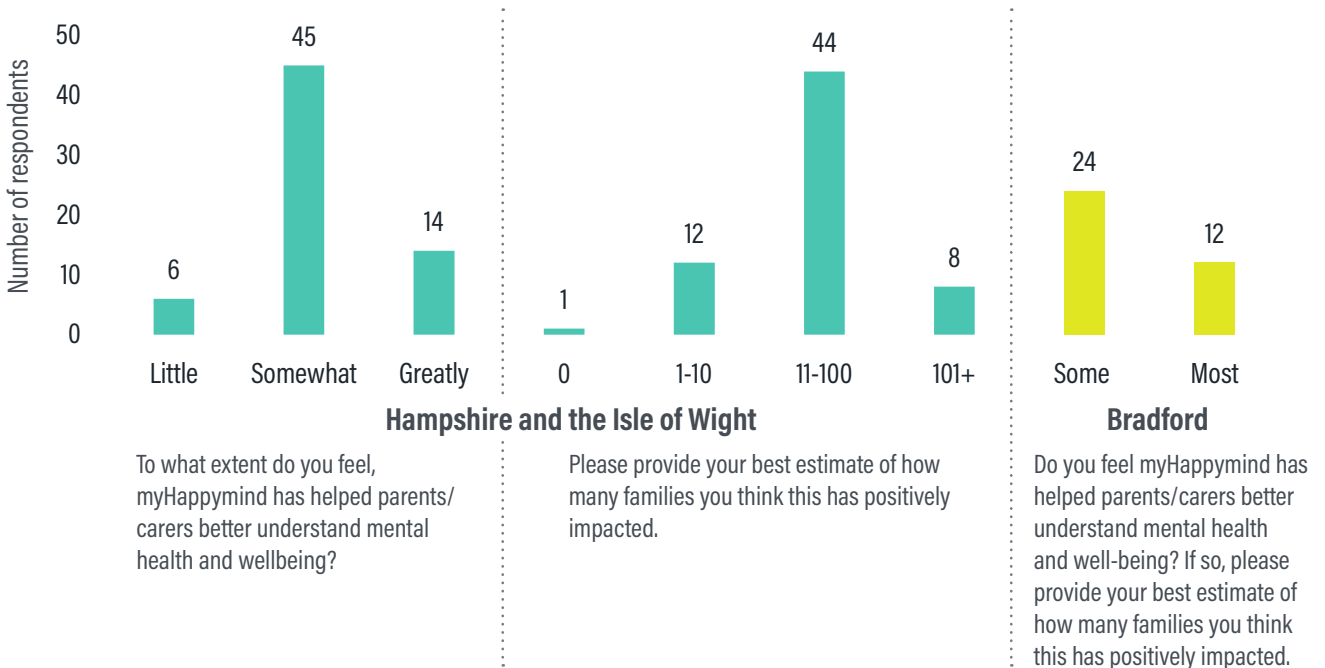
“I’d say to date...it does justify the investment made. I think the key thing from our perspective is around that sort of impact of changing the culture of schools, around emotional health and wellbeing and sort of really embedding that whole school approach.”

Figure 7: Impact on staff



Responses to these questions suggest that significant numbers of staff have an improved understanding of mental health and wellbeing. These are underscored by the free text comments, 23 of which relate to the programme being well received by teachers and learning from it (including for personal benefit) with one respondent suggesting that the programme has reduced teacher workload (see quote below). However, this appears to be inconsistent across the two locations and thirteen comments, all from HIOW, report that the programme is not always prioritised or given sufficient time. For example, one respondent in HIOW commented that a challenge was “Teacher buy in and consistency of delivery.” This could again, be due to differences in the length the programme has been running at for each site, but without a comparator at the same timepoint, we were not able to analyse this.

Figure 8: Impact on parents

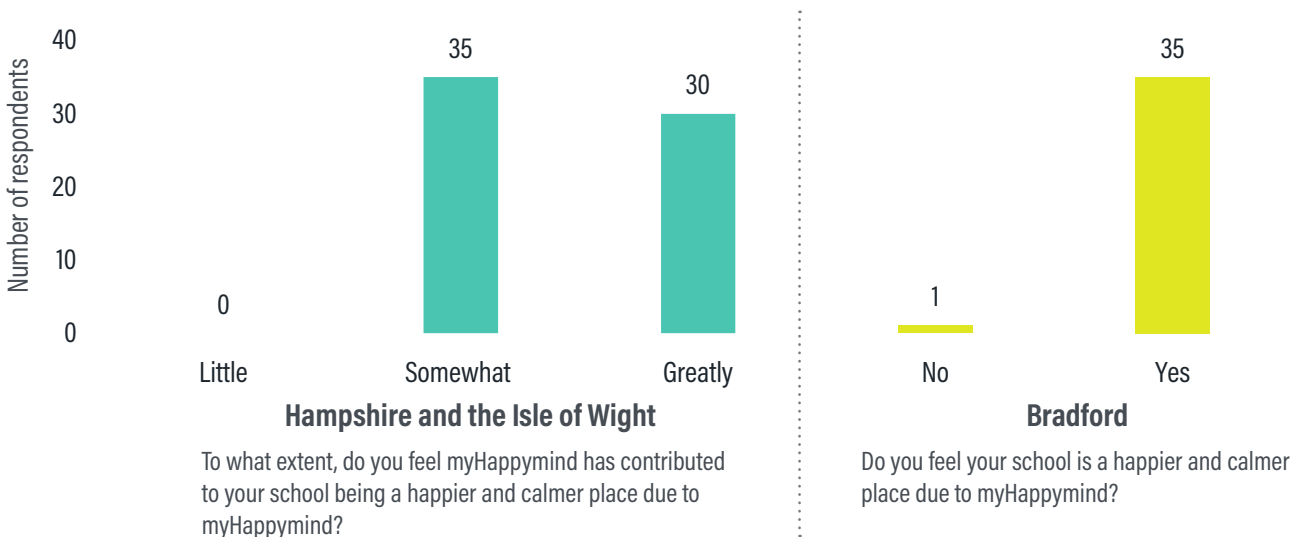


While responses suggest that some parents have been positively impacted by the programme, this is less pronounced than other stakeholders with both HIOW and Bradford reporting mostly 'some' impact on parents. This is reflected in the free text comments (10 in HIOW and 2 in Bradford), with teachers describing challenges with parent engagement. A respondent from HIOW described this problem "Parents are still getting CAHMS and other referrals and not yet using this at home despite us trying to get them too." On the other hand, Bradford seems to be further ahead in parental engagement, as may be expected due to the programme running for longer, with many using the app and teachers reporting that many are positive and supportive, leading to myHappyMind language and techniques being used at home with benefits being seen in school. For example, one commented "Parents are very grateful of being able to use the app and we always direct parents to it during early help meetings."

SCHOOL CLIMATE (HAPPINESS AND CALM, SELF-REGULATION)

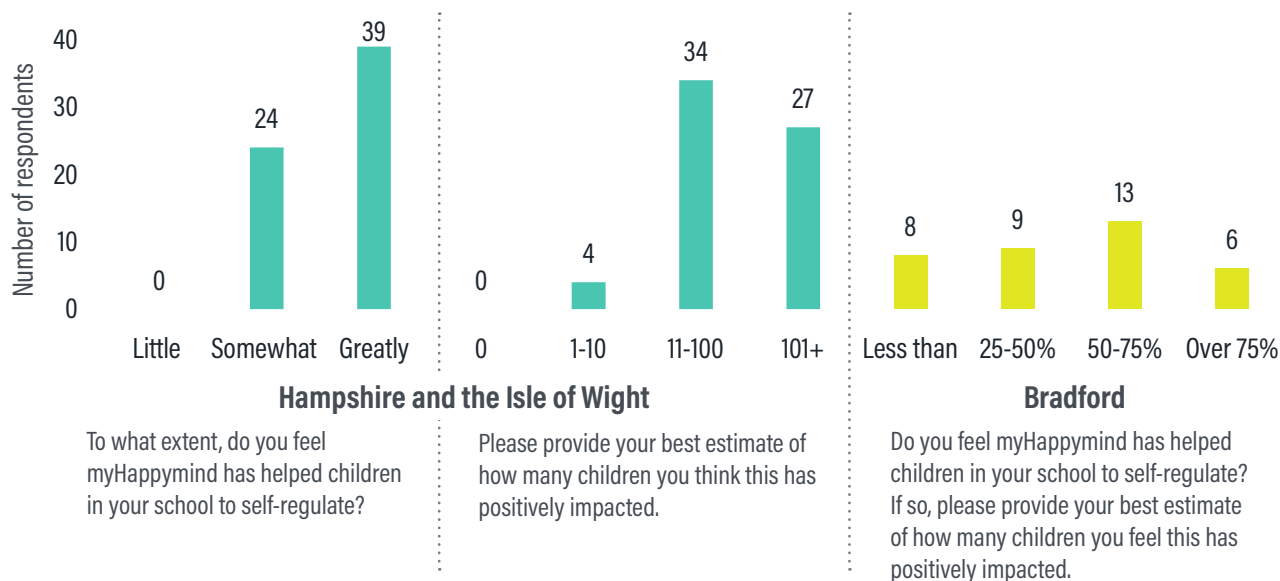
This section includes questions relating to the extent to which myHappyMind has led to improvements in children's happiness, calmness and ability to self-regulate within school.

Figure 9: Impact on happiness and calmness



Almost all respondents report that myHappyMind has led to increases in happiness and calm in school, at least to some extent. A small number of free text comments relate to this. In Bradford one respondent commented "MyHappyMind has contributed to a calm school culture. I believe that it is excellent as a preventative approach to behaviour/mental health needs before they become too big (i.e. needing external support)."

Figure 10: Impact on self-regulation



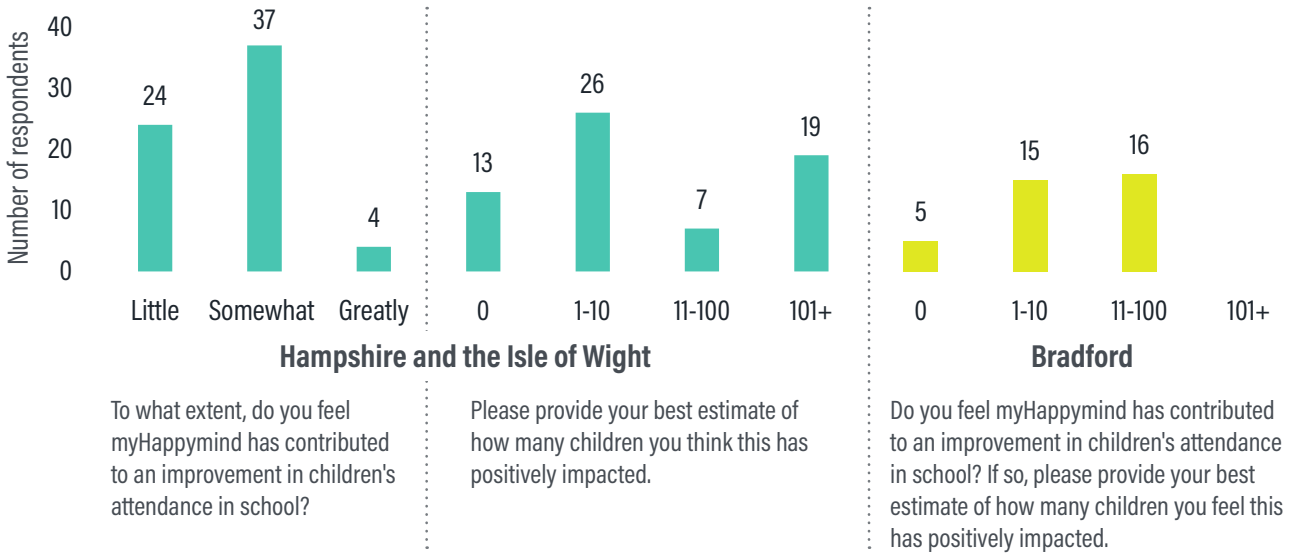
Self-regulation was also seen to have improved in school, with strategies for self-regulation such as Happy Breathing being useful and enjoyable. Some teachers described building in time and space for Happy Breathing at key points during the day. It was noted to have contributed to creating a calming effect on the school, especially for younger pupils. One Bradford respondent reported that “The impact of My Happy Mind in the half term we have been using it is huge. The Happy Breathing is now a consistent approach used in school by colleagues when children are in class or playgrounds. Due to the consistent approach it is now something which parents/carers are also referring to when speaking to teachers too. The benefit of a subtle technique which children can use if very important and allows children to discretely self-regulate when otherwise there would have been a more public response.”

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT, SAFETY AND INCLUSION

This theme incorporates responses to questions relating to how myHappyMind had impacted metrics including attendance, onward referrals, exclusions and safeguarding incidents, as well as the impact on pupils with special educational needs. Across all these questions, respondents report an impact of myHappyMind, although this was slightly less pronounced than the impacts observed to the school culture. Additionally, numbers are difficult to interpret in this section due to the absence of a baseline and the differences in questions and categories between HIOW and Bradford.



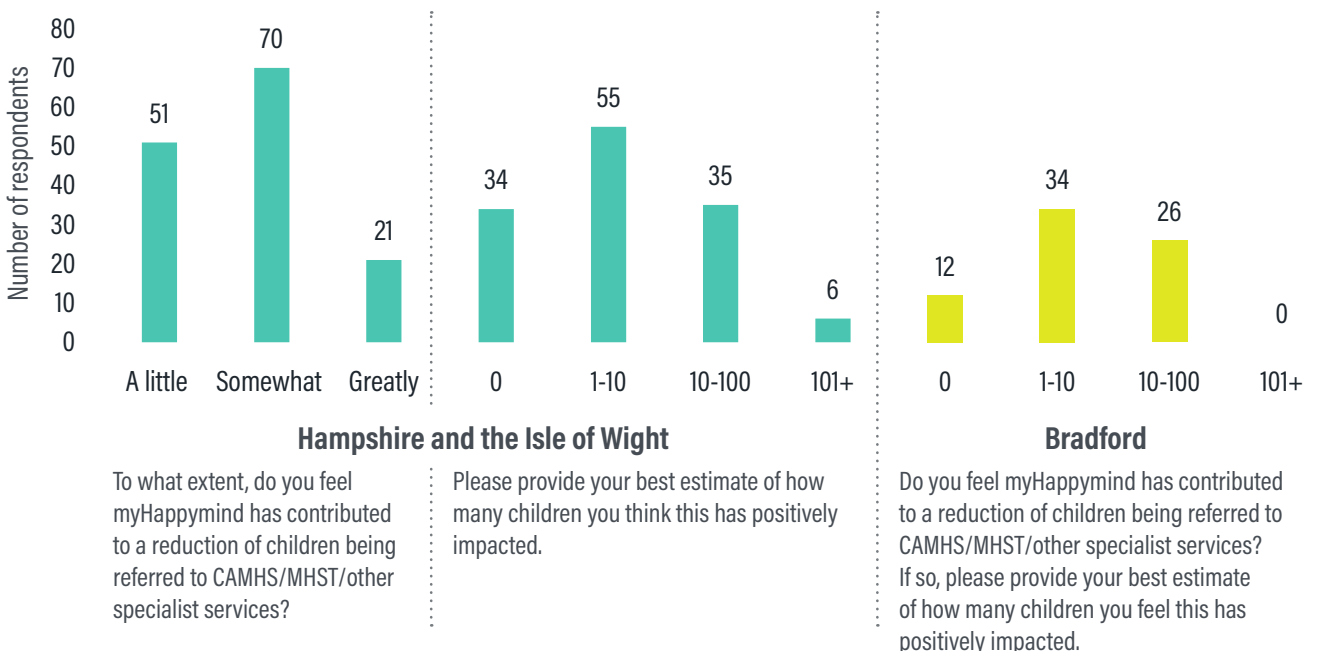
Figure 11: Impact on pupil attendance



myHappyMind was considered to have an impact on pupil attendance. More respondents noticed somewhat of an improvement than a great improvement. However, some respondents had noticed a significant improvement. One Bradford respondent commented "Our behaviour data and attendance data has improved greatly with fewer behaviour issues and more children regulated in lessons. Our children have a much deeper understanding of how their brains work and this has helped them to talk about their emotions and how they feel in different situations. The staff CPD [continuous professional development] has been fantastic alongside the implementation of myHappyMind. We all love it, including our Governors! More parents are onboard and downloading the app to support their children at home."

For the perceived estimated number of children positively impacted in terms of attendance, the distribution of results is varied in HIOW, with no clear trend to draw an approximation from. Bradford's responses are more linear, suggesting that somewhere between the upper end of 1-10 and lower end of 11-100 is a likely approximation for the number of children positively impacted.

Figure 12: Impact on referrals



A similar pattern is reported with referrals – with respondents identifying positive change but fewer categorising this as a great change. One Bradford respondent commented that: “It is absolutely critical to keep delivering myHappymind in schools, particularly in disadvantaged areas as not only is it reducing waitlists to specialist services now, the significant impact will be seen in the long term health of individuals, communities and society as a whole. It MUST remain a priority.”

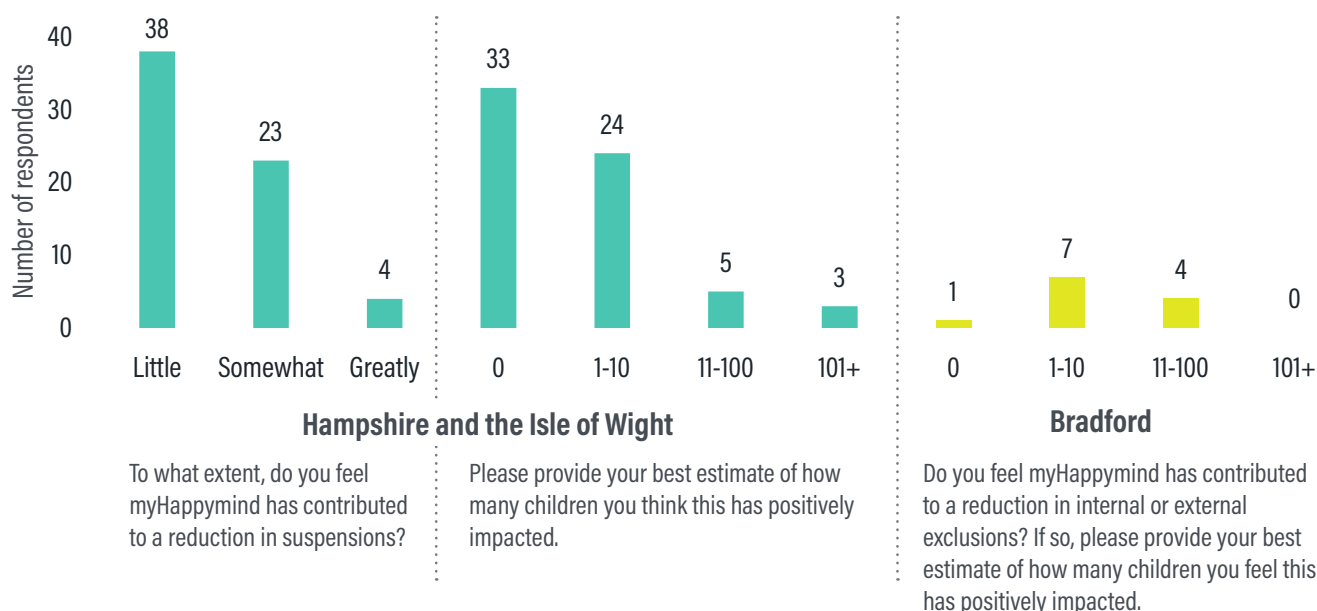
The distribution of results for the perceived estimated number of children positively impacted is varied. Across both sites, the majority selected 1-10 with slightly more selecting 10-100 compared with the 0 response option.

One interview participant suggested that links and partnerships between myHappymind and Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) should be strengthened:



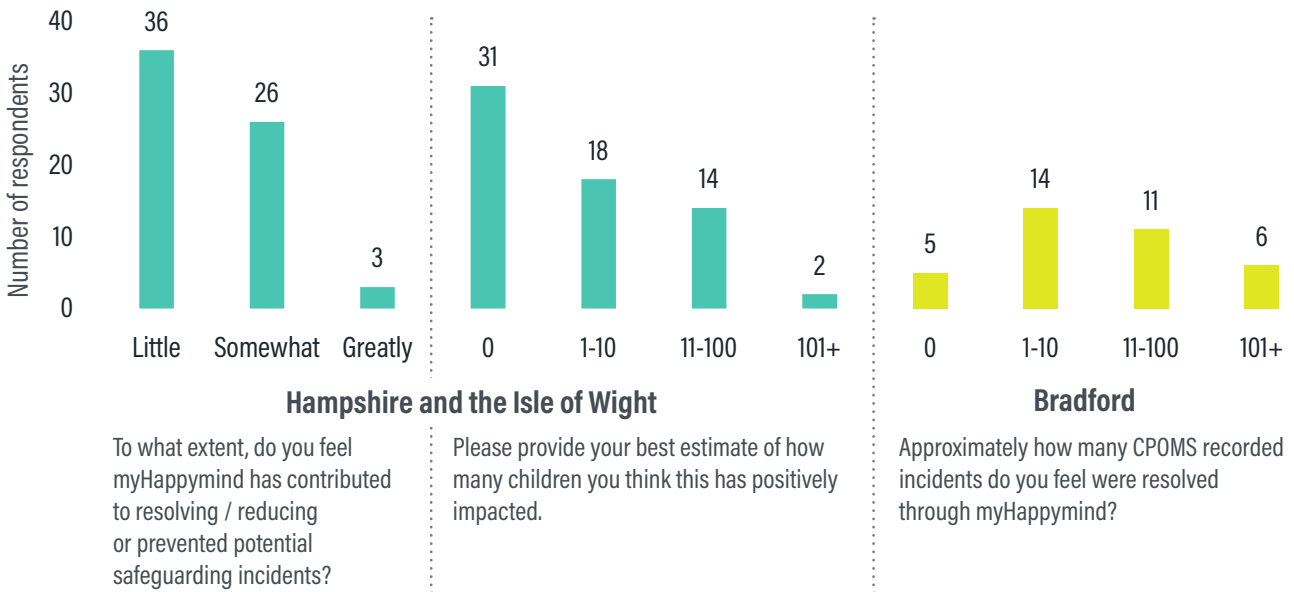
“And I think it's around sort of the MHSTs could sort of use the same language that myHappymind are doing to sort of...embed that culture and that language within the primary schools.”

Figure 13: Impact on exclusions



Impacts on exclusions were positive but relatively small. This could be because as one Bradford respondent put it: “It has not helped with exclusions as we do not exclude.” There were no references to exclusion in the HIOW comments. However, there was a powerful case study from Bradford where “One child with severe SEMH needs who was given a fixed term exclusion, has been supported upon the return to school and increased awareness of MH needs has enabled us to make this a positive experience. It is worth noting that this child readily described myHappymind as, “A waste of my time!” but now is enabled to take part in the sessions and most importantly understand what is happening in their own body and mind, and use strategies learned to self-regulate. That’s a serious success story!”

Figure 14: Impact on safeguarding



55% (36) respondents in HIOW said that myHappyMind had "little or no" contribution to reducing or resolving incidents, 40% (26) said it had "somewhat" of an impact and 5% said "greatly". No free text comments relating to safeguarding were collected, limiting the ability to provide context to these figures. The question is framed as myHappyMind's contribution to safeguarding incidents, although it is important to note that safeguarding incidents can be driven by factors outside the scope of universal classroom wellbeing programmes.

Figure 15: Impact on children with special educational needs and social, emotional and mental health needs

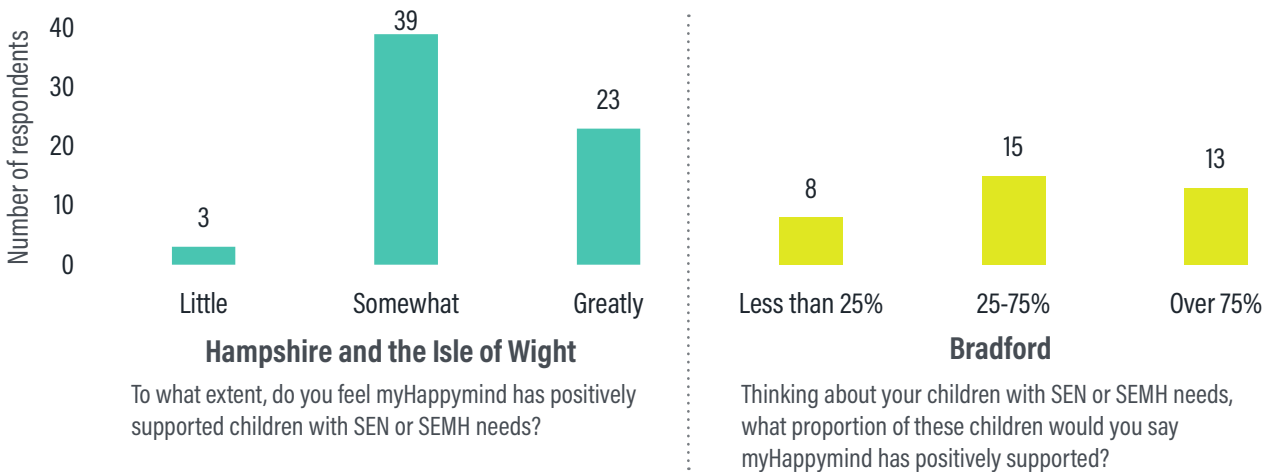
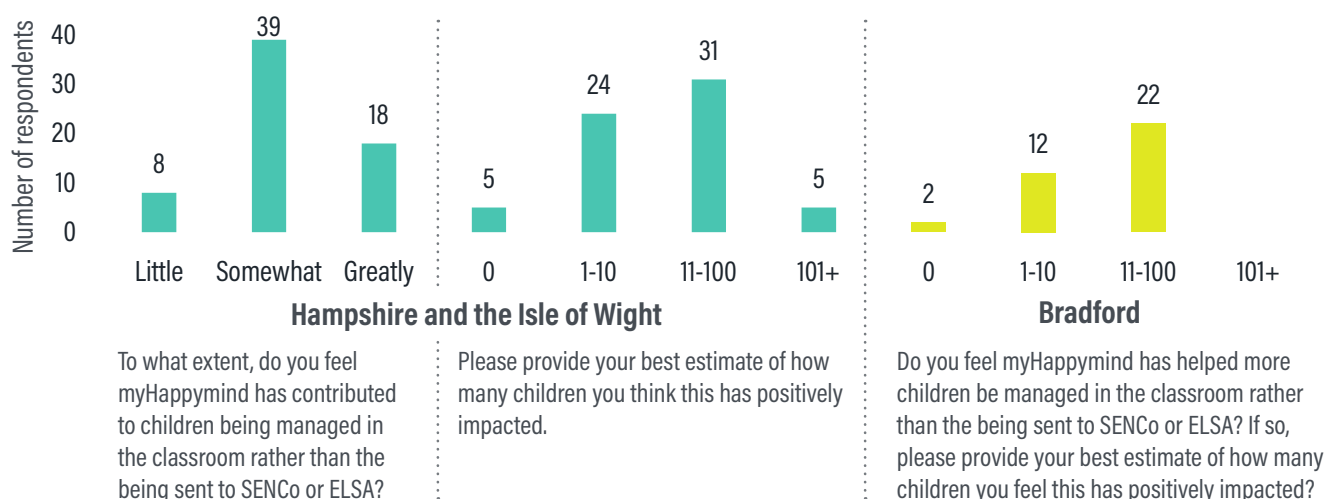


Figure 16: Impact on referrals to SENCOs & ESLAs



Respondents identified positive impacts on children with special education needs and social, emotional and mental health needs, as well as on referrals to SENCOs and emotional literacy support assistants, (ELSAs), with most respondents identifying somewhat or great impacts of the programme in these areas. There were also positive comments about the impact on children with additional needs from both locations.

One respondent from HIOW commented that “I have also realised that there are far more children than we originally thought that needed this program and were finding life in general quite tricky. The school has embraced myHappyMind with many children wanting to be Wellbeing Champions and helping others.”

In Bradford, one school was “located in a highly deprived area and faces significant challenges related to the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs of both pupils and staff. Programmes like myHappyMind are invaluable in addressing these challenges. They not only reduce teacher workload, freeing up time to support pupils with SEMH needs, but also enable the delivery of a high-quality mental health and wellbeing curriculum.”

A headteacher also expressed the positive impacts of myHappyMind on children with additional needs during an interview:



“I have to say the addition of the SEND, the special needs element, has been a real bonus this year because ...we're a mainstream school, but we now have a high proportion of children with special educational needs because all the special schools are full. So, we've made little base groups, which basically means there are times when those children have learning in their own way that they can access myHappyMind...and we use the SEND programme for those children, and they get a lot out of that. They get a lot out of doing myHappyMind.”

OTHER COMMENTS

Whilst not directly related to the return on investment questions, the free text comments highlighted some additional themes, which reinforce responses given by teachers across other modules. These included many comments about children having developed new and valuable knowledge and vocabulary about their brains that they were able to apply to themselves, as well as comments about overall enjoyment of the programme. There were also themes suggesting improvements to the programme content and system such as increased flexibility (including where teaching staff change across the programme), some system glitches and also some comments about adapting the material for very young children or those in older year groups.



NOTES ABOUT THE DATA

While we hope that this report provides helpful insights into how schools are experiencing myHappymind, there are several important limitations to keep in mind when interpreting the findings of the data we analysed for this evaluation. These limitations reflect the real-world, service-delivered nature of the data and apply to most school-based wellbeing evaluations of this kind. They should be read alongside the consistent positive feedback from teachers across both locations and all five modules.

EXISTING EVIDENCE FOR MYHAPPYMIND

In the 'Existing evidence' section of the report we summarise previously conducted reviews of myHappymind to put the findings of this review in context. The data used to complete these reviews was not included in our analysis.

The survey data analysed for this report was collected by myHappymind, as is common in service-level reporting, this was collected through their platform surveys. Interviewees were selected by myHappymind and interviews were conducted independently by Centre for Mental Health.

Only data from two areas (Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and Bradford) were included.

Two distinct areas, differing in size, demographics and context, were purposely selected as case study areas to showcase potential variation in impact, making findings more relevant to a range of localities. However, these may not be representative of all areas using myHappymind. Additionally, some of the classes taking part had already completed earlier stages of the myHappymind programme in the previous academic year, whereas others were experiencing myHappymind content for the first time. This could have influenced the data for some year groups, for example, by potentially appearing to limit the change seen. In addition, Bradford have been using the programme for two more years than HIOW which could explain differences in impact seen in some areas of the programme.

PRE- AND POST- PROGRAMME SURVEYS WERE NOT DESIGNED TO MATCH EACH OTHER

myHappymind's survey approach, is described as following an educational evaluation method, whereby post programme questions are aimed at measuring if educational objectives were achieved. For example, before the programme was delivered, teachers were asked to estimate the proportion of their class who were aware of the factors that contribute to their wellbeing and know how to look after their own brain. After the Meet Your Brain module, teachers were asked if this module had helped their class to understand their brain. Although this approach is understandable, as the questions do not align, it is difficult to quantify with confidence how much change has occurred over time.

NOT ALL TEACHERS COMPLETED THE FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS

As noted earlier in the report, later modules had lower sample sizes, reflecting differences in teachers' progress with delivering the programme at the time of data collation. Therefore, findings from these should be approached with more caution. Additionally, because responses were anonymous, it is not possible to identify how individual teachers' views changed over time. It is also possible that teachers who completed the programme and chose to complete the later surveys had different views from those who did not.

THE RESULTS ONLY REFLECT TEACHERS' AND HEADTEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

The study did not collect direct opinions or measures directly from children themselves using validated wellbeing tools. However, teachers are considered well placed to notice changes in children which makes their opinions very relevant, especially for younger children who may not be able to express their views in this way.

THE ROI FINDINGS ARE BASED ON HEADTEACHERS AND SENCOS ESTIMATES

Teachers were not asked to provide actual numbers for things like attendance or referrals, so ROI results should be viewed as indicative rather than precise. An independent report led by Portsmouth local authority data shows significant impact on absence and suspensions (myHappyMind and Portsmouth, 2025).

Together, these limitations provide important context for interpreting the findings and should be considered when assessing the strength, generalisability and precision of the impacts reported.



IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The findings of this report add to a consistent and growing body of evidence that suggest the positive effect on pupils, staff and school climate of the myHappymind programme, with alignment between many of our findings, the University of Chester Real-World Validation, and the Portsmouth City Council case study. These reports all highlight consistent evidence from teachers that the myHappymind programme supports children in their emotional regulation, self-esteem and resilience. Data also suggests the programme has an impact on metrics such as attendance and inclusion.

The report highlights an opportunity to further demonstrate myHappymind's impact, but the evidence also suggests some opportunities for stronger and more consistent ways of measuring the impact of the myHappymind programme across more areas in the future.



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

Mental health support in schools is largely delivered through partnership between the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care. The following recommendations are therefore directed to both departments.

- 1. Embed positive psychology-based wellbeing interventions in schools:** Positive psychology interventions in schools show promise and similarly with myHappyMind, teachers and senior school leaders report positive impacts on children and on the school as a whole. The Departments should work together to include positive psychology interventions as part of the Government's commitment to embed specialist mental health support in all schools. These should be supported and monitored to gather further evidence on the impact of these types of interventions.
- 2. Ensure all schools and colleges adopt a whole setting approach to mental health and wellbeing:** Government guidance suggests a "whole-school and college approach" to promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Feedback from school leaders involved in myHappyMind highlights the value of involving the whole school community, including parents and carers. Government should support schools and colleges to embed wellbeing across leadership, culture and the curriculum extending beyond the current Mental Health Support Team (MHST) whole-school approach.
- 3. Invest in tailored interventions for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** Teachers recognise the benefits of programmes like myHappyMind which have carefully tailored their resources to ensure that aspects such as activities, language pitching, audios and visuals are inclusive. The Department for Education should ensure forthcoming SEND reforms improve access to effective mental health support for this group.
- 4. Improve links to Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs):** Programmes such as myHappyMind can help strengthen universal mental health support in schools and potentially reduce the need for external referrals. To maximise impact, these programmes should be better aligned with MHST provision, ensuring clear links between universal wellbeing support and access to specialist help where needed.
- 5. Improve staff knowledge of mental health and wellbeing:** Building staff knowledge is a key principle of government guidance on a whole-school and college approach (HM Government, 2021). Feedback from school leaders in participating myHappyMind schools is that the programme is successful in improving teachers' knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing topics. Government should support schools to provide training on mental health and wellbeing for staff.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MYHAPPYMIND

- 1. Strengthen measurement techniques for myHappyMind programme:** For future reviews, myHappyMind should consider aligning questions in pre- and post-surveys and standardising across locations to enable clear like-for-like comparisons to be made. Validated tools could be introduced to gather impact data directly from children, although it is noted that testimonials are being collected and a pupil ambassador scheme is in place to strengthen return on investment cases. This could include short, age-appropriate wellbeing measures and surveys, such as the Stirling children's wellbeing scale (HM Government, 2021) or other suitable measure (Kanani *et al.*, 2024). These could be used alongside teacher reports or the collection of qualitative data from children and parents, as suggested in government guidance (HM Government, 2021). A longer follow up period after delivery (of 3 to 6 months) would allow evidence of how well myHappyMind has embedded in schools over the longer term, including assessing children's learning and retention of information (HM Government, 2021). myHappyMind has reported that they are introducing the Stirling children's wellbeing scale by September 2026
- 2. Allow data linkage:** Consideration could be given to providing confidential identifiers to allow pre- and post-data to be connected and changes identified at the individual class level. Additionally, although noting the contextual reasons provided for this, having a greater sample and proportion of respondents completing both the pre- and post-survey would provide a more complete picture.
- 3. Address minor implementation issues:** Although only raised by a small proportion of teachers, smoothing out system glitches and frustrations where these are within myHappyMind's control would give teachers an improved experience. myHappyMind could also consider adapting content for certain years (early years and older years) or increasing adaptability for particular cohorts with differing needs. myHappyMind has reported that they will be addressing these implementation issues through new technology they are launching by July 2026.
- 4. Consider programme evolution:** Consider integrating health related elements alongside the existing emotional wellbeing focus to recognise the connection between body and brain. This is being done in some primary settings internationally, using the PERMA-H model (Lai *et al.*, 2018).



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APPENDIX ONE: GLOSSARY

The following glossary defines key terms, concepts, and acronyms used throughout this report. It is intended to provide readers with clear explanations to support understanding and ensure consistent interpretation of technical or specialised language.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – NHS specialist services that assess and support children and young people with moderate to severe mental health difficulties.

Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) – a secure digital safeguarding and pastoral recording system widely used in UK schools and colleges to record, monitor, and manage concerns about pupils' welfare, wellbeing, and safety.

Early years: Early years education in England refers to learning and development of children from birth to five years of age. It is provided by private and state nurseries up to age four and by reception classes in primary schools at age four and five.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) – A trained school-based professional who works with children and young people to help them understand and manage their emotions, develop social skills and build resilience. ELSAs receive specialised training from educational psychologists and provide targeted emotional support.

Happy Breathing: The method for self-regulation that is taught during the myHappyMind Meet Your Brain module, and features throughout the programme for all year groups.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (HIOW) – One of the myHappyMind sites, covering schools and services within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System.

Integrated Care Board (ICB) - Local statutory NHS bodies responsible for planning and commissioning health and care services in England.

Mental Health Support Team (MHST) – Part of CAMHS, teams established to provide early intervention support for children and young people in schools and colleges.

PERMA – A wellbeing framework developed by psychologist Martin Seligman outlining five core elements of flourishing: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.

PERMA-H – An expanded version of the PERMA model that includes the additional dimension of Health.

Return on investment (ROI) – Typically a measure of the financial benefit generated by an intervention relative to its cost, although in this case, Return On Investment was categorised by headteachers in terms of estimates of number of children impacted.



Special educational needs (SEN)/Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – Terms used to describe children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that require additional or different support from that typically provided in mainstream education settings. myHappyMind surveys use SEN and both terms are used in this report.

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) – A teacher responsible for overseeing the provision of support for pupils with special educational needs within a school.

Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs - SEMH needs are a type of special educational need where a child communicates through behaviour in response to unmet social, emotional or mental health needs.





SUPPORTING A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING

AN EVALUATION OF MYHAPPYMIND

Published May 2026

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