

An interpretive case study to explore children's, teachers' and parents' experiences and perspectives on the impact of a positive psychology technique called the 'three good things in life' technique.

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A research study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

## Declaration

This work has not been accepted for any degree and it is not currently being submitted for any other degrees.

This research is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of East London for the degree of Applied and Educational and Child Psychology.

The thesis is the result of my own work and investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references in the text. A full reference list is included in the thesis.

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David John Lee

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## Abstract

The purpose of the thesis was to evaluate a positive psychology intervention called the ‘three good things in life’ technique (Seligman, Steen, Parker and Peterson, 2005). The research used a case study approach, within one school and the technique was implemented with one year five and one year six class (nine to eleven year olds), who completed the ‘three good things’ technique for one week. The research focused on an analysis of the completed booklet, a focus group with six pupils, teacher interviews and individual parental feedback interviews. Overall there were forty-two pupils from the two year groups who participated in the research and completed the ‘three good things’ booklet (Seligman et al., 2005), six pupils took part in the focus group, two of the pupils’ parents participated in the interviews and the two class teachers were interviewed.

The results of the thematic analysis and data triangulation showed that all pupils enjoyed using the technique and reported positive experiences in self-administrating the ‘three good things’ booklet and wanting to carry on doing the technique beyond the one week period. Feedback for the technique was very positive, as reported by pupils, teachers and parents. Increases in pupil

positive self-reflection and prosocial behaviour were noticed by pupils and class teachers, although there were no changes with negative behaviours, as the classes did not have pupils with behavioural needs. In the booklet the pupils wrote about how they were improving in key subjects, but also social behaviours were logged such as helping each other, and the pupils developing their personal skills or traits. There were also participant recommendations for improving the booklet including the option of pupils customising the booklet. It is important to note that future research will need to focus on quantifying the amount of noted improvements in behaviour or progress that the pupils make when using the ‘three good things in life’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005). It is also important to note that the research was of a preliminary nature with a small research group, and therefore it will require further research to add to its evidence base.

Overall, this study has demonstrated some potential benefits of the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) and the ease of using it with children and also within education. Further research can expand on this initial qualitative analysis and provide further information for future studies and debate.

## Contents

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 How the Thesis is structured.....	1
1.2 Area of Research.....	2
1.3 Relevant Policy or Studies on Promoting Emotional Wellbeing in the UK for Schools .....	4
1.3.1 The impact of Unmet Mental Health Needs.....	5
1.3.2 Recent Developments.....	7
1.3.3 Taking the First Step with assessing Mental Health Needs.....	8
1.3.4 The Role of the EP.....	9
1.3.5 Difficulties of applying interventions.....	10
1.3.6 Is there a need for whole school interventions or whole class interventions.....	12
1.3.7 Previous Government Initiatives.....	16
1.4 The Relevance and Contribution of the Research .....	18
1.5 The Context of the Study.....	20
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>22</b>
2.1 Overview of the Chapter .....	22
2.2 Search Procedure Adopted for the Literature Review.....	22
2.2.1 Inclusion criteria for studies in the review.....	23
2.3 An Overview of Positive Psychology.....	24
2.3.1 What is Positive Psychology.....	25
2.3.2 What does Positive Psychology aim to do?.....	26
2.4 An Overview of Positive Psychology, Including Positive Experiences and the Concept of Happiness.....	28
2.4.1 The Concept of Happiness in Positive Psychology.....	29
2.4.2 Life of Pleasure (Hedonism).....	30

2.4.3 Hedonism and Subjective Wellbeing.....	31
2.4.4 A Life of Meaning (eudemonia).....	32
2.4.5 A Life of Engagement – Integrating Hedonism and Eudemonia.....	33
2.5 The Original ‘Three Good Things in Life’ Technique.....	35
2.5.1 A Critical Overview of the ‘Three Good Things in Life’ Intervention. What are the limitations ?.....	37
2.5.2 Replication of the ‘Three Good Things in Life’ and Expansion of the Techniques.....	41
2.5.3 Emotional Regulation and the Impact of Good Parenting.....	46
2.6 Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Literacy.....	48
2.6.1 Ability Models of Emotional Intelligence.....	49
2.6.2 Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence.....	51
2.6.3 The Contribution of Humanistic Psychology .....	55
2.7 Ideological Differences between Positive Psychology and Humanistic Psychology.....	56
2.8 Difficulties with the Positive Psychology Paradigm.....	62
2.8.1 Emotional Wellbeing Interventions Including Emotional Literacy.....	63
2.8.2 Difficulties with Emotional Intelligence and Literacy Programmes.....	67
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>73</b>
3.1 Overview of the Chapter.....	73
3.2 Philosophical Considerations: Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology.....	73
3.3 A Brief Description of the Study’s Aims and its Context.....	76
3.4 Chosen Methodology for the Study.....	78
3.5 Methodological Orientation.....	79
3.6 Ontology and Epistemology.....	81
3.7 Qualitative Traditions.....	84
3.8 Summary.....	86
3.9 Study Design, Including Procedures Adopted and Actions Carried Out.....	88

<b>3.9.1 Study Design.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>3.9.2 Case Study and a Review of the Limitations to the Study’s Reliability and Validity.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>3.9.3 The Three Good Things Booklet.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>3.9.4 Participants and Sampling.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>3.9.5 Meetings that Facilitated the Study.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>3.9.6 Context of the school.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>3.9.7 Reflexivity.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>3.10 Focus Groups.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>3.11 Interviews with Teachers and Parents.....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>3.11.1 Teacher Interviews.....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>3.11.2 Parental Interviews.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>3.11.3 Pupil Interviews.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>3.12 Ethical Considerations.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>3.13 Justification, Rationale and Description for the Approaches Chosen During Data Analysis.....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>3.14 Procedure and Materials.....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>3.15 Coding Approach (Thematic Analysis).....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>3.15.1 Method of transcription.....</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>3.15.2 Phase 1: transcription approach.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>3.15.3 Phase 2: Generating initial codes.....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>3.15.4 Phase 3: Searching for themes.....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>3.15.5 Phase 4: Developing emergent themes.....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>3.15.6 Phase 5: Naming themes.....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>3.15.7 Phase 6: Searching for connections across emergent themes.....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>3.16 The Analysis of ‘Three Good Things’ Booklet Material.....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>3.16.1 Key differences between content analysis and thematic analysis.....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>3.17 A Description, Justification and Rationale for the Methods of Data Gathering Adopted.....</b>	<b>133</b>

3.17.1 Rationale for using interviews.....	134
3.17.2 Rationale for Questions Asked to the Teachers.....	135
3.17.3 Rationale for the Questions Asked to the Parents.....	136
3.17.4 Rationale for the Questions Asked to the Pupils.....	137
3.17.5 Rationale for Using Questionnaires.....	139
3.18 A Review of the Limitations to the Study’s Reliability and Validity and the Steps Taken to Control Them.....	140
3.18.1 Limitations to a Case Study Approach.....	140
3.18.2 Limitations to an Interview Approach.....	142
3.18.3 Limitations to Questionnaires.....	143
3.19 Summary of Research Methodology.....	144

**CHAPTER 4: Findings, Analysis of the Booklet, and Interview Materials .146**

4.1 Overview of the Results Section .....	146
4.2 Overall Data that was Collected....	147
4.3 Theme One – Subject Improvements.....	149
4.3.1 Theme Two - Helping Others.....	151
4.3.2 Theme Three - Being Ready or Finishing Quickly .....	153
4.3.3 Theme Four – Being Given Praise or Being Rewarded.....	154
4.3.4 Theme Five – Using or Developing a Core Skill within a Subject.....	156
4.3.5 The Overall Data Collected from the Booklet.....	157
4.3.6 Themes from the focus group material with pupils.....	159
4.4 Initial Overview of the Analysis with Pupil’s Views and Experiences of the Technique. Positive and Constructive Feedback Theme.....	159
4.4.1 Theme One: Increase in Pupil’s Positive Self Reflection .....	163
4.4.2 Theme Two: Pupils Increase in Happiness.....	170
4.4.3 Theme Three: Pupil Reports of Prosocial Behaviours.....	176

<b>4.5 Teachers' Perceptions of the Effect on Pupils After They Completed the 'Three Good Things' Booklet.....</b>	<b>183</b>
4.5.1 Initial analysis of the teachers' views: an overview of the material and what themes emerged from the data.....	183
4.5.2 Theme One: Teachers' views of the increase in pupil positive self-reflections.....	184
4.5.3 Teacher Question One.....	188
4.5.4 Teacher Question Two.....	190
4.5.5 Theme Two: Teachers' Views About the 'Three Good Things technique'.....	193
4.5.6 Theme Three: Teachers' Views on Increases in Pupils' Prosocial Behaviours.....	197
4.5.7 Theme Four: Teachers' Views on Improving the Booklet.....	200
<b>4.6 Themes that Emerged from the Parental Data.....</b>	<b>205</b>
4.6.1 Theme One: Parental Views About the Booklet.....	205
4.6.2 Theme Two: Behaviour Changes.....	208
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>210</b>
5.1 Overall Results.....	210
5.1.1 Overall Patterns of Behaviour.....	211
5.2 Research Aim 1: What are the Children's Experiences and Perceptions of Using the 'Three Good Things' Questions for One Week?.....	213
5.3 Research Aim 2: What Are the Teacher's Perceptions of the Children After They Have Completed the 'Three Good Things' Booklet?.....	214
5.4 Research Aim 3: What are the Parental Perceptions of their Children's Involvement after the 'Three Good Things' Intervention has been Completed.....	217
5.5 Research Aim 4: What Are the Participants Views on Improving the 'Three Good Things in Life' Intervention?.....	218
5.5.1 Pupils' Views.....	218
5.5.2 Teacher's Views.....	219
5.6 Threats to Validity and Reliability.....	220
5.7 Critique of the Study and Possible Re-Designs.....	225
5.8 How the Study's Results Relate to the Literature.....	228
5.9 What are the Implications of the Technique on Increasing 'Happiness' for the Participants?.....	232

<b>5.10 Further Research.....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>6.1 Overview.....</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>6.2 Implications for educational psychologists .....</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>REFERENCES: .....</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES: .....</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Example Copy of the Three Good Things Intervention .....</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Interview Questions for Pupils, Teachers and Parents.....</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Ethical Approval Forms.....</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Script to Address Threats to Validity.....</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Data from the ‘Three Good Things’ Booklet Pupil Responses .....</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>Appendix 6: Thematic Analysis Results of the Booklets.....</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Transcripts from the Focus Groups/Interview Questions.....</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Appendix 8: Phase 1 - The Original Transcription Data.....</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>Appendix 9: Phase 2 – Generating Initial Codes.....</b>	<b>364</b>
<b>Appendix 10: Phase 4 - Reviewing Themes.....</b>	<b>401</b>
<b>Appendix 11: Phase 5 - Pro-Social Theme.....</b>	<b>432</b>
<b>Appendix 12: Pupil Teacher and Parent Permission Forms.....</b>	<b>445</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1. Overall Methodological Approach Selected.....	80
Table 2. Meetings with the Stakeholders for the Study.....	98
Table 3. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) Phases of Coding (Thematic Analysis (and Steps Undertaken By the Researcher.....	120
Table 4. Overview of the Method of Data Gathered.....	122
Table 5. A Rationale for the Teacher Questions.....	133
Table 6. Rationale for the Interview Questions for Parents.....	136
Table 7. Rationale for the Interview Questions for the Pupils.....	137
Table 8. The Overall Methodological Approach Selected.....	138
Table 9. Data Collected for the Study and with which Participants.....	145
Table 10. Extract 1 – An Example of Pupil Responses on Subject Improvements.....	147
Table 11: Extract 1 – An example of Pupil Responses on Subject Improvements.....	149
Table 12 – Example codes of pupil responses about finishing quickly in the ‘three good things’ booklet.....	151
Table 13: Extract 3– Examples of pupil responses about being given praise or being rewarded (NA indicates no data on this theme).....	153
Table 14: Extract 4 – Example of pupil responses on using or developing a core skill.....	154
Table 15: The Overall Data Collected from the Booklet.....	156
Table 16: Overall Pupil Responses about the ‘Three Good Things’ Technique.....	157
Table 17: Overall Teacher’s Views About the ‘Three Good Things’ Technique.....	160
Table 18: Overall Experiences of the Participants Using the ‘Three Good Things’ Technique.....	184

### List of Figures

Figure 1. The basic beliefs of the four main methodologies, based on Guba and Lincoln (1994).....	162
Figure 2. Flowchart of the Overall Themes of Pupil’s Experiences Found.....	169
Figure 3. Flowchart of the Sequence of Positive Self Reflection.....	175
Figure 4. Flowchart of the Sequence of Pupil Reported Increases in Happiness.....	177
Figure 5. Flowchart of the Sequence of Pupil Experiences of Doing the ‘Three Good Things’ Technique.....	183
Figure 6. Flowchart of the Overall Themes of Teachers’ Experiences.....	187
Figure 7. Flowchart of the Sequence of Teacher’s Views of Pupils Positive Self Reflections.....	193
Figure 8. Flowchart of the Sequence of Teacher’s Views.....	196
Figure 9. Flowchart of the Sequence of Positive Behaviours.....	200
Figure 10. Flowchart of Pupil Views on improving the ‘Three Good Things’ Booklet.....	204
Figure 11. Overall Experiences of the Participants using the ‘Three Good Things’ Booklet.....	213

## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>BPS</b>	British Psychological Society
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education
<b>DfES</b>	Department for Education and Skills
<b>EI</b>	Emotional Intelligence
<b>EL</b>	Emotional Literacy
<b>EP</b>	Educational Psychologist
<b>EPS</b>	Educational Psychology Service
<b>NICE</b>	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
<b>SEAL</b>	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 How the Thesis is Structured**

This thesis is organised into chapters. Chapter One is the introduction and gives a broad overview of the research and the topic of positive psychology. It also includes the research aims of the thesis. Chapter Two is the literature review, which covers relevant areas of positive psychology but also explains how the literature was researched. Chapter Three includes the methodology and discusses the way this study approached the process of acquiring new knowledge, how a case study approach was utilised and the reasons for doing so, including what materials were selected and which participants were chosen. Chapter Four presents the acquired data, the patterns that were identified and how they were analysed. In Chapter Five the findings of the research are brought together with the research questions, to see how the findings relate to the literature and what the implications of the research are, including avenues for future research. Lastly Chapter Six summarises the overall findings.

In the following section there is an initial discussion on the area of research, leading onto a description of the research questions.

## **1.2 Area of Research**

This thesis centres on the field known as positive psychology, and in recent years there has been a considerable amount of literature that has grown around the area. The journal '*Positive Psychology in Progress*' (Seligman, Steen, Parker and Peterson, 2005) played a critical role in promoting the positive psychology paradigm, the introduction of its psychological techniques and how they could be used to improve the emotional wellbeing of participants. Seligman et al.,'s journal article (2005) discussed the findings of a large scientific study which used five new techniques and a control group (to be discussed in section 2.4). One of the techniques was called the 'three good things in life' technique, the outcome of which was reported to be a reduction in adult participants' depressive symptoms and an increase in their subjective wellbeing (happiness) for a period of six months (Seligman et al., 2005, p.416). For this intervention the adult participants were given instructions using a computer-based approach with pre and post measures of their mental health; the change in participants' emotional wellbeing was measured just after completion of the technique but also at other intervals leading up to the six-month period, which was the limit of the data recorded. Essentially the 'three good things' intervention et al., gave a statistically significant and measurable impact for adult participants' mental health in terms of anxiety and depression. What makes the intervention unique is its ability to gain statistically significant improvements in mental health without the use of a counsellor or

psychotherapist.

From the existing evidence base it is unknown if longer-term benefits of mental health are possible with this technique. There are a number of questions that can be asked for future research; for example: what were the participants' subjective experiences and perceptions of taking part in the research; did the 'three good things' technique improve the quality of their life or just boost their emotions?

The research presented in this thesis makes a unique contribution through use of a qualitative (small group) study to explore pupil, teacher and parental beliefs in the potential impact of using the 'three good things' technique. The research is important because it sheds new insight into positive psychology interventions that promote mental health and reports how just one week of using this technique was found to create a period of emotional support or resilience.

Overall the author wished to see if a positive psychology technique would be beneficial to pupils in one year five and one year six class, looking to explore the participants' views, experiences of the technique, and their perceptions of how it was delivered.

In the next section relevant studies and government policies on emotional wellbeing and mental health is discussed, in order to briefly discuss background history of promoting the emotional wellbeing of children in the UK and to set a

context for the research.

### **1.3 Relevant Policy or Studies on Promoting Emotional Wellbeing in the UK for Schools**

A useful overview of children's mental health is provided by UNICEF (2007). This review identified that the UK fell within the bottom third of twenty-one industrialised countries for children's rankings of subjective wellbeing. Taking into account the economic strength of the country at that time, the findings clearly indicated that children's emotional wellbeing in the UK was disproportionately low.

Currently the area of mental health and supporting children and young people is in a state of considerable development. Orbach (1999) proposed that society, as a whole, needs to create an emotionally literate culture and not to just focus on skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Following on from this, the Mental Health Foundation (1999) advocated that schools and educational psychologists should have a central role within a multi-disciplinary support system to help combat mental health problems in children and young people. In the UK, there has been research published on the increased prevalence of mental health needs for children, and concern for the mental health of children is not unique to the UK (Mental Health Foundation, 1999). Internationally, up

to 20% of adolescents experience clinically recognisable mental health difficulties (Belfer, 2008), with a proposed worldwide prevalence of mental health disorders in children and young people of 13.5% (Polanczyck et al., 2015). So the research establishes an evidence base for an overall increase in children's mental health needs in the UK but also a proportionally higher level for adolescents. The evidence provides a clear need to promote the emotional health and wellbeing of children (including adolescents). One potential area for promoting positive mental health would be schools, as it is a consistent part of a child's formative early life, it provides rules, structure and routines and potentially it will have highly experienced professionals who can implement new strategies or interventions. In the next section the impact of not meeting children's mental health needs is discussed, to highlight potential consequences for the future.

### **1.3.1 The Impact of Unmet Mental Health Needs**

The state of children's mental health state of children has a societal impact but also a financial impact for the future. Approximately 10% of children and young people experience clinically significant mental health difficulties that would require assessment and possible intervention (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, & Goodman, 2005), but it is also important to note, that this figure is expected to rise over, at least, the next thirty years (Maughan,

Iervolino, & Collishaw, 2005). The long-term consequences of child mental health difficulties can include an increased risk of a range of adverse psychosocial outcomes in later life (Farrington, Healey, & Knapp, 2004; Colman et al., 2009). These children and their families come into contact with a range of educational, mental health and social care agencies, although often in a non-coordinated way, and with high levels of unmet needs (Farrington, Healey, & Knapp, 2004; Colman et al., 2009). This therefore implies that NHS services, including specialist CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and also schools will continue to have a financial and systemic burden in the area of mental health for the foreseeable future. The costs of not intervening early are very high. The Chief Medical Officer for England estimated that once a young client is taken on by CAMHS, the cost of dealing with that one referral will be between £11,030 and £59,130 annually (Department of Health, 2013). This is despite the fact that there are cost-effective early interventions available including non-clinic-based therapies and systemic and universal preventative awareness raising approaches, all familiar territory for the educational psychologist. It is reported that more than half of all adults who have clinical levels of mental health problems already had a diagnosis in childhood, but only a minority of these had received treatment (Kim-Cohen et al., 2003). It was concluded that a quarter to a half of adult mental health cases in the population might have been prevented by effective intervention in childhood. Between 1980 and 2015 researchers reported that 1 in 15 young people self-harm, 68%

involving hospitalisation, and suicide is the leading cause of death in young males at around 23% (Hawton et al., 2012). An estimated 24,000 of 10-19-year-old young people attempt to commit suicide in England and Wales each year, and specific conditions such as depression and conduct disorder have doubled, including an increase in emotional problems in girls aged 11 to 13 (Hawton et al., 2003). In the wider societal context, mental health is the largest cause of disability, amounting to 23% of the disease burden and 13% of NHS expenditure. The long-term consequences of early onset mental health problems include poorer academic achievement, unemployment, family and relationship instability and increased likelihood of disorders in adulthood (Wolpert et al., 2015).

### **1.3.2 Recent Developments**

The research on mental health as discussed in section 1.3.1 clearly highlights an area of significant concern for children's mental health, which was expressed again by the publication in 2013 of the report of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, *Overlooked and Forgotten* (Oliva & Lavis, 2013) and subsequent educational advice (Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2015). The need for developments is set out as a vision by the Future in Mind publication (2015) '*for a comprehensive approach to promoting, supporting and treating our children and young people's mental*

*health, and to supporting their families'* (p, 69), where a number of proposals are made for a holistic approach to supporting children and families with mental health needs, to enable this vision to be translated into national and local frameworks. There has also been training programmes developed such as the 'Wellbeing Toolkit' (Rae, 2015) which was designed to build knowledge and skills in supporting emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people.

In addition to recent publications there have been some key decisions made in the area of politics. In February 2015 ministers discussed the potential targeting of mental health in children and young people, recommending that schools and GPs should play a role in identifying and tackling problems as they arise. The Department for Education, (2015) proposed how the central role of education could partly address the mental health problems of children and young people, and the Government published guidelines for education staff in England, *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools: Advice for School Staff* (Department for Education, 2015).

### **1.3.3 Taking the First Step in Assessing Mental Health Needs**

The first step is therefore focused on assessing the mental health needs of children and one starting point is outcome measures for children and adolescents. Commonly used tools have included The Adolescent Well-being scale (Birleson, 1980), the Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS) (Schaffer et al., 1983), The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (1997), HoNOSCA (Health of the Nation Outcomes Scales for children and adolescents) (1998), Connors (1998) and The Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS) (2000). Since 2004 CORC (CAMHS Outcomes Research Consortium) has been gathering outcomes data for children and young people; and by 2015 CORC held information on 260,000 separate treatment episodes of children. CORC had a clear aim which was to foster the effective and routine use of outcome measures in work with children and young people who experience mental health and emotional wellbeing difficulties (and their families and carers) (CORC, 2015). The CORC measures of SDQ, GBO (Goal-Based Outcome measure), HoNOSCA and CHI-ESQ (Experience of Service questionnaire) can also be used in implementing the first stage, being able to measure the mental health of children and treatment methods or approaches at schools.

#### **1.3.4 The Role of the EP**

The role of the Educational Psychologist in the mental health of children was argued to be central and the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition (2015) called for a key role for education, and Educational Psychologists in particular, in addressing the mental health needs of children. This is similar to the view of MacKay (2011):

*In terms of training, they [Educational Psychologists] are the most generic psychologists with more postgraduate training time devoted to the child and adolescent sphere than for any other branch of psychology. In terms of role, they are the most contextualised, working across the domains of home, school and community. In terms of background, their knowledge of educational settings is unparalleled. (p.11).*

It was proposed that Educational Psychologists need to work alongside mental health services to meet the needs of as many children and young people at risk as possible, and at the earliest point of need.

### **1.3.5 Difficulties of Applying Interventions**

However, despite the identification of a need to support the mental health of children, effective provision is still affected by barriers between services,

different priorities, poor understanding of individual roles and use of professional language (Vostanis et al., 2012). For example, a recent study of CAMHS and educational practitioners' experiences of joint working indicated limitations in knowledge and competencies, and identified possible solutions such as establishing linking posts on the interface between CAMHS and schools, building local relationships and joint training (Vostanis et al., 2012). There is increasing evidence of the impact of both universal and targeted/indicated mental health interventions delivered in school settings (Wilson & Lipsey, 2007; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Dix, Slee, Lawson, & Keeves, 2012). However, almost all of the studies in this area originate outside England and are tightly controlled 'efficacy' trials in which schools access levels of support and technical assistance not normally available to them (Shucksmith et al., 2007). This is an important issue, because bringing interventions 'to scale' in real world settings can be problematic (Elias, Zins, Graczyk, & Weissberg, 2003), in that even well-validated programmes can produce null results in 'effectiveness' trials (Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003). The reason is that such interventions do not occur in a vacuum, but rather form part of a complex set of approaches to developing effective provision in schools, which might include 'one-stop shops' to provide concurrent input from different agencies (Tisdall, Wallace, McGregor, Millen, & Bell, 2005) or consultative models (Clarke, Coombs, & Walton, 2003). One approach is the Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) initiative. This latest government

initiative aimed at fostering the role of schools in England in promoting mental health was rolled out from 2008 onwards (Department for Children, Schools & Families, 2008).

To summarise, the potential role of schools has been highlighted by the accumulating research evidence that the support from early years to later ages (adolescence) lays a foundation for positive mental health, well-being and resilience (e.g. Mustard, 2008). In order to actualise this proposed way forward the school continues to be identified as a context not just for providing education about traditional ‘subjects’, but for assisting children and adolescents to develop competences for living more broadly, through what is known in educational circles as ‘*social-emotional education*’ (Humphrey, 2016). This movement has already been reflected in initiatives such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) in the UK (Humphrey et al., 2010) and KidsMatter in Australia (Dix, 2011). Such a social-emotional education is in keeping with the World Health Organisation’s ideology of the ‘*health-promoting school*’ (2011) and encompasses a broad range of issues, such as promoting positive relationships, preventing bullying, developing a healthy body-image and managing strong emotions. Individual programmes may be wide-ranging or more narrowly focused. Like SEAL there are a number of universal approaches and for this research another method of a whole group/school approach to positive emotional wellbeing

(mental health) is proposed within positive psychology, which is discussed later in section 2.4.

### **1.3.6 Is There a Need for Whole School or Whole Class Interventions?**

There is increasing evidence to support the need for effective educational psychology interventions in schools. In a study of the types of interventions used by school staff to support children and young people with mental health problems, Vostanis et al. (2013) found that schools did not focus on prevention and did not use an evidence-based approach, although they may be using effective interventions. Schools were asked to rank the types of interventions most used by their establishment. Those used the least should have had a much greater focus. For example, there was little time spent on the supervision and training of the school staff in support and pastoral roles, little awareness raising and support for parents and not much information for the pupils and parents. Most time was spent in groups to support behaviour and social skills, indicating a reactive approach rather than a preventative one and an individual/within child paradigm rather than a systemic one. Although the *Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools: Advice for School Staff* (Department for Education, 2015) focusses on the development of actual mental diagnoses, it does provide a good framework for embedding a level of proactive systemic approaches which potentially facilitate a preventative strategy.

Whole-school approaches have been proposed (Department for Education, 2015) and these include:

- a committed school management team for taking forward the school's mental health policy;
- an ethos of high expectation of attainment with consistently applied support with policies, for example bullying;
- a strategic role for key learning support and pastoral staff;
- working with parents' and pupils' wishes and opinions;
- continuing professional development, ensuring good mental health is the responsibility of all members of the school community;
- training on the early warning signs, causes for concern and appropriate actions;
- clear systems for identifying at risk pupils, referral routes, escalation of intervention and accountability;
- working with a range of professionals within and out with the school as set out in school additional support needs policy;
- participation in local joint mental health and social care forums; and
- curriculum flexibility.

Teachers were also directed towards a mental health screening tool, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, which is easy to use and can be downloaded (Department for Education, 2015). In particular, there is the delivery of core services that include: assessment (in this case mental health and contextual assessment including associated risk); intervention (including direct therapy, awareness raising with parent and pupil, onward referral to clinicians or other agencies if appropriate and delivering evidenced-based preventative universal interventions); training (of school staff at all levels and agencies); research (monitoring mental health, innovative implementation and evaluating programmes); consultation (both formal and informal, with pupils, parents, support staff and agencies). Overall there is a need for specific interventions but crucially a whole-school approach is discussed with differing types of intervention at a whole school, class, group and individual level (Department for Education, 2015).

The research demonstrates that schools are developing whole-school approaches to promoting resilience and improving emotional wellbeing, preventing mental health problems from arising and providing early support where they do. The evidence also shows that there are clear areas for improvement. Evidence shows that interventions taking a whole-school approach to wellbeing have a positive impact in relation to both physical health and mental wellbeing outcomes

(Brooks 2012), for example, body mass index (BMI), tobacco use and being bullied.

The vast majority of secondary schools surveyed in recent Centre Forum research (Taggart, Lee, & McDonald, 2014) reported that they implement programmes to promote positive mental health universally across the student population, with 93% doing this within the context of Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education. The research also indicates that pupils in 86% of secondary schools surveyed have access to trained/qualified counsellors, and almost all secondary schools (98%) have pastoral care services. While counselling services within schools are not intended as a substitute for other community and specialist mental health services, they can be a valuable complement to them. Consequently the three good thing technique (Seligman et al, 2005) offers the potential to promote the emotional health and mental health of pupils at schools. It is the author's view that in the role of an Educational Psychologist, an effective tool for mental health would be an important addition to the profession and hence it was selected for the study.

### **1.3.7 Previous Government Initiatives**

An early government initiative was the National Healthy Schools Programme (DfEE, 1999) which aimed to promote the link between good health, behaviour

and achievement through four key areas: healthy eating; physical activity; personal, social and health education (PSHE); emotional health and wellbeing. Following on from this initiative there was the Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda (DfES, 2003), which was a major driver in promoting children's holistic needs, including their emotional needs. The next initiative was the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines (NICE, 2008) which focused on emotional wellbeing of children. Finally there was the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme for schools (DfES, 2005; DCSF, 2007) which looked at promoting children's emotional wellbeing and how it impacts on peer relationships. Although the basis of the SEAL initiative was founded on small case studies, it aimed to promote children's emotional wellbeing. The SEAL programme used a set of lesson plans that could be implemented in schools, as well as whole-school initiatives. There have also been developments within the field of psychology that have focused on the development of emotional wellbeing, which is discussed next.

Within psychology, there are areas, such as emotional wellbeing or emotional literacy/intelligence, which existed prior to the creation of positive psychology techniques, and for the purposes of clarity the author will refer to these areas as emotional literacy. Emotional literacy became popular in the UK (Weare and Gray, 2003) due to a response to government initiatives at the time, as discussed above, and the perceived need to promote children's emotional wellbeing within

an educational context. A research study by the University of Southampton, (Weare and Gray, 2003) illustrates its application:

*LEAs are using the concept as a framework for organising and implementing a range of different pieces of work, all of which are seen as contributing to better emotional literacy. (p. 16)*

At this time the UK had seven Local Education Authorities (LEAs) creating emotional literacy interest groups (Weare and Gray, 2003). Weare and Gray (2003) discussed how Southampton had made a significant commitment to emotional literacy, more so than any other authority, as it aimed to implement a consistent approach to be used throughout the school curriculum. The argument at the time was that an emotional literacy curriculum could help all pupils and could include using initiatives like Circle Time (Mosely and Tew, 1999), which has been used in areas like anti-bullying and the Citizenship Curriculum (QCA, 2002), aiming to educate pupils on human rights. Overall the research discussed above identifies a need for further research and initiatives or techniques to promote children's emotional wellbeing.

Now that there has been a broad background discussion on relevant studies and policies, a more detailed discussion on the proposed contributions of this study follows.

## **1.4 The Relevance and Contribution of the Research**

As discussed previously, the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) sheds new light on promoting a population’s mental health using a one-week intervention and using a large (quantitative) sample of participants (which is discussed later in section 2.4).

The author’s research however, aimed to show the value of smaller-scale research (qualitative) on positive psychology techniques and to provide new information on participants’ subjective experiences. As will be discussed, there is a lack of research in this area and contributing to it is worthwhile.

The research contribution of this research was to use the ‘three good things in life’ technique and a year five and year six class at a primary school in Leicestershire was selected. The research evidence discussed so far demonstrates a clear need for whole school or whole class intervention in improving children’s mental health. The research therefore aimed to accurately record the beliefs and views of participants using the technique and to explore any changes in behaviour in or out of the classroom that might indicate there had been beneficial impact on emotional wellbeing. This was explored further by recording the views of those who took part in the research. The last area the research looked to explore was to see if the ‘three good things’ technique

(Seligman et al., 2005) could be improved or amended to work better when using it with children.

The next section contains more detail about the ‘three good things’ in life technique (Seligman et al., 2005) and the chosen research questions for the study are described.

### **1.5 The Context of the Study**

Overall the research sample comprised of two classes with two teachers (the learning support assistant was unfortunately not interviewed due to long-term sickness), who used the ‘three good things in life’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) for one week, which is discussed later in section 2.4. The programme ran from the 25-29<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. One year five class and one year six class was selected. The pupils who participated in the study were taught in their normal classes. After a week of using the technique six pupils participated in a small focus group and two teachers and two parents were also interviewed. The ‘three good things in life’ technique was completed on every school day for one week, and after 2 pm so the children could reflect on their day, using a booklet form (see appendix one). If it was required, children could complete the booklet with adult support e.g. for children with learning difficulties, but this supportive feature wasn’t needed in the research.

As the author wanted to explore the usefulness of the technique, a small sample was required to explore the perspectives of the children but also the teachers and parents. To meet the aims of the research four questions were derived for the study. These are:

- 1) What are the children's experiences and perceptions of using the 'three good things' questions for one week?
- 2) What are the teachers' perceptions of the children after they have completed the 'three good things' booklet? Do teachers perceive any differences in the interactions and relationships of the children with others in their classrooms or within the wider school?
- 3) What are the parental perceptions of their children's involvement after the 'three good things' technique has been completed? Were any changes at home noticed?
- 4) What are the participants' views on improving the 'three good things in life' technique?

In the next chapter the literature is reviewed, including the methods adopted for the research.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter will explain what the search criteria adopted for the literature review were (2.2); discuss the theoretical background of positive psychology (2.3); and then examine some of the pertinent areas of positive psychology and emotional wellbeing that relate to this particular study. Following on from this, the discussion will move on to other theories that contribute to emotional wellbeing within positive psychology and psychology in general, including emotional regulation and parenting, emotional intelligence and emotional literacy.

### **2.2 Search Procedure Adopted for the Literature Review**

Initially, the keywords of ‘positive psychology’, ‘emotional wellbeing’, ‘emotional literacy’ and ‘emotional intelligence’ were identified to generate the search. Over time, and to make sure no relevant journals were omitted, searches also included additional keywords such as ‘three good things’, ‘children’ and ‘pupils’. In order to generate a comprehensive list of potentially relevant journal articles and books, the electronic database EBSCO was used. Searches were undertaken regularly over a six-year period with the most recent search undertaken in July 2016. Electronic databases used included ERIC, CINAHL,

PSCYC Article, and Psyc Info. Free online databases such as Google Scholar were also utilised. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in English after 1995. The search resulted in the retrieval of a total of 65 studies and after careful consideration all the relevant studies became the basis of the literature review. A full list of the articles can be found in the reference section (see references) and an asterisk was used for each of the 65 studies used, for easy identification. Relevant studies cited within the retrieved studies were also located, so as to broaden the coverage and ensure no important works had been missed.

At the time of the research the combined keywords of ‘positive psychology’, ‘three good things’ and ‘qualitative research’ came up with zero relevant results, which confirmed that this area of research is an underdeveloped area.

### **2.2.1 Inclusion Criteria for Studies in the Review**

The inclusion criteria applied to selecting the studies was used to ensure specificity (Petticrew & Roberts 2006), taking into account the aims of the research. The inclusion criteria adopted were:

- Studies confined to positive psychology focusing on school children or pupil keywords.
- Studies that related to the ‘three good things in life’ technique.

- Sufficient information provided in terms of the design of the study, participants, data collection and analysis.
- The inclusion of an outcome or outcomes and recommendations.
- Published in a refereed journal.
- Programmes delivered over a number of weeks.

Articles were excluded for the following reasons:

- Studies carried out in the workplace, as they did not relate to the research questions.

An application of the inclusion criteria led to the identification of 65 relevant studies for this review, which are reviewed in the following sections. (As discussed in section 2.2, the identified literature is marked with an asterisk in the references section).

### **2.3 An Overview of Positive Psychology**

The literature review looks at the relevant areas of positive psychology in relation to the aims of the research. Other relevant areas of positive psychology, such as emotional literacy, are discussed to explore how some people may be more emotionally literate than others. The question of whether it is possible for children to improve their emotional wellbeing is also discussed, including how that has been researched within an educational setting. The review highlights

the lack of small-scale in-depth qualitative research in the area of positive psychology. There is, however, a wealth of experimental (quantitative) studies in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. Finally there is an argument presented for the need to continue research in order to develop a good evidence base for the subject of positive psychology techniques with children in terms of replication of experimental studies, but also more mixed-method approaches and more small scale in-depth (qualitative) studies to provide a more robust evidence base.

### **2.3.1 What is Positive Psychology?**

In the year 2000, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi announced a new field of research called positive psychology. The authors proposed the importance of reconsidering how mainstream psychology has focused on '*human shortcoming, deficits, pathologies and limitations.*' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). The authors reflected on the need for ways of '*building positive qualities*' in people (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5) and looked to work at the subjective, individual, and group level (Delle Fave, Massimini, and Bassi, 2011, p. 3). In order to meet its aims, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) suggested positive psychology should encompass the following three levels:

- a) Articulate a vision of the good life that is empirically sound;

- b) Show what actions lead to increases in emotional wellbeing, including positivity in individuals and help for communities to flourish; and
- c) Help document what kind of families result in the healthiest children and what work environments support the greatest satisfaction amongst workers. (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5).

The three points above are important ones in terms of the approach that positive psychology takes. It looks to create empirically sound research and has mainly focused on scientific and experimental research (post-positivism). It aims to create positive change and measurable progress at the workplace, for families and for the community, which would include supporting the school community.

Despite the recent origins of positive psychology, it draws upon other relevant fields of psychology where researchers have devoted their lives to the study, prevention and treatment of mental illness but also the promotion of emotional wellbeing. These are discussed next.

### **2.3.2 What Does Positive Psychology Aim to Do?**

Positive psychology aims to explore the positive behaviours of people through:

- a) assessment (e.g. how to measure the concept of happiness),

- b) intervention (e.g. how to build on strengths or develop happiness), and
- c) Lifespan development (how people's strengths and virtues change over the course of their lives) (Seligman, 2003, p.127).

This review intends to focus on the second area of psychological 'intervention'. Positive psychology is committed to the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions (Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson, 2005). The intent of positive psychology is to have a more complete and balanced scientific understanding of the human experience and it argues:

*[...] that a complete science and a complete practice of psychology should include an understanding of suffering and happiness, as well as their interaction, and validated interventions that both relieve suffering and increase happiness—two separate endeavours. (Seligman et al., 2005. p, 410)*

Liney and Joseph (2004) argue that the field of positive psychology aims to reduce negative symptoms in people but also to bring the individual to a state of happiness rather than a theoretical state of emotional neutrality: *'Applied positive psychology is the application of positive psychology research to the facilitation of optimal functioning'* (p.4).

Therefore the study of positive psychology looks at optimal functioning for all aspects of life, and aims to fully explore all the ranges of behaviours in different circumstances, cultures and situations. Positive psychology aims to measure happiness and evaluate interventions through statistical analysis. In essence, positive psychology's focus is the opposite of categorising mental health illnesses and disorders like depression or anxiety. Instead it looks at ways to create calmness and happiness, in order to help people meet their full emotional potential and maximise their performance.

Positive psychology uses a number of different paradigms and perspectives. This is reflected in Snyder and Lopez's (2004) writings. In *The Handbook of Positive Psychology* they use a wide array of general psychological paradigms including emotional wellbeing, emotional intelligence and emotional literacy.

There follows an overview of positive psychology's view about positive experiences and the concept of 'happiness'.

#### **2.4 An Overview of Positive Psychology, Including Positive Experiences, and the Concept of Happiness**

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) classified the three pillars of positive psychology as (1) positive experiences, (2) positive traits, and (3) positive institutions. For the purposes of the literature review, positive experiences are discussed, as this is the most relevant to the context of the 'three good things in life' technique. The theoretical areas of positive experiences are briefly described here, according to their relevance.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) categorised positive emotions into those which are orientated in experiences from the past (for example contentment

with life and satisfaction with life), future orientated (optimism and hope for the future), and present orientated (obtaining pleasures and physical gratifications). However, Fredrickson (1998) uses a different classification of positive emotions including joy, contentment, gratitude and love. Fredrickson (2001) argues that positive emotions broaden thought and action, and therefore build up enduring personal resources such as intellectual, physical, social and psychological skills (Fredrickson, 2004). Furthermore, these resources outlast the negative emotions and support an upward spiral of further positive emotions and capabilities. The implication of Frederickson's model is that positive experiences will negate negative emotions in the long term.

Reflecting on the two models of positive emotions, as seen above, it is apparent that an individual requires a certain level of positive emotion in order to be happy, but this sense of emotional wellbeing is based on a person's positive experiences in the past and the present and their hopes for the future (Seligman et al. 2000). The second model, the 'Broaden and Build' model proposed by Frederickson (2001), highlights how positive emotions can create an upward push towards happiness (also referred to in this study as emotional wellbeing). In the next section, concepts of happiness from the perspective of positive psychology are discussed.

#### **2.4.1 The Concept of Happiness in Positive Psychology**

Happiness is a difficult concept to capture as it is something that is felt but not seen and it can be highly subjective and personal. The concept of happiness has been described as an extremely important area in human behaviour and the ultimate currency (Ben-Shahar, 2007, p. 51). Within positive psychology though, the question is how to generate *more* happiness in an individual. There are two different traditions of happiness incorporated within positive psychology (Delle Fave, Massimini and Bassi, 2011). These are the hedonic

view (a life of pleasure) and the eudemonic view (a life of meaning). These two traditions are often found to overlap (Bhullar, Schutte and Malouff, 2013).

#### **2.4.2 Life of Pleasure (Hedonism)**

The hedonic view of happiness states that happiness is directly related to having comfort (physical and emotional), enjoyment and pleasure. This model proposes that by meeting your needs and desires you will generate happiness. Positive psychologists have focused on hedonism and the impact of pleasure and displeasure on emotional wellbeing (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz, 1999). The experience of hedonism involves individuals' own views about life satisfaction, the effects of positive affect and negative affect (Pavot and Diener, 2008), and this area is generally known as subjective wellbeing (Diener, 1984). So for the purposes of the study, it could be assumed that a happy child will be more satisfied with life when they have experienced more positive than negative emotions (Martin and Huebner, 2007). In essence, to work out a person's sense of subjective wellbeing, you need to subtract the number of positive experiences from the number of negative experiences, to create an overall subjective wellbeing construct (Schimmack & Diener, 1997) which is suggested to occur in a daily self-reflective process. With children, Huebner (1991) argued that variables such as age, year in school and gender did not significantly influence a child's life satisfaction construct. In the next section the area of hedonism and subjective wellbeing is discussed.

### 2.4.3 Hedonism and Subjective Wellbeing

The area of subjective wellbeing did not develop from a single theory or paradigm. It is a composite of various paradigms, looking to find the core component of what drives an individual, and this is linked closely to the field of hedonism. According to Diener (1984), subjective wellbeing is an umbrella term covering happiness, life satisfaction and positive and negative affect. It is a concept that is more a map of the area of happiness rather than the territory it reflects (the reality). The area has been defined by Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, (2002) as '*a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life*' (p. 63). It explores how people think and feel about their lives. There are three components of subjective wellbeing: life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect. These areas are independent factors that can be studied separately (Andrews & Withey, 1976, Lucas et al., 1996). The area of subjective wellbeing has traditionally been measured from an experimental perspective using tools like the five item satisfaction with life questionnaire (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985; Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Diener's (1984) perspective of subjective wellbeing is: (1) satisfaction with life; (2) positive and negative affect; and (3) happiness, but wellbeing can be a subjective area and, therefore, people might have a different concept of what wellbeing means for them. Subjective wellbeing can also be assessed in specific domains (e.g., work, relationships etc.). It includes '*a global assessment of all aspects of a person's life*' (Diener, 1984, p. 3). It explores how people think and feel about their lives.

In the author's view, the area of subjective wellbeing can be described as a meta-approach in exploring an individual's subjective experience, interpretation and/or perspective of their wellbeing. For each person, due to their age, culture

and personality, there will be a different emphasis on how to live. Therefore if an individual lives a mainly a hedonistic life but takes it to an extreme, this can have health implications so that this pursuit of happiness may have the opposite effect on their quality of life and in the long term make them unhappy. The same could also be proposed for a life focused purely on goals and not enough on enjoying things like spending time with friends and family.

Satisfaction with life is a component of subjective wellbeing (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). For Seligman (2000), satisfaction is a past-oriented positive emotion, because life satisfaction refers to a cognitive, judgmental process about the past. Scientific (post-positivist) methods of assessing life satisfaction can be measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS -Diener et al., 1985). Overall the area of happiness and subjective wellbeing is complex and difficult to capture. For the purposes of any research there are the options of using a psychometric assessment to capture happiness in participants or to work with their constructs and concepts of happiness and wellbeing. Another option is to look for changes in behaviour after an intervention, in order to see if there have been any real world changes for the participants.

#### **2.4.4 A Life of Meaning (Eudemonia)**

The eudemonic view of happiness is the polar opposite to the hedonistic view of how we become happy, which looks less on meeting needs with pleasure and more at goals.

It is based on the ability to pursue goals which are meaningful to the individual (Delle Fave, Massimini and Bassi, 2011). Studies like Peterson et al., (2005 and 2007) show that happiness and life satisfaction are correlated with meaningful actions. Eudemonia is a diverse area with differing models to explain human behaviour (Boniwell, 2012). One model is self-determination theory (Ryan and

Deci, 2012) which proposes that there are three basic psychological ‘nutrients’ which are: 1) autonomy, the need for a person to have choice and be able to choose what they are doing. 2) Competence, the need for a person to feel confident in what they are doing. 3) Relatedness, the need for a person to have human connections that are close and secure. This model argues that when a person’s needs are satisfied, motivation and emotional wellbeing are enhanced. The self-determination theory argues that by meeting emotional needs, including social needs, an individual will develop their own sense of happiness but also be motivated (Ryan and Deci, 2012). Another proposed model of eudemonia is the Flow Model by Csikszentmihalyi (1999). This model argues that going into prolonged periods of an activity and losing all sense of time, referred to as a flow state, helps to promote happiness and motivation (1999). The model argues that the more flow states a person has, the more motivated and happy they are. The model of flow has also been incorporated into the area of life of engagement, which is discussed next.

#### **2.4.5 Life of Engagement – Integrating Hedonism and Eudemonia**

Seligman (2002) proposed that happiness can be attained by three different routes: 1) the pleasant life, 2) the engaged life and 3) the meaningful life.

The pleasant life is based on hedonistic theories of happiness discussed above and is a life that pursues positive emotions about the past, present and future (Seligman, 2002). Seligman’s (2000; 2002) ‘*life of engagement*’ is a concept of engagement which draws primarily on the work of Csikszentmihalyi’s (1999) theory of flow. When experiencing flow, self-perception slowly fades away through concentration on a task, and happiness follows after the flow experience

rather than before (Seligman, 2002). A meaningful life is the third route to happiness (Seligman, Park, Teen, 2005), where an individual finds a '*higher purpose*', and looks to religion, politics, family, community or a nation (Seligman, Rashid, and Park, 2006). Seligman (2002) stated that following all three routes to happiness would be the best way to achieve 'authentic happiness,' which is regarded as living a 'full life'. At a later date Seligman (2011), added achievement as the fourth path to happiness and wellbeing, developing an acronym called PERMA, (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement) to explain his theory of wellbeing.

Within the area of research some studies (Peterson et al., 2005; Peterson et al., 2007) show that happiness and life satisfaction are correlated with engagement. The empirical results indicate that the three orientations to happiness (pleasure, meaning and engagement) are compatible, and that, therefore, they can be pursued either independently or in combination (Peterson et al., 2007). Peterson et al. (2005, 2007) show a positive correlation between orientations to happiness (pleasure, meaning and engagement) and satisfaction with life. The author would argue that, to date, there is a need for further research on the perception of engagement, how it affects the participant's belief systems and ways of enhancing this subjective experience. In addition, whether flow is the same experience for all people or if it differs from person to person is an area in need of further research.

For the purposes of this research, the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) relates to the theory of authentic happiness (Seligman, 2002). Based on the literature discussed so far, it can be theorised that the ‘three good things’ technique should therefore help pupils to gain enjoyment from the activity, for them to be engaged in the activity and achieve a sense of flow, and it should also give them meaning and help them in their place in the school institution in some way, either socially or behaviourally. Essentially using the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) could help pupils to get closer to living ‘a full life’.

## **2.5 The Original ‘Three Good Things in Life’ Technique**

The original ‘three good things’ study (Seligman et al., 2005) has already been discussed briefly in section 1.2. To recap on this large study, multiple groups were recruited from the general public around the world. Participants were recruited via the internet from those who had read the book *Authentic Happiness* (2002). A total of 411 participants were randomly assigned to five intervention groups or a control group (placebo). The participants completed the intervention for one week and then completed questionnaires to measure their degrees of happiness and depression at different intervals (pre-test, post-test – after the technique, one week after, one month after, three months and six months after). The study was designed to test interventions that were thought to work (Seligman et al., 2005, p.416). These interventions were:

- **Gratitude visit.** Participants were given one week to write and then deliver a

letter of gratitude in person to someone who had been especially kind to them but had never been properly thanked.

- **‘Three good things in life.’** Participants were asked to write down, every night for a week, three things that went well each day and their causes.
- **You at your best.** Participants were asked to write about a time when they were at their best and then to reflect on the personal strengths displayed in the story. They were told to review their story once every day for a week and then to reflect on the strengths they had identified.
- **Using signature strengths in a new way.** Participants were asked to take a computer survey of character strengths online and to receive individualised feedback about their top five strengths. They were then asked to use one of these top strengths in a new and different way, every day for one week. Signature strengths are defined as strengths and virtues that enable human thriving (Seligman and Steen 2005, p.411).
- **Identifying signature strengths.** Participants were asked to take a computer survey, to note their five highest strengths, and to use them more often during the next week.

- **Control group.** Writing down early memories every night for one week.

The study found that two of the interventions created a significant decrease in participants' depressive symptoms and increased their happiness (emotional wellbeing). The two interventions were 'using signature strengths in different ways' and the 'three good things in life' technique. Essentially, participating in these two interventions for only one week gave participants a 'window of recovery'. Just this brief period of support was argued to make a significant difference to participants' emotional wellbeing (mental health). (The 'gratitude visit' was also found to be beneficial, but only for one month.) The 'three good things' technique (Seligman et al., 2005) was chosen for this research as it was felt to be the simplest to use with children.

### **2.5.1 A Critical Overview of the 'Three Good Things in Life' Intervention.**

#### **What are the limitations?**

Seligman et al., (2005) proposed how this technique could be used in the treatment of anxiety and depression and also to elevate positive emotions (happiness). Seligman et al. (2005) had looked to measure anxiety and depression and the study used the Centre for Epidemiological Studies–Depression Scale (CES-D) symptom survey (Radloff, 1977). From the depression scale Seligman et al. (2005) looked for a parallel symptom approach

for happiness but he was unable to find one. Seligman et al. (2005) found that positive psychology's concept of happiness had no research equivalent and so typical measures didn't capture areas such as the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life (Seligman, 2002). In order to capture any possible changes of emotion Seligman and his colleagues created a new measure, the Steen Happiness Index (SHI) (Seligman et al., 2005). The new SHI test was designed to be sensitive to emotional changes, particularly upward changes in happiness levels. The SHI contains 20 items and requires participants to read a series of statements and pick the one from each group that describes them at the time of completing the questionnaire. Pilot work with several hundred adult respondents showed that scores on this measure converged substantially with scores on other measures of happiness ( $r=.79$  with Lyubomirsky & Lepper's (1999) General Happiness Scale, and  $r=.74$  with Fordyce's (1977) Happiness Scale). The internet was used to recruit participants, for the study (Seligman et al., 2005) and to collect data (Prochaska, DiClemente, Velicer, & Rossi, 1993) using a convenience sample, and there were 300 new registrants every day to the website site: [www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org). One potential risk to the study that was explored was the possibility of biased sampling. Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, and John (2004) compared survey data collected via the Internet with survey data collected via traditional methods and concluded that the data collected from the participants over the internet was just as diverse as data collected via traditional methods. There is however a potential volunteer bias in

that the people who entered the study did so because they were interested (Robson, 2002).

In terms of processing the data an analyses of variance was used (ANOVA) and participants' scores were compared across the following time points (Seligman et al., 2005): pre-test; immediate post-test (after doing their exercise for one week); one week after the post-test; one month after the post-test; three months after the post-test; and six months after the post-test. An overall ANOVA for happiness scores (six conditions during six time periods) showed significant effects over time to a significance level of  $p .001$  and similar effects were found for depression scores (significance level of,  $p .001$ ). Participants in all conditions (including the placebo control group) tended to be happier and less depressed at the immediate post-test and at the other post-tests up to a period of six months, all to a significance level of  $p.001$  within a randomised control style quantitative approach. Essentially the SHI test (Seligman et al., 2005) did demonstrate an improvement in the participants' happiness levels.

In addition, while the 'three good things' technique had a large sample of 577 participants who completed baseline questionnaires, only 411 (71%) completed all five follow-up assessments. However generalisability can be questioned as the majority of the participants were white (77%) and were aged between 35

and 54 years (64%). Of the participants surveyed, 39% had a degree from a four-year college, and 27% had some graduate school education. Notably, only 4% of the participants did not have education or vocational training after high school, another limit on the generalisability of the findings. To summarise, most of the participant population were white, educated and aged between 35 and 54. The author argues that this initial study did not necessarily provide a generalisable sample and queries the validity of the initial claims about the research (Robson, 2002) as further research was required.

In terms of application to an education setting, Positive Psychology has been criticised because it has:

*[...] yet to explore in detail the school as a positive institution. They have written at length, however, about such positive personal traits as moral virtue and resiliency, and about positive emotions both as embodied in experiences of classroom 'flow' and as facilitators of students' personal resources. In essence, outside of the individual techniques of the three good things test and using signature strengths, Positive Psychology has yet to be used within a whole institution. (Kristjánsson, 2012, p86) .*

Within the research literature, positive psychology has been praised for being effective at improving positive traits and well-being, but there is a scarcity of data, which means these findings have not been shown to be reliable for the purpose of introducing large scale school based intervention programmes (Dawooda, 2013). In essence there is not enough data in this area to conclude that the two positive psychology techniques, using signature strengths in different ways or using the ‘three good things’ intervention, can be used beyond an individual level and no data on using it within a group or class. Thus currently the technique is a ‘within person approach’ that lacks a greater area of application in terms of using it with groups or institutions. There is therefore a clear need to investigate the use of the ‘three good things’ intervention with a group or class. Taking a qualitative approach will enable a subjective perspective, allowing the researcher to gain the participants’ perspective on what, how and whether the ‘three good things’ intervention (Seligman et al., 2005) works for a class of children.

### **2.5.2 Replication of the ‘Three Good Things in Life’ and Expansion of the Techniques**

Following on from the ‘three good things’ technique, other researchers have looked to replicate the study but also branch out into other possible techniques to boost an individual’s emotional wellbeing. Gander, Proyer, Ruch and Wyss (2013) researched nine strength-based positive interventions on wellbeing and

depression. The study aimed to see if it was possible to replicate the original findings of the ‘three good things’ technique, but also to explore possible variations of the technique, such as extending the time of the intervention to two weeks, the use multiple interventions at the same time, and the use of a new intervention called the ‘three funny things’ technique for one week. It used a large scientific (quantitative) study of 622 adults who participated in one of the nine interventions plus a placebo control which used an exercise on positive early memories. It approached the recruitment of participants differently from the original study; whereas in the original research the exercises were labelled as ‘*happiness exercises*’ (Seligman et al. 2005), in this study they described the interventions as ‘*train your strengths*’ (Gander et al., 2013, p.1243). In this study, all the interventions except for the two week ‘three good things’ intervention were associated with an increase in happiness and a decrease in depressive symptoms. The findings were important as it was in a German-speaking country and thus showed some cross-cultural validity to the findings, but further replication with different cultural groups is still required.

Overall this study suggested that doing the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) for two weeks didn’t lead to an increase in positive results. In fact, adults filling in the form for two weeks didn’t carry on looking at the positives in the second week in the way that the participants doing the technique for one week did. This suggests the concept that a participant can ‘overdo’ a technique, as repeated use could theoretically feel more like a chore rather than a helpful task. This has clear applicability to using the technique in schools and not doing the technique for more than one week. There is no data available to quantify if children would have a shorter or longer threshold for overdoing the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005).

The results of the ‘three funny things’ technique were also relevant, as the findings indicated an increase in emotional wellbeing. Participants were instructed to write down three of the funniest things they experienced or did during the day and an explanation of what had happened to them every day for one week. The results of the three funny things were similar to the original ‘three good things in life’ technique in having positive effects for boosting emotional wellbeing. The other relevant factor found in the Gander et al. study (2013), is how the three funny things technique decreased depressive symptoms in adults.

Overall the advantages of a technique like the ‘three good things in life’ are that it has been replicated by other researchers and in different settings. The findings have indicated an increase in emotional wellbeing and a decrease in depressive symptoms (Gander et al., 2013). There is also additional information in follow up studies that showed: a) not to overdo the technique, as carrying it out for more than one week can negatively affect the results, b) that combining techniques does not increase improvements in emotional wellbeing and c) any positive technique which *‘facilitates the experience of positive emotions, has a positive effect on wellbeing’* (Gander et al., 2013, p.1255). This has also been demonstrated in other replication studies. For example, Mongrain and Anselmo-Matthews (2012) aimed to replicate the ‘three good things’ and ‘using your signature strengths’ interventions, also including a placebo control group looking at positive early memories. The findings demonstrated an increase in wellbeing for all interventions including the control, which was an unexpected development. One theory was that *‘positive psychology interventions may boost happiness through a common factor involving the activations of positive, self-relevant information’* (Seligman et al., 2005, p. 382). One common factor between all the research discussed and the ‘three good things’ technique is that

all the studies used a scientific and experimental approach (quantitative), and there is little research from other paradigms that could give a different perspective on the technique and could potentially give more information on how it works. One example is that the impact of the techniques has not been explored in terms of any improvements to an individual's behaviour in a group or in an institution. It is mainly a within-person approach with no exploration of using positive psychology in a systems approach and little on how it could be used to enhance an institution such as a school.

Finally, all the interventions discussed above have a common factor of increasing positive self-reflection and self-awareness using an intervention that is self-administered. There is, however, one intervention that has used positive psychology like a curriculum with children and young adults, which is discussed next.

Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins (2009) created a curriculum of positive education and one programme used was called the Penn Resiliency Programme (PRP). The main goal of the PRP curriculum is '*to increase students' ability to handle day to day stressors and problems*' (Seligman et al., 2009, p. 297). A sample of 2000 children and adolescents between the ages of 8 and 15, with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, participated in the programme in the USA. The study found a reduction in depressive symptoms which was still present in a six and twelve month follow up of the programme (Brunwasser and Gillhan, 2008), a reduction in anxiety and some evidence of a reduction in behavioural problems. One crucial factor found in the effectiveness of the programme was the training and supervision of the group leaders. The effectiveness of the PRP could vary greatly across different studies, with moderate to large positive effects in some studies and no impact found in others. The skills of the group leader appeared to affect the effectiveness of the

programme. This clearly indicates a problem in all group work, when the charisma and skill of the group facilitator is paramount. As prior studies of the ‘three good things’ technique or other positive psychology techniques (Gander et al., 2013) were self-administered, this problem was avoided. This clearly shows that a good approach is to use the technique individually as it avoids potential facilitator problems. The Seligman et al. (2009) study had a strong sample with control groups over different times, places and ethnic groups. It demonstrated the pitfalls of a group curriculum and also used an experimental method which did not look at the beliefs or views of those who participated or, importantly, ask for their views on ways to improve the curriculum. A dominant scientific (quantitative) view was used throughout the study. Using a smaller scale research including qualitative data collection techniques or a mixed methods approach, using experimental and qualitative methods together, may yield a valuable and different point of view in the ‘three good things in life’ technique (Seligman et al, 2005), as information about individuals’ subjective experiences is absent in all the research reviewed.

In this section the replication and expansion of the three good things technique was discussed and a critical view on its benefits and limitations. One critical question concerning positive psychology is, can the emotional wellbeing of a person be changed or improved, and what is the research evidence for this? To look at the literature in this area it is important to explore other areas of positive psychology that contribute to its overall perspective (Snyder and Lopez, 2005). These are: the emotional regulation of children, including parental styles; emotional intelligence; and emotional literacy. It is important to look at the impact of early parenting and how it may affect a pupil’s emotional wellbeing and their education, is within the aims of the author’s research. It may hold particular importance during information gathered in the parental interviews.

### **2.5.3 Emotional Regulation and the Impact of Good Parenting**

Elias and Weissberg (2000) argue that if a child is not aware of their feelings, they will find it difficult to make reasoned decisions, control impulsive actions or say what they really mean. Essentially Elias and Weissberg (2000) are arguing that if a child is not in touch with their feelings, this can lead to later difficulties in problem-solving and behaviour. Other researchers, such as Schore (1999), argue that in the area of emotional regulation, the degree of attunement between a baby at ten months of age and its parent(s) predicts the ability of the child to manage intense emotions at two years of age. The argument is that the quality of the interactions of the child with its carers shapes its brain development and thus its emotional state. This is a theory also proposed by Cairn (2002), which highlights that how we are treated early in life will permanently affect our emotional development.

Elias and Weissberg (2000) consider parents to be of extreme importance in developing children's social and emotional competencies. This position resonates with research findings that suggest a correlation between low emotional intelligence scores and high levels of truancy (Petrides et al., 2004). The research indicates that being able to self-regulate your frustrations and maintain a healthy state of emotional wellbeing will make you more resilient to difficulties at school and thus reduce the chance of choosing to avoid school through truancy behaviour.

Parenting behaviours are often claimed to be antecedents of emotional intelligence based on biologically determined temperaments (Hock, 1992). The argument is that parents are often responding to children's biologically determined temperaments and personalities, which, in turn shape children's ongoing development. Parents are considered to be primary socialisers, responsible for shaping the emotional competencies of their offspring (Mayer

and Salovey, 1997). The younger the child, the more influential the family might be (Saarni, 1999). In a family context, children learn from their parents for their emotional identification and regulation (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). In the area of parenting skills, there are different views on the socialisation of the emotions of children, and thus differing ideas about how parents should treat and bring up their children (Eisenberg, Cumberland and Spinrad, 1998). One study found that a mother's responsiveness to her child's observable emotions predicted emotional understanding in these children (Denham, Zoller and Couchoud, 1994). Some parents express their feelings and cultivate this with their children, while others suppress these feelings and are likely to teach their children to deny or ignore their negative emotions (Saarni, 1999). Saarni's (1999) and Denham, Zoller and Couchoud's (1994) argument is that this will impact on the children's emotional development. Further studies suggest that mothers who respond with anger to their children foster low emotional understanding later in their children's lives (Denham and Grout, 1993). The same research also illustrated that mothers who respond in an optimal way to their child's anger tend to have children who will be less prone to negative emotions and be more sociable throughout their lives (Denham and Grout, 1993). Studies by Brenner and Salovey (1997) suggest that the severity, frequency and length of time of the child's maltreatment by parents and carers are associated with the severity and frequency of dysfunctional self-regulation in young children. The findings are that maltreated children have difficulty in coping with stress, feel depressed and have high levels of anger. Developing the argument further, emotionally non-responsive mothers have infants and toddlers who have difficulty coping with stress (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1984).

So in the area of emotional regulation, the research suggests that the way that a child is brought up and the way a parent responds to their child's emotional needs actually shapes the way that a child learns to cope with their emotions;

good parenting facilitates good emotional regulation, and leads to high levels of emotional intelligence/literacy.

Overall, the theories discussed illustrate the importance of parenting, which is extremely important for children's emotional development. This argument sustains the notion that the family is important for the emotional development of a child. It also raises the idea that as children can learn their emotional states from their parents, they could also learn skills of emotional expression and regulation in educational settings. For the role of education there is the question of whether a school can train and foster higher levels of emotional development in children, particularly those who have been maltreated and/or who are suffering from high levels of stress and anger (Brenner and Salovey, 1997). The long term effects of positive emotional development could be very beneficial for children's future. In the next section the area of emotional intelligence and emotional literacy is discussed, leading to a discussion on interventions that have been used with children. The research argues that from infancy a child's sense of self is shaped to develop their emotional wellbeing. The impact of nurturing during infancy and the formative time of early years has been discussed, and this has an impact on later childhood, early adolescence and through to adulthood.

## **2.6 Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Literacy**

Research suggests that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence, as measured by Bar-On's (1997) Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) test, suffer less from stress, have better health, better management performance and are less likely to burn out in stressful jobs (Gerits, Derksen, Verbuggen and Katzko, 2005). In addition, emotional intelligence has been correlated with transformational leadership and success (Srivastava and Bharamanaikar, 2004), suggesting that there can be an application to identifying and developing

leadership qualities from these individuals. Given the potential benefits for education and the future workforce, further investigation into whether an educational setting can promote emotional intelligence/literacy is merited, ‘rather than exclusion as sometimes being the only recourse.’ (DfEE, 1997, p.78).

There is a distinction between the concept of emotional intelligence and emotional literacy: although they have strong similarities, they are different. Elias and Weissberg (2000) argue for the use of the term ‘*emotional and social wellbeing or competence*’ (p.20). They also argue for freely using the terms emotional intelligence or emotional literacy. As a consequence, for the remainder of this section the terms emotional intelligence and emotional literacy are used to illustrate the theoretical differences of researchers’ approach to emotional development. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is discussed first as this will explain the differences it has to Emotional Literacy (EL), discussed later in section 2.6.2. The first aspect of emotional intelligence for discussion is the different models that have been created, which can essentially be divided into ability models and mixed models of emotional intelligence.

### **2.6.1 Ability Models of Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been a very controversial topic over the years. Many researchers and writers appear to have very different views of what emotional intelligence is and practitioners have tried to apply the subject to different areas, including education and work (Matthews et al., 2004). The origins of emotional intelligence can be traced to Gardner’s (1983) interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Mayer and Salovey (1993), gave one of the first formal definitions of emotional intelligence. Their definition of emotional intelligence is:

*Different types of people will be more or less emotionally intelligent. Emotionally intelligent individuals may be more aware of their own feelings and those of others. They may be more open to positive and negative aspects of internal experiences, better able to label them, and when appropriate, communicate them. Such awareness will often lead to the effective regulation of affect within themselves and others, and so contribute to wellbeing. (p. 440)*

Mayer and Salovey (1997) argue for a four branch model of emotional intelligence which describes four areas of capacities or skills that collectively describe many areas. More specifically, this model defines emotional intelligence as involving the ability to:

- accurately perceive emotions in oneself and others;
- use emotions to facilitate thinking;
- understand emotional meanings; and
- manage emotions.

This early theory was later followed by other theorists like Bar-On (1997) and the more popularised and contested views of Daniel Goleman (1995a and 1995b) who is discussed later, in section 2.6.2.

So the term ‘emotional intelligence’ refers to the ability to identify, express and understand emotions, to assimilate emotions into thought and to regulate both positive and negative emotions in oneself and others (Matthews et al., 2004). Largely the initial view of emotional intelligence was as an ability similar to IQ. This mental ability model considers that emotional intelligence works like any form of intelligence and must meet three empirical criteria (Mayer, Salovey and

Caruso, 2000a). These are that mental problems have right or wrong answers, that measured skills correlate with other measures of mental ability and that the ability level rises with age. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000b) also argue that, *‘although traits such as warmth and persistence are important, we believe they are better addressed directly and as distinct from emotional intelligence.’* (p. 402).

This separates the ability model from the mixed model approach as the latter does not use personality traits, and by keeping them separate, researchers argue that they can see how each trait works independently and how each contributes to a person’s behaviour. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000a) argue that emotional intelligence is a good predictor of emotional behaviour. Their claims are that their model can predict good communication and development of knowledge in emotional areas such as moral, ethical, social problem solving, leadership or spiritual feeling (Mayer and Salovey, 1995). Although some of the more well-known and controversial work on emotional intelligence has come from the work of Goleman (1995a and 1995b). Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (1997) have published a significant amount of work on this subject and in their research they have tried to be seen as separate from Goleman and his claims. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000b) also accept that other researchers view emotional intelligence differently, which is discussed next.

### **2.6.2 Mixed Models of Emotional Intelligence**

Models that mix together emotional intelligence with other personality traits, unrelated to either emotion or intelligence, are often referred to as mixed models of emotional intelligence (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2000b). These mixed models of emotional intelligence have been considered to be broad models of personality traits (Petrides, Furnham and Frederickson, 2004).

Many popular books on emotional intelligence use quite different definitions of emotional intelligence than those discussed above. For example, the model by Daniel Goleman (1995a) includes over twenty-five characteristics of emotional intelligence, ranging from emotional self-awareness to teamwork and collaboration, service orientation, initiative and achievement motivation. Goleman (1995a) added the twenty-five characteristics to create a new mixed model that was characterised by five broad areas: knowing your emotions, managing emotions, motivating yourself, recognising emotions in others and handling relationships.

Goleman's (1995a) claims for emotional intelligence are that it '*will account for success at home, at school, and at work*' (p.192). With children, Goleman also claims that emotional intelligence will lead to less rudeness or aggressiveness, increased popularity and improved learning.

An important question to ask, however, is whether Goleman's mixed model has much to do either with emotion or indeed intelligence. Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence is sweeping and has been open to much criticism (Matthews et al., 2004; Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 1997, 2000). Goleman (1995b) puts forward the idea that emotional intelligence is an ability where one can '*motivate yourself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think.*' (p. 34).

This is a broad statement which essentially rejects the idea of a pure ability model and Goleman seems willing to make strong claims with little empirical support. One example of Goleman's claims is that emotional intelligence has a higher predictive validity for performance in the workplace than an intelligence quotient (IQ) (Druskat and Wolff, 2001). This assertion cited evidence from an

unpublished study and does not include any quantifiable measure of emotional intelligence. A lack of good evidence will prolong the subjectivity of the concept of emotional intelligence. In Goleman's book (1995b) he does, however, cite programmes that he claims provide good evidence (PATH and the Seattle Programme) which are discussed later in section 2.6.3. One criticism by Matthews et al. (2004) is that Goleman '*relies on varied models gleaned from established areas in psychology, especially those relating to neuroscience of emotion*' (p. 13). Other researchers have argued that if Goleman's claims were based on evidence then they would '*exceed any finding in a century of research in applied psychology*' (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2000, p. 403). Unfortunately, due to the lack of specific evidence, Goleman's claims are initially impressive but without a coherent or convincing basis, because they lack research evidence (quantitative and qualitative) to back up his broad hypothesises (Steiner and Perry, 1997).

Even with the criticisms of Goleman's work (1995a), his central contribution to the subject is that he brought the concept of emotional intelligence into the public eye and public interest.

Other researchers have tried to use emotional intelligence in different ways to Goleman (1995a and 1995b). Bar-On (1997) tried to explain why some individuals are more able to succeed in life than others. Searching through the literature on personality he identified broad areas of functioning that were relevant to life success. Bar-On (2000) created the first commercially available operational index for emotional literacy, using clusters of established personality traits. This self-report instrument was created to test each underlying component. This work has highlighted the possibility of attempting to measure the subjective nature of emotions by self-completion questionnaires about personality traits. The concept of emotional literacy is usually attributed to the

work of Steiner and Perry (1997) who argued that emotional literacy is, ‘*the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathize with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively*’ (p.11).

Steiner and Perry (1997) developed their theory, which they called ‘*Emotional Literacy Training*,’ over twenty-five years. This approach, which is based on transactional analysis, teaches people the following skills:

1. Knowing what feelings we have, how strongly and why.
2. Caringly recognising other people’s emotions, their strengths and reasons.
3. Developing the love-centred ability to express or hold back our feelings so as to enhance the quality of our lives and the quality of life of those around us.

Steiner and Perry (1997) argue that for emotional literacy to be effective, it has to be developed with love as the central guiding emotion. This is a distinct difference from what has been discussed so far. The use of the concept of love and its origins in transactional analysis has shaped the concept of emotional literacy in a different direction. Sharp and Faupel (2001) continue the idea of emotional literacy as the ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions. Overall emotional literacy differs from the associated construct of emotional intelligence by moving away from personality traits and methods of assessment to focus primarily on training. Steiner and Perry’s theory (1997) has its associations with Goleman’s claims (1995) that people can become more emotionally literate, but Steiner and Perry differ from Goleman in that their work is based on professional practice of transactional analysis. Like Goleman, Steiner and Perry give the subject of emotional literacy little quantifiable evidence, but they do give a professional qualitative evidence base that can be built on by future research.

In this section there has been an account of mixed models of emotional intelligence or emotional literacy. Consequently in the next section there follows a discussion on available interventions for increasing emotional wellbeing, including emotional literacy, including the contribution of humanistic psychology to the field of emotional wellbeing.

### **2.6.3 The Contribution of Humanistic Psychology**

The first use of the term positive psychology originates within another field of psychology called humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychologists, such as Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1963) developed theories of human happiness. The modern interpretation of positive psychology by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) looked at research using a scientific approach, in order to generate generalisable theories (quantitative) while the humanistic, positive psychology tended to pursue small scale, qualitative research (Friedman, 2008). It is also important to note that while Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) started with large scale research, other positive psychologists are including more small scale, qualitative research similar to humanistic psychologists (Mahoney, 2002).

Humanistic positive psychologists such as Maslow (1954) argued that previously psychologists had made mistakes in '*their pessimistic, negative and limited conception of the full height to which the human being can attain.*' (p. 353).

There is a clear need to acknowledge the contribution of humanistic psychology to positive psychology, which has been recognised by fellow researchers (Mahoney, 2002). Next, the differing points of view between positive psychology and humanistic psychology are discussed.

## **2.7 Ideological Differences between Positive Psychology and Humanistic Psychology**

Positive psychology has been criticised on how it presents its new approach and criticisms seem to arise from the assumption that:

*If there is a positive psychology, then the rest of psychology must be negative psychology, and if we need a positive psychology it is because this so-called negative psychology has taught us little. (Gable and Hadit, 2005, p.103)*

The way positive psychology has been viewed by some is that it presents the main body of psychology as being negative and focusing on mental illness, while seemingly ignoring the fact that there has been a humanistic paradigm for quite some time and that a lot of psychology has been positive e.g. emotional literacy/intelligence, social psychology etc.

Positive psychology focuses on obtaining measurable, experimental research on improving emotional wellbeing, and most psychologists would applaud this kind of approach, but, as a paradigm, positive psychology has less small scale, qualitative research and, as already discussed, has based a lot of its work on already existing approaches e.g. emotional literacy etc.

The paradigm known as the humanistic approach has also received a lot of criticism, reportedly from positive psychologists. Friedman (2008), in an article on the methodological and epidemiological divide between humanistic and positive psychology, states that the humanistic approach is a limited area of psychology with *'the implication that humanistic psychology is unscientific or at least "scientifically barren" for allegedly having failed to generate a meaningful research tradition'* (p, 114). Friedman spends considerable time highlighting how humanistic psychology uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, in order to counter the criticisms laid against it. It was also argued that humanistic psychology is well known for its qualitative approaches, with Friedman, (2008. p.120) noting *'the general tendency toward a preference for qualitative research from within humanistic psychology and for quantitative research within positive psychology'*. Friedman (2008) proposes that the gap between the differences of paradigms *'is reflected in prejudices on both sides'* (p.121) and that using these approaches together with a multimethod or mixed method approach would help these two divergent ideologies find *'common*

*ground*' (p.121). This would however appear not to be a view shared by some positive psychologists, who argue that humanistic psychologists do not represent positive psychology because they *'have generated no research tradition, are narcissistic, and are antiscientific'* (Taylor, 2001, p.14). So despite the assertion that the role of positive psychology is to be positive, its actions within the literature appear to be the contrary with regard to other paradigms.

Further views about positive psychology are expressed by Waterman (2013) who argues how key theorists in humanistic psychology have made key contributions that are ignored in positive psychology. One example is how original use of the term positive psychology is attributed to:

*Abraham Maslow, a key figure in the origin and evolution of humanistic psychology, [who] wrote extensively about positive motivation, positive growth, and positive emotions (Maslow, 1943,1954) and used the term positive psychology in Motivation and Personality (Maslow, 1954, p.125)*

Waterman (ibid) argues that positive psychology has ignored humanistic psychology's contribution to psychology and how:

*Positive psychologists seldom reach out to endorse humanistic endeavours. To the contrary, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) criticised humanistic psychology for its association with self-help movements and for encouraging self-centeredness, a criticism that appears to be seriously misplaced to humanistic psychologists. (p.126)*

The criticisms that have been heaped onto humanistic psychology by psychologists from positive psychology do not take into account how all GCSE, 'A' level and degree level students learn about Maslow (1954) and also Carl Rogers (1963). Their work and contribution in psychology is well established and these areas, in the author's experience, are used a great deal in education and looking at the wellbeing of children. One example is that most teachers are well versed about Maslow's hierarchy of needs and how behaviour management needs to take into account a child's physical needs and also their emotional needs before they can settle to learn. A lot of schools have breakfast clubs as they know the importance of meeting physical needs first, as some children are neglected at breakfast time at home. It could be argued that this is partly due to the various theoretical models proposed by humanistic psychologists. Positive psychology needs to be mindful that it stands on the shoulders of respected authors.

The ongoing debate has, however, created some benefits as psychologists are now looking at the various contributions both paradigms can make, and also a more balanced view about psychology may come out of these academic discussions. It remains to be seen if these two paradigms will learn to blend their strengths. It is also important to note that not all positive psychology authors have forgotten the contribution that humanistic psychology has made. In *Positive Psychology in Progress* (2005) Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson comment on how their work is:

*Building on pioneering work by Rogers (1951), Maslow (1954, 1962), Jahoda (1958), Erikson (1963, 1982), Vaillant (1977), Deci and Ryan (1985), and Ryff and Singer (1996)—among many others—positive psychologists have enhanced our understanding of how, why, and under what conditions positive emotions, positive character, and the institutions that enable them flourish. (p.410)*

While many think of positive psychology as a new ‘brand’, the author would argue how this approach is an ideology within psychology, one where all psychologists, no matter where they trained or what profession they belong to (e.g. clinical psychology, educational psychology, research, occupational

psychology etc.), can all be ‘positive psychologists’, as this approach influences our aspirations and the outcomes of those for and with whom we are working.

*Positive psychologists do not claim to have invented the good life or to have ushered in its scientific study, but the value of the overarching term positive psychology lies in its uniting of what had been scattered and disparate lines of theory and research about what makes life most worth living. (Seligman et al., 2005, p.410)*

It is the author’s view that the ideology of positive psychology is an important one that aligns a practitioner’s thinking to look at the holistic needs of the population we serve in order to promote and support their overall wellbeing as much as possible. Positive psychology is argued to be nothing new but rather an important principle in our work that started from key theorists like Rogers (1951), Erikson (1962) and Bowlby (1988), leading up to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000), and Goleman (1995a), and is now discussed by other theorists like Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson (2005) plus many others. It is a span of work started in the late twentieth century that continues to be applied in the twenty-first century.

## 2.8 Difficulties with the Positive Psychology Paradigm

Positive psychology has been the topic of much debate. Held (2004), argued that whilst he acknowledged the important contributions positive psychology had made, as a psychological science, he suggests that the focus on a positive attitude may lead to a polarisation of psychology into positivity and negativity.

Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003) suggest that the study of positive states should not, therefore, lead to researchers ignoring the negative aspects of the human experience. There is a call to look at the whole human experience and Ryff and Singer, (2003), argue for the need to *'move beyond false dichotomies that separate positive and negative features of the human condition, to an appreciation of inevitable dialectics between positive and negative aspects of living'* (p.271). This has led to the generation of a new term within positive psychology called 'second wave' positive psychology (Ivtzan, Lomas, Hefferon and Worth, 2015). Second wave positive psychology or SWPP (Ivtzan, Lomas, Hefferon and Worth, 2015) is a response to criticisms of positive psychology and aims to create a syntheses between positive psychology and mainstream psychology, blending positive and negative life experiences together (Lomas and Ivtzan, 2015). The aim is to broaden the field and research base of SWPP to reflect all aspects of the human experience. The author's view of this development is that it is a promising and natural progression from the initial aim of the study of happiness (Seligman et al., 2005) to then develop, through

research and debate, interplay of an individual's full emotional range and how it may change through time. This is a potentially significant area of research, not just exploring the individual human experience but also groups, institutions, and cultures.

### **2.8.1 Emotional Wellbeing Interventions including Emotional Literacy**

One key question is what are the benefits of emotional intelligence or literacy on learning and behaviour?

Goleman (1995b) has argued that emotional and social competencies have been shown to be more influential than cognitive abilities. Applying this argument in schools, in the area of academic success, schools can use emotional intelligence to improve educational and life chances. Goleman supports his evidence with examples of emotional intelligence programmes that appear to justify his position. From what has already been discussed about Goleman's work, the programmes that he discusses need to be considered carefully. These are discussed next.

In terms of behavioural benefits that correlate with enhanced emotional intelligence, Wells et al. (2003) reviewed programmes in the literature that focused on promoting mental health. Several programmes in the United States were found to have a positive effect. These successful programmes taught emotional and social competences and focused upon the whole school environment, not just on the behaviour of individuals. Such beliefs underlie the notion that the Citizenship Curriculum (QCA, 2002) needs to pervade all aspects of school life rather than being confined solely to educational lessons.

Schools that have had significant positive changes have been characterised by having a positive ethos (Osler and Starkey, 2000).

Noting the effect of teachers on the emotional intelligence of pupils, the literature argues that some of the most important emotional learning takes place in informal interactions between pupil and teacher (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). The argument is that teachers can influence a child's ability to express and regulate emotions directly by teaching and coaching and also indirectly by observational learning. Teachers can model ways for pupils to regulate and express their emotions. Teachers can also create a comfortable learning environment to support their pupils (Matthews et al., 2004). This highlights how a school setting can provide an important context for the learning of emotional skills. However, what is the evidence of the effectiveness of such programmes?

The first and most well-known example of an emotional intelligence/literacy programme is the 'Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies' (PATH) programme (Greenberg, Kusche, Cooke and Quamma, 1995). This was a programme designed primarily for younger children. It set out to achieve the following objectives:

- promote social and emotional competence;
- facilitate the development of emotional awareness;
- improve interpersonal problem solving;
- prevent violence and aggression; and
- reduce behavioural and emotional problems.

PATH was divided into three units related to core social and emotional learning competencies. Examples of these units are those focused on self-control, emotional understanding, interpersonal understanding, and intrapersonal

problem-solving skills (Matthews et al., 2004). This study used a randomised control design and involved around three hundred children. The PATH programme was a whole-school intervention that resulted in significant improvements in vocabulary and emotional understanding (Greenberg et al., 1995). This study has been subjected to further empirical evaluation (Zeidner et al., 2002) which overall led to a positive evaluation of the impact of the PATH programme. In the three studies that took place in the Seattle Social Development Project, post intervention measures for pupils in the experimental group indicated that they had developed better abilities to recognise emotions and respond to social problems, and the group was characterised by fewer incidents of aggressive and violent behaviour (Matthew et al., 2004). On a one year follow up, the pupils reported lower levels of negative affect and fewer conduct problems. Greenberg et al. (1995) developed a longer term PATH curriculum designed as an improvement on the original. There was a stronger focus on emotional identification, emotional regulation and social problem solving. This intervention had an '*extensive impact on children's understanding of emotions*' (Matthews et al., 2004, p. 449).

Overall the programmes that are linked to emotional intelligence, such as the PATH curriculum, cover a wide range of its components (Matthews et al., 2004). Examples of components are regulation of emotions, perspective taking, conflict resolution and coping with stress. Matthews et al. (2004, p. 456) put together the most common objectives for emotional intelligence looking at similar programmes. These are:

- problem solving;
- awareness and understanding of emotions in self and others;
- impulse control;
- emotion regulation;

- coping with environmental stress and negative emotions; and
- perspective taking and empathy.

The mix of these components in the emotional intelligence programmes varies, as some, like PATH, address many of the components (Greenberg et al., 1995) while others, like the Seattle Social Development Project (Matthews et al., 2004) address fewer components.

Salovey et al. (2000) argues that emotional intelligence projects are well liked by both students and teachers, and it is very interesting that both parties apparently see a benefit.

The programmes that have been discussed above, e.g., PATH (Greenberg et al., 1995) demonstrate that social and emotional skills have been shown to result in a wide range of educational gains, including improved school attendance, higher motivation, and higher morale (Durlak and Wells, 1997). Additional research has also found that there is a need for emotional intelligence or emotional literacy programmes to address a whole-school ethos as well as specific intervention programmes (Elias, Zins, Gaczyk and Weissberg, 2003). As a consequence, in order for it to be successful, an intervention needs to be integral to the school and not just an ‘add on’ to the curriculum (Zins, Weissberg, Wang and Walberg, 2004). Overall there have been positive effects in using interventions focused upon promoting emotional wellbeing or emotional awareness. For all the positives, there have been some difficulties with the emotional intelligence and emotional literacy programmes described so far.

## 2.8.2 Difficulties with Emotional Intelligence or Literacy Programmes

Matthews et al. (2004) argue that the main difficulty with programmes like PATH and the Seattle programme is that they '*were not, in fact, specifically designed as emotional intelligence intervention programmes*' (p.457). Matthews et al. (2004) explain that most of these programmes were created for other reasons, like drug prevention or conflict resolution, and not for establishing a good evidence base for the concept of emotional intelligence and/or enhancing the social development, emotional development and learning of all children. Another difficulty is the way that these programmes are based on trying to establish a link between emotional states and changes in learning and behaviour. The difficulty is the subjective nature of emotions and how programmes such as PATH were not specifically focused upon trying to measure emotional intelligence before or after the interventions, meaning that there is little empirical evidence to support an overall generalisable concept of the impact of emotional intelligence, thus raising questions about its validity in this context. A lot of the research is based on correlations between an intervention and the behaviour observed, which does not establish cause and effect (Robson, 2002). Matthews et al. (2004) argue that there is a tenuous link with the theoretical framework of emotional intelligence interventions and describe the difficulty in comparing the different programmes due to the '*different facets of emotional intelligence in different age groups*' (p.459). The claims made by Matthews et al. (2004) are well founded, with the possible exception of the PATH programme cited by Goleman (1995a and 1995b), which, unlike most similar programmes, used experimental methods and control groups. As already discussed, even though there are difficulties with the PATH programme, it is a good example of how further research, whether qualitative or quantitative, can provide evidence for the effectiveness of interventions which aim to enhance children's emotional intelligence or literacy. The criticisms advanced by

Matthews et al. (2004) are largely based on the limited qualitative data generated by studies evaluating the development and/or impact of emotional intelligence, but this bias does not mean that all qualitative data are not without relevance and meaning, especially with the inherent difficulties of research in education (Robson, 2002). Qualitative data can explore the assumptions and beliefs of people participating in the research and how the intervention has affected them.

In the UK Humphrey, Lendrum, and Wigelsworth (2010) implemented a national evaluation of SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) and found that there was no significant impact on pupil outcomes in terms of social and emotional skills, mental health difficulties or behaviour. The lack of impact was attributed to the flexibility of SEAL, which was designed to enable the integration of existing initiatives; unfortunately this resulted in vague guidelines and a lack of clear and specific instructions for how SEAL should be implemented and delivered. This lack of clarity led schools to say that they felt confused and unsure of how to progress. This suggests that although schools appear to welcome flexibility and autonomy (Smith, O'Donnell, Easton & Rudd, 2007), this should be within a prescribed framework of implementation. In addition to a recommended framework it was also proposed that essential components of the approach which are central mechanisms for change need to be explicitly written into the instructions to improve compatibility with an organisation's needs and context (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, and Zins,

2005). The barriers and implementation difficulties at teacher level were partly due to low staff involvement in SEAL and the reliance on ‘volunteers’ who already appreciated the benefits of the promotion of emotional health and wellbeing initiatives. Even among those staff who showed the will to implement SEAL, the lack of guidance appeared to result in uncertainty about how to proceed, suggesting that there should be greater emphasis on developing skills, confidence and competence. This is not an isolated finding; several studies have shown that teachers often feel inadequately prepared to manage the needs of pupils with mental health difficulties and would benefit from more training (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services, 2008; Kidger, Gunnell, Biddle, Campbell & Donovan, 2010; Loades & Mastroyannopoulou, 2010; Rose, Howley, Fergusson & Jament, 2009; Rothi, Leavey & Best, 2008).

In addition there were also other areas that were not sufficiently addressed (Humphrey et al., 2010) as there was a failure to develop staff understanding and skills. This failure in itself may present one of the biggest barriers to the successful implementation of school-based mental health prevention and promotion programmes. SEAL guidance included ‘continuing staff development’ but this was not sufficiently emphasised. Finally, there was a perceived failure to deliver more than an initial staff briefing in most of the case-study schools, which may also reflect barriers at school level. In addition much of the research around the promotion of mental health and social and

emotional skills in schools has focused on interventions at primary school level (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011) and indeed secondary SEAL itself was informed by this research (Department for Education & Skills, 2007). There are, however, major differences between primary and secondary school settings and the SEAL guidance materials did not provide advice on how to overcome them. Institutional size presents a telling example; secondary schools are typically much larger than primary schools and the multiple subject departments and greater numbers of staff inevitably present greater organisational and management challenges when attempting to implement change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976). There was a clear need for good communication between departments, and a coordinated whole-school approach that may not have been possible for large schools (Humphrey et al., 2010). This may be particularly problematic for programmes like SEAL, which emphasise the application and reinforcement of skills and thus depend on a consistent approach from the multiple members of staff with whom students interact on a daily basis. It may be argued that if reluctant staff members are not persuaded of the importance of the universal promotion of emotional health and wellbeing (Stallard, 2011), then a more targeted approach could have been considered (Humphrey et al., (2010). The research also highlighted that there was also a lack of engagement with some teachers (Humphrey et al., 2010) which was more prevalent in secondary schools and also in scientific subjects, which regarded SEAL as ‘soft’ and not worth implementing.

Overall, while the concept of emotional intelligence or literacy appears to offer an exciting and positive step into the twenty-first century, there are inherent difficulties in trying to establish a good evidence base for this concept. For this subject to move forward, more research needs to be conducted in schools, with a focus on the benefits of programmes designed to promote emotional intelligence or literacy. What this literature review has highlighted so far is that programmes need to become established in a school's curriculum, aiming to promote new ways of thinking, and to develop a positive school ethos, being able to measure progress in the mental health of pupils, in order to come close to achieving the impact that Goleman (1995a and 1995b) argues is possible, enabling pupils to develop their emotional awareness and wellbeing. The author would also argue that the same considerations need to be made for implementing positive psychology initiatives and learning from the limitations of the SEAL programme.

Overall this chapter has covered what positive psychology is and what interventions it has developed. It has also established that children's emotional states are not fixed as they can be influenced by the quality of the upbringing and the quality of their relationships, which leads to a level of emotional wellbeing that can be influenced further by interventions at school e.g. the 'three good things' initiative (Seligman et al., 2005) as well as its replication

studies (Gander et al., 2003); the ‘three funny things’ technique; the Penn Resiliency Programme (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins, 2009); and emotional literacy studies like PATH (Matthews et al., 2004). This chapter has also explored what paradigms positive psychology has incorporated into the field, including emotional literacy and emotional intelligence, and what criticisms have been made against it.

Overall the author argues that there is a need for small scale (qualitative) research on the ‘three good things’ technique, which is lacking in the literature to date, to see what effect it has on the individual pupils but also collectively in the classes, and a value in contributing information about using it in an educational setting. In the next chapter the methodology that was chosen for this research is explored, and the rationale given for the choices of methods and the design of the study in order to address the research questions.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Overview of the Chapter**

In the first section, the philosophical considerations that are relevant to the study and underlie research philosophy (ontology and epistemology) are discussed. The next section outlines some of the approaches which an Educational Psychologist may choose when implementing a piece of research, incorporating the author's own learning and approach to the understanding of reality within research. In the final section an outline of the methodologies considered, and how they relate to the research aims and objectives, is discussed.

### **3.2 Philosophical Considerations: Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology Relevant to the Study**

The aim of this section is to explore the differing philosophies available and how these could be used to develop further research in educational psychology. However, it is first necessary to reflect on the philosophical underpinnings that have led to the development of these different methodologies. One key area to explore is the philosophical paradigms that influence what is known as ontology and epistemology.

Ontology is concerned with the nature of being, '*to what exists in the world, to the nature of reality*' (Punch, 1998, p.170). It relates to the various beliefs that people have about the nature of reality. For example, one person might believe that one reality exists and it can be known only imperfectly (Maxwell, 2012) and that reality can be discovered within a certain degree of probability, while others believe that reality is socially constructed and the mind is active in the construction of knowledge (Schwandt, 2000). Ontology therefore relates to what the nature of reality is. Following on from ontology is the area of epistemology, which is discussed next.

Epistemology refers to the study of what knowledge is and its relationship between the knower and the would-be known (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), in other words, the systematic consideration of knowing (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000) and the different ways of applying this to research. One researcher might have the epistemological view that we can measure certain events accurately by controlling variables in an experimental study, for example, in a laboratory. Such a researcher might seek empirical (observable) evidence to support the theories they are questioning, using various experimental methods where external variables can be manipulated. Another researcher might hold the view that individuals are part of a multiple, socially constructed reality and as researchers we are active in the process of developing knowledge and we cannot

control all the variables in the real world. Such a researcher might choose to do an observational study or interview individuals about their beliefs in order to generate theories and increase understanding of the area researched.

Ontological and epistemological positions impact on the way research is conducted; the researcher's assumptions about the nature of reality will affect how they approach research and how they seek to 'know' or 'know more' about a research area. Within psychology there are various paradigms which the researcher can access, in order to be clear about their beliefs and the approach used for their study. As a researcher in educational psychology, there is a need for a clear and concise description of the ontological and epistemological positions in research. This is important so that the Educational Psychologist can reflect on the strengths of their study, but also the limitations of the knowledge acquired and its use in creating new theories. One example would be doing qualitative research, using a small number of participants and a case study methodology within a school, with a social skills intervention for six children. Such a small number of participants could not be used to try and generate universal theories to the overall population, as the sample is too small for statistical analysis. Using a small sample contextualises the study rather than trying to find a generalisable theory. Using a case study to argue an overall theory relating to all people is out of the bounds of the ontological and epistemological paradigms of the methodology.

In the next section there is a brief description of the research aims, followed by a critical commentary of the different methodologies considered, and in the last section a final discussion on the chosen methodology.

### **3.3 A Brief Description of the Study's Aims and its Context**

In September 2013 a letter was sent out to local schools in Leicestershire to see if they wished to participate in a positive psychology study. A number of schools were identified but only one was found to be appropriate as they were able to commit members of staff to the research and also to the interviews and focus groups that were also required.

The school that did agree to participate in the study was interested in supporting children's emotional wellbeing. Aside from the parents, all participants involved in the study were either employed by or being educated at the school. The 'three good things in life' technique (Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson, 2005) was the primary focus of the study and it aimed to explore the way in which children, teachers and parents experienced and interpreted the 'three good things in life' technique, in order to gain their views about any impact this had on behaviour or emotions, both within and outside the class. In order to achieve this, research questions were generated to reflect the epistemological and theoretical positions adopted within the research (Smith et al. 2010).

Before choosing a methodology for the research, there were initial questions that required answers, and as the research was a new area, it was important to look at generating data from a wider perspective. A methodology was required that was robust enough to take into account the multiplicity of inter-related contexts within a school, for example the participants' experiences, and the potential impact of the technique on classroom dynamics. Therefore four research questions were formed from the literature review. These were:

- 1) What are the children's experiences and perceptions of using the 'three good things' questions for one week?
- 2) What are the teachers' perceptions of the children after they have completed the 'three good things' technique? Do teachers perceive any differences in the interactions and relationships of the children with others in their classrooms or within the wider school?
- 3) What are the parental perceptions of their children's involvement after the 'three good things' technique has been completed? Were any changes at home noticed?

- 4) What are the participants' views on improving the 'three good things in life' technique?

In the next section, the methodology chosen in order to meet the four research questions for the study is described.

### **3.4 Chosen Methodology for the Study**

An initial literature review on the 'three good things in life' technique (Seligman et al., 2005) demonstrated that it had been used with adults, but also that other researchers have used the technique with children in schools (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins, 2009). This section provides a discussion and rationale for the choice of methodology and method adopted for the research. There are a number of methodologies and methods available to a social researcher such as an educational psychologist (Crotty, 1998), in order to establish an essential and solid theoretical base from which to conduct any piece of research. Methodology underpins the research strategy (Silverman, 2000) and the choice of methodology is influenced by the generated research questions that the author is seeking to answer. The author intends to begin this section by discussing how his ontological and epistemological stance has informed the choice of research questions and directed the choice of method and type of analysis. Following on from this, the author will explore the settings and contexts within which the research was conducted and discuss how it addressed

ethical issues or barriers. The methodology section will conclude with a consideration of threats to reliability and validity within the study and the central role of reflexivity.

### **3.5 Methodological Orientation**

Within the present study the author chose to pursue a qualitative framework to inform the choice of methods. This reflects the author's own epistemological and theoretical orientation regarding the nature of knowledge and what can truly be known (Robson, 2002) and this is consistent with the manner in which educational psychologists have utilised qualitative methods over the years (Madill, 2002).

The emergence and continued relevance of qualitative approaches of inquiry within educational psychology reflects something of an interpretivist turn in research, away from the post positivist traditions of psychological research (Coolican, 2004). Research in education has tended toward adopting qualitative approaches that focus on the construction of phenomena in real world settings (Scheurich, 1997).

Qualitative approaches tend to reject complicated narratives and comprehensive explanations of the origins of knowledge, and question the view that one system of knowledge can ever be ‘better’ or more ‘successful’ than others (Delanty, 1997).

The overall methodological approach adopted within the thesis is broadly demonstrated in the table below (see table 1). There follows a discussion on the study’s ontology and epistemology.

**Table 1: Overall Methodological Approach Selected**

<b>1. Ontology and Epistemology</b> <b>Interpretive</b>
<b>2. Theoretical Perspectives</b> <b>a) Phenomenology, b) Hermeneutics</b>
<b>3. Case Study</b> <b>(Methodology)</b>
<b>4. Focus group for pupils and semi-structured interviews for teachers and parents</b> <b>(Method)</b>

### 3.6 Ontology and Epistemology

The distinction between post positivist and interpretivist approaches to research lies in the ontological philosophy each school of thought adheres to. Ontology is concerned with the nature of being, '*to what exists in the world, to the nature of reality*' (Punch, 1998, p.170). Traditionally post positivist approaches have sought to adopt an objectivist ontological view of the nature of reality (Robson, 2002). Within this, ontology reality is believed to be independent of human belief, perception and cognition, and has an objective and generalisable pattern of effect that is waiting to be uncovered by the researcher (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005). A post positivist approach to knowledge and understanding of the world suggests that there is a single reality that can be researched through rigorous application of scientific methodology, and assumes that the world is based on common sense perceptions and is real in some definable way (Madill et al., 2000).

In contrast this research study is ontologically rooted in interpretivism, which prescribes that knowledge, truth and 'reality' can never be truly 'known' because an objective world that can be discovered, measured and quantified does not exist (Pring, 2004) outside of a socially constructed world. What we regard as 'reality' may exist regardless of consciousness; however it is our consciousness that creates meaning, and this 'reality' is seen as an interaction

between the objective and subjective ‘worlds’ (Crotty, 1998). An interpretive approach is conceptualised as a construction of reality from a certain perspective, based on the perceptions of the individual. Within this philosophical framework, social interactions and social behaviour and their meanings can only ever be viewed from an individual’s perspective. However, the individual’s perspective can never be seen as a definitive and generalisable ‘reality’ (Bryman, 2001). The interpretive approach therefore emphasises the discovery of social patterns and meanings rather than the discovery of ‘universal truths’ (Madill et al., 2000) which are co-constructed within interactions in the social world and are influenced by personal, historical and socio-cultural contexts (Gergen, 2001).

Epistemology is philosophically linked to ontology and is concerned with how we know what we know, the theory of knowledge (Davies, 1991) and the methods used in relation to gaining an understanding of social reality (Grix, 2001). The positivist approach has long been applied within the social sciences. This has been particularly true within psychology, where researchers have sought scientific credibility, rigour and objectivity in the search for cause and effect relationships (Cohen et al., 2000). In contrast, this study rejects an objective epistemological stance in favour of a more relativist and interpretive approach, where *‘social actors are seen to jointly negotiate the meanings for*

*actions and situations*' (Blaikie, 1993, p.96). Within this epistemology, reality is conceived as highly subjective, and interpretivist research accordingly adopts an inductive and theory-generating approach.

It is commonplace within academic research to draw distinctions between positivist and constructionist epistemology, but this is a rather simplistic characterisation, when in reality different approaches can be useful in addressing different research questions (Krauss, 2005). Indeed it is perfectly possible that differing aspects of human existence can be explored equally well by either tradition, depending upon the context. Similarly, traditional distinctions between qualitative and quantitative methodology can be seen as too simplistic, as researchers often borrow heavily from different traditions within their research (Crotty, 1998). Accordingly qualitative research cannot be seen as a homogenous field as there are a wide variety of methods associated with this kind of research philosophy, and many differing nuanced epistemological positions that researchers may adopt. Indeed Willig (2001) notes that qualitative approaches can be seen to exist on a continuum, ranging from those adopting a realist foundation to those with a distinct and rigid relativist position.

### **3.7 Qualitative Traditions**

Broadly qualitative methodologies have developed within phenomenological and social constructionist traditions. Both traditions share a number of similarities including the assumption that ‘reality’ is not of primary concern, that meaning is preferable to measurement (Krauss, 2005) and that language can help the researcher understand the thoughts and feelings regarding the inner world of the participant (Barker et al., 2002). However social constructionists tend to adopt a more rigid relativist approach, which emphasises the role of culture and society in the construction of the self and our mode of relating to one another as human beings (Owen, 1992).

Furthermore this position emphasises the importance of language and the social interactions within which language is generated, sustained and abandoned (Gergen and Gergen, 1991). Accordingly, beliefs about the world are viewed as social constructions (Owen, 1992) and research seeks to uncover taken-for-granted discourses, because the language people use to describe their experiences is not necessarily viewed as a reflection of an individual’s underlying thoughts and feelings (Barker et al., 2002). Knowledge is therefore conceived of as the property of the group rather than the individual (Kuhn, 1970).

In contrast, phenomenological approaches endeavour to study the experiences of individuals to discover a perspective on their life in relation to particular phenomena, to uncover what matters to people within their lived worlds (Smith et al., 2010). Phenomenologists focus upon an individual's thoughts, feelings and perceptions and seek to access the inner life worlds of the participants to allow an analysis of the multiple perspectives people within the world inevitably hold (Barker et al., 2002).

Accordingly the perceptions that an individual holds regarding their life world are viewed as the primary psychological processes underpinning what people think, feel and do (Barker et al., 2002). Phenomenological approaches tend to fall between the 'realist' and 'relativist' ends of the continuum; that is a phenomenological position tends to argue that although experience is always the product of interpretation, and is therefore constructed, it is nevertheless 'real' to the person who is having the experience. Phenomenological traditions grew out of a frustration with traditional 'modern' approaches which drew recourse to a structured view of the universe and world in which we live. For phenomenologists 'truth' can only be seen as an intersubjective perspective, heavily influenced by the fluid nature of the social world around us (Finlay, 2005).

Inevitably the phenomenological school of thought forms of a broad spectrum of beliefs and approaches, although all share an interest in understanding what the human experience is like (Smith et al., 2010). In a simplistic sense this spectrum can be characterised by the distinction between approaches which place emphasis upon hermeneutic (interpretation) and idiographic (study of the individual) understanding (Smith et al. 2010), and those stemming from a traditional Husserlian approach which typically focus upon descriptive accounts of experience (Giorgi, 2008). There has been significant growth in phenomenological research in the past twenty years, with many different types of approach adopted including case studies, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), grounded theory and ethnography. Although there is much cross-over between approaches (Barker et al., 2002), each offers a distinct method of gaining understanding. The present study adopts case studies as its methodological approach.

### **3.8 Summary**

There are a wide range of methodological approaches available to the researcher (Crotty, 1998). What is essential is that a good theoretical base is developed for any doctoral study, as the methodology underlies the overall research strategy (Silverman, 2000). The choice of methodology a researcher makes is often influenced by the kind of research questions a study is looking to explore or

answer.

The author wished to see if a positive psychology technique would be beneficial to pupils in one year five and one year six class, and sought to explore the participants' views and experiences of the technique, and their perceptions of how it was delivered. In order to answer the research questions created and utilise the 'three good things in life' technique in a primary school (Seligman and Steen, 2005), the philosophies within an interpretive paradigm are the most appropriate. The research is focused on not replicating a large study but instead focusing on the experiences of participants in the context they are educated. Therefore taking all factors into account, the research epistemology that is most appropriate to answer the research questions is the interpretive approach. Mertens (2010) defined this approach as recognising that '*knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process*' (p.11). Schwandt (1994) argued that researchers should attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it (p.118 as cited in Mertens, 1998). The ontology of the study the author is using embraces that reality is socially constructed, so there are multiple mental constructions which can work together or in conflict with one another. There is a rejection in the belief that there is one objective reality, as characterised in the post positivist ontology (Robson, 2002). The purpose of the interpretive paradigm is the belief that knowledge is not discovered but is actively constructed. The research is

based on an *‘active process with the inquirer and the inquired- are interlocked in an interactive process influencing each other’* (Mertens, 2010). Instead of the researcher seeking to be objective, which is a characteristic of a post positivist approach (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2003), the emphasis is upon confirmability (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). The data is therefore rooted in the context of the study and information can be tracked back to the personal constructs and beliefs used to create the individual or group interpretations which can be made explicit in their narrative.

To conclude the points discussed so far, this research is ontologically and epistemologically rooted in an interpretive approach. A qualitative methodology is considered the most appropriate approach for the study as it reflects the research questions generated from the literature review. A small number of participants can be used to generate rich, subjective data, specific to the study’s needs. In the next section the study design is discussed, including the reasons for selecting it.

### **3.9 Study Design, Including Procedures Adopted and Actions Carried Out**

#### **3.9.1 Study design**

To gather data on the participants’ experiences or views, a case study design was selected. Robson (2002) describes a case study as a well-established

research strategy that can explore the interpretations of an individual person, a group setting or an organisation. The benefit of a case study is its ability to gather rich data for the author's research question, which is currently missing in the literature. Robson (2002) discusses that the central defining characteristic of a case study is to concentrate on a context or setting that is studied in its own right. In this case it is the effects of the positive psychology interventions in an education context that is being explored. The need for realistic research allows for the '*use of the most relevant data collection method for the context under consideration*' (Pawson and Tilley, 1994, p.31). The case study method has advantages as the researcher can investigate 'real' experiences which are dynamic as a learning process for the participants (Robson, 2002). The focus is on analysing and identifying the significance of events in the case study.

Yin (2013) identified two broad types of case studies in terms of research focus. These are a single case design and a multiple case design. For this study, a single case design was selected for the following reasons. As cited by Yin (2013, p.51) the rationale for selecting a single case design is that '*the single-case study can represent the critical test of a significant theory*'. In this study the participants' assumptions and experiences are being gathered in a new area of research and therefore a case study design provides a valuable contribution where scientific observation alone cannot record the participants' thoughts, feelings or reflections. The second reason, according to Yin (2013), is that a

case study can be used ideally in unique situations; the positive psychology intervention is the first attempt at using the ‘three good things’ intervention with a qualitative methodology with children. In conclusion, a single case study was selected because it is relevant to the context of the study and its aims. A case study approach with a set of individual cases that are linked by the positive psychology intervention should lead to answers to the research questions.

This type of study allows those participating to offer their thoughts, feelings, professional judgement and reflections as they progress through the intervention. The case study approach was used because of the need to gain descriptive feedback of the results. The main strengths of a case study methodology are that it is trans-paradigmatic and thus it is compatible with several different epistemological positions (Verschuren, 2003). Case studies explore unique features of the research context which may be lost in larger scale studies and which might be key to understanding a situation. They are not influenced by unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables.

The principal limitations of this approach are often cited from researchers within post positivist epistemologies (Flyvbjerg, 2004). The post positivist paradigm views case studies and qualitative methods in general as flawed due to: the perceived failure to control confounding variables within the experiment;

not having clear hypotheses include an alternate hypothesis; and low statistical representativeness (Flyvbjerg, 2004).

A frequently cited criticism of case study methodology is that its dependence on a single case causes it to be incapable of yielding outcomes which can be satisfactorily generalised (Tellis, 2007). However, it can be argued that case study research does not intend to provide universally generalisable findings in the post positivist sense (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The research supports Lincoln and Guba's (2002) position that if the idea of making generalisations is accepted, then they should be indeterminate, relative, time based and context-bound.

As an interpretivist researcher, the author would argue that these perceived flaws and criticisms are not of significance to this research as it is committed to using a '*real world setting as the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest*' (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Some authors, such as Stake (2005), argue that case study is not within itself a methodology. Stake (2005) suggests that a case study does not present a clear rationale of how research should be conducted. Similarly, Harding (1987) suggests that methodology is a '*theory and analysis of how research should proceed*' (p.3) and a case study approach does not achieve this because it has poorly defined parameters.

In response to criticisms of the case study approach, Cohen et al. (2007) explain that case study elements need to have a clear purpose, which is to represent and analyse the individuality of real participants within the research context and explored through their own accounts; in essence, to represent the participants reality and to ‘*give a sense of being there*’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 67). A case study approach, according to Cohen et al. (2007), is a methodology because it is closely aligned with qualitative research methods such as observation and interviews, which aim to elicit evidence from the individual about their experiences regarding the relevant context and generate new knowledge.

Cohen et al., (2007) presents certain elements which are characteristic of case study approaches. These elements relate to a case study’s distinctiveness, for example its ability to allow the researcher to do ‘*in depth analysis, portrayal, constructivism, inferential, subjective, and descriptive research*’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 237). Further argument for the case study lies in the in depth and rich data it can generate. A case study is closely aligned with qualitative research methods, with both being concerned with the individual and exploration of their experiences in relation to contextual and systemic factors. Case studies provide a rationale for using qualitative research methods to generate new knowledge about a particular context, which is the aim of this research. As the strengths of the use of case studies have been discussed it would be appropriate to discuss some of their limitations.

### **3.9.2 Case study and a review of the limitations to the study's reliability and validity**

For a case study design, a central criticism is that the results cannot legitimately be generalised to a wider population, which gives it a lack of external validity (Yin, 2013). For this study, rather than endeavouring to obtain general, stable results, the design seeks to give a rich picture of the perceived impact of the 'three good things' technique (Seligman et al., 2005) in a single school. The author argues that '*a genuine creative encounter can make new forms of understanding*' (Simons, 1996 p.227). For this study the research is looking specifically at an individual case of a positive psychology technique; the intention is not that findings should be generalised to the total population. If, in the future, there is a need to enhance external validity, future studies can be conducted in other situations to see if there are similar results.

By ensuring construct validity, Yin (2013, p.118) identifies three steps that are required:

1. Use multiple studies of evidence;
2. Establish the chain of evidence; and
3. Have key informants review the draft case study report.

In this case, it is the experiences of those participating in the research that was the focus of inquiry. The study focusses on their perceptions of themselves and those around them. In this regard the construct validity of this study can be argued to be good as it is using multiple sources of data from three populations i.e. pupils, teachers and parents. The case study was also reviewed by the supervisor in order to establish a chain of evidence and also regularly reviewed various phases of the draft.

The next area of discussion relates to threats to reliability. Yin (2013) argues that following the design of a previous study and gaining similar results strengthens reliability. Unfortunately, as described previously, the current study is a unique case rather than duplicating previous research. As a consequence, this first study may suffer from low reliability. A traditional way of overcoming this is by repeating this study in the future, to look for similar results; however, at present, such a step has not been taken. A way to reduce the impact of this threat to the 'trustworthiness' of the study is to make sure that it does have good validity (as previously discussed), so that it has relevance to the school's needs.

In conclusion although the study appears to have good validity, on the area reliability it is less secure. As the case study approach has been discussed it

would be appropriate to discuss how the ‘three good things’ technique was used in the study.

### **3.9.3 The ‘Three Good Things’ Booklet**

The ‘three good things in life’ technique was put into booklet form for ease of access for young pupils. The mechanism of the booklet was the same as the original ‘three good things’ study, as on each day of the week it asked pupils to write three good things that they had done (Seligman et al., 2005). The change from the electronic form of completing the technique to writing it down on paper was not difficult (see appendix one) and attempts were made to include colour and other presentation features to make it seem relevant and interesting to pupils. For the remainder of the research sections, reference to the technique will refer to it as either the ‘three good things’ technique, the ‘three good things’ booklet or the booklet.

### **3.9.4 Participants and Sampling**

For the purposes of the study, one year five and one year six class were used in a primary school as it was felt that at this age they would be able to articulate their thoughts in writing. The children completed the ‘three good things I did today’ booklet for one week. Each child had an individual booklet (see appendix one). The booklet took approximately ten minutes to complete per day, and this would take place near the end of the day (2:00 pm) to give the

children time to reflect. All pupils who had a learning need were supported in recording the information by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) or class teacher. After the booklet was completed, six children were interviewed, as well as their teachers and parents. The participants were obtained through a purposeful randomised sample of an equal amount of year five and year six pupils, as this was thought to give an even balance of views and opinions and thus enable *'the researchers to satisfy the specific needs of the project'* (Robson, 2002, p.265). A purposeful random sample is described as *'often (but by no means exclusively) a feature of qualitative research'* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2003 p, 114) where the participants are selected for their characteristics. They are selected for a specific purpose and in this case, year five and year six pupils were required. The participants were randomly assigned with three from the year five and three from the year six class. This led to two year six males and one year six female being selected and two year five females and one year five male being selected which randomly gave an equal distribution of males and females. The focus groups with the pupils then met with the researcher together to give a sense of empowerment to the pupils and being proportionately higher in number, this was considered beneficial, in order to reduce the 'expert' role of the researcher and promote open dialogue. Additional numbers of pupils were considered but there were concerns about creating a situation that decreased participant performance due to social loafing

(George and Jones, 1999). The pupils who were selected then had their parents invited for the focus groups later in the week.

To improve the validity of the study a triangulation strategy was used (Robson, 2002). The method uses multiple sources of data to enhance the rigour of the research project. The research compared the responses of the pupils, teachers and parents. This comparison of responses from different respondent groups serves to enhance the validity of the study as it can highlight discrepancies in what the participants say. For this study, which explores participants' experiences, the triangulation method is important due to the subjective nature of the research and the need to highlight and explore discrepancies of these experiences.

The size of the sample for the study was considered. Morse (2000) suggests that as the scope of the study is narrow, the nature of the topic clear, with a large capacity to gather rich data from the participants, this would allow for a small number of participants to be used.

In total the study included forty two pupils who completed the booklet and then six children for the focus group, two teachers in a group interview, and two parents in individual interviews (more were invited and asked to complete questionnaires but the response rate was poor).

### 3.9.5 Meetings that facilitated the study

Table 2 below is a diary of the meetings that took place during the planning and data collection phase of the study.

**Table 2: Meetings with the Stakeholders for the Study.**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Objectives of the Meetings</u></b>
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Initial meeting with Whiteham Primary School SENCO and Deputy Head Teacher to discuss the aims and for the researcher to discuss how they can be explored through research. Reflecting upon the aims of the project and how it may be achieved.
6 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	Second meeting with Whiteham Primary School to finalise the resources they will use. Discussion on the ‘three good things in life’ technique. Dates and times are drawn up.
11 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	Drafted letters for parental permission are handed into school for the SENCO to distribute.
22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2014	Copies of the ‘three good things’ are available for parents to see. All copies of the booklet are dropped off for the teachers to use. Parental drop in available for any interested parents upon request.
18 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	Start of the ‘three good things’ booklets to be used at 2:00 pm for one week.
29 <sup>th</sup> of November 2014	End of the ‘three good things’ booklets. The pupils were then selected using a stratified random sample. The pupil’s parents were then invited for the following week.
3 <sup>rd</sup> of December 2014	Focus groups with pupils years six and seven (afternoon).
6 <sup>th</sup> of December 2014	Interviews with parents in separate meetings (all day)

### **3.9.6 Context of the School**

The school that participated in the study is a primary school based in the South Leicestershire area. The Ofsted inspection provides the basis of the information about the school. The primary school is slightly smaller than average with most pupils being White British and a very small minority from other ethnic groups. There was 199 children on role at the time of the research. The proportion of children who are disabled (SEN) is above average. The proportion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is below average. The school is an academy which has had a consistent Ofsted rating of good from 2012 to the present. In its prior Ofsted rating in 2009 it was judged to be satisfactory. The school has therefore gone from satisfactory to good and the Ofsted inspection records how the school has demonstrated improvement in all areas. The teaching was judged to be good with high but appropriate expectations of learning and the children are well prepared for secondary school. The behaviour and safety of the school was also judged to be good. Children with special educational needs are also judged to make appropriate progress in light of their needs. There is roughly an equal amount of male and female pupils attending the school and the progress of the children at the school is slightly above national expectations.

### **3.9.7 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity recognises that *'researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching'* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p.14). The area of reflexivity raises the idea in the researcher's mind that they have their own life experiences and perceptions that will affect the study. Crotty (1998) stresses the importance of reflecting on the impact the researcher will have on the research. Ahren (1999) argues for the need to use reflexivity to identify potential bias in the research. To increase the **researcher's awareness** Ahren created a 'reflexive bracket' (1999, p, 408). By completing this bracket, which includes creating a diary of the research in combination with the triangulation method already discussed, the author seeks to decrease the threat of validity and researcher bias.

Reflexivity was an integral part of the research which required the author to give considerable thought to the multiple roles and identities of researcher, intervention designer and evaluator. As there was no previously established relationship with the school, there was a need to develop mutual trust and respect. However, the school's relationship with the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service was already developed and, as an Educational Psychologist within the team, this enabled trust and respect to be developed more quickly. As a researcher, the author did have concerns about the multiple roles that he facilitated and that he was not seen as a person in a position of power or control or as an 'expert'. To counteract this possibility, the author had to ensure that

opportunities were available for the pupils, teachers and parents to be able to express their views and facilitate an exchange of ideas and dialogue.

The researcher felt that there was a need to adopt a neutral stance throughout the process of the study. This remained a constant concern throughout the study as the very fact of the researcher's involvement in the preparation of the 'three good things in life' technique (Seligman et al., 2005) may have led to being less neutral at times. The researcher's awareness of this possibility was addressed through discussions with the researcher's supervisor and peer study group. The author found that the use of a diary was very helpful in writing down thoughts and actions and reflecting on his position consistently during the research implementation.

For this study the researcher did not have a dual role of researcher carrying out the interviews and facilitator of delivery of the 'three good things' technique. This is because the school staff delivered the 'three good things' booklet and all direct involvement from the author with the pupils and parents was at the interview stage. Staff were reassured that interviews would be implemented in a manner to enable all who participated to respond openly.

Robson (2002) suggests that an in-depth knowledge of the intervention being evaluated may indeed provide an advantage in itself as this can lead to

improvements in the service being delivered. This describes the experience of the researcher in this study. The author did, however, have ongoing concerns that the staff may have wanted the intervention to succeed and therefore may not have been as objective as possible in their responses during the interviews. The time spent by the researcher in the school during the initial consultations of the study enabled the researcher to become more aware of any key contextual factors.

The role of the researcher became removed during the week the implementing the booklet as the class teachers introduced the booklet and administered them daily for the two year groups. The researcher became involved again during the post interviews with the pupils. This allowed for a certain 'distance' from administering the intervention and yet being available for staff should the need arise.

### **3.10 Focus Groups**

Focus group interviews are a useful way to explore and examine what people think, how they think, and why they think the way they do about the issues of importance to them, without pressuring them into making decisions or reaching a consensus (Robson, 2002). Kitzinger (2005) discusses how the focus group method is an 'ideal' approach for examining the stories, experiences, points of view, beliefs, needs and concerns of individuals (p.57). It allows participants to

develop their own questions and frameworks as well as to seek their own needs and concerns, in their own words and on their own terms. Group work allows the researchers to access different communication forms which people use in their day-to-day interaction, and these include the use of humour, arguing, teasing and discussing past events (Kitzinger, 2005, p.57). Consequently focus groups permit researchers to enter the world of the participants in a way that other research methods may not be able to do (Robson, 2002).

Essentially a focus group is an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic (Wilkinson 2004). A focus group, as a research method, 'involved more than one participant per data collection session' (Wilkinson 2004, p 271). The focus group works as a 'collective conversation', which can be small or large (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis 2008, p.375) and 'it involves some kind of collective activity' (Kitzinger 2005, p.56). The primary aim and benefit of a focus group is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of a select group of people concerning a specific issue, from the perspective of the participants of the group (Liamputtong 2009). Focus group interviews involve a group of six to eight people (Robson, 2002) who come from similar social and cultural backgrounds or who have similar experiences or concerns. They gather together to discuss a

specific issue with the help of a researcher in a particular setting where participants feel comfortable enough to engage in a discussion.

A successful focus group discussion relies heavily on '*the development of a permissive, non-threatening environment within the group where the participants can feel comfortable to discuss their opinions and experiences*' (Hennink 2007, p.6). The focus group method is different from group interviews since group interactions are treated explicitly as 'research data' (Ivanoff & Hultberg 2006, p.125).

The strengths of the focus group method are that the researcher is provided with a great opportunity to appreciate the way people see their own reality and hence '*to get closer to the data*' (Ivanoff & Hultberg 2006, p.126). For the purposes of the research this method suits the context of obtaining the views of pupil participants in a small group of five to six to obtain the relevant information required. Overall there were six pupils took part in the focus group.

### 3.11 Interviews with Teachers and Parents

The study looked to explore the perceptions of the participants, to gain information on their views, which was collected through one-hour interviews using semi-structured questions.

For the reliability and validity of interviews, Yin (2013) argued that the weakness of using this method of data collection is a possible response bias from the participants. Those taking part in the study may only give the response that they believe the researcher wants to hear. In addition, a bias may also develop due to poorly constructed questions. To overcome these two potential difficulties, the risk of a response bias from the participants was reduced by using a script to remind participants to be as open and honest as they could be. This may not completely address the threat to validity of biased responses but it aimed to increase the participants' awareness that authentic answers are essential.

The second threat to validity is posed by poorly constructed questions. In the current study, the interview questions were discussed with the research supervisors and an analysis was made of the most appropriate questions for the study. It was decided, during supervision, that the research questions should be reflected within the interview and focus group questions and a step-by-step decision was made to make sure the research aims were reflected in the

questions asked. As discussed in section 3.10.3, where there is a clear rationale for the choices of the questions made, there was also a need to check for appropriate and well-constructed questions, with minor alterations made to address questions that were considered to be ambiguous during supervision sessions.

Another area of possible threat to the study is the use of open ended questions. McNiff et al. (1996) argued that although open ended questions are good because they capture a broader range of experiences, they still have their limits, and so some relevant data not considered by the researcher may be lost. In order to overcome this, a final question was added, to ask for any feedback on points not previously directly explored.

### **3.11.1 Teacher Interviews**

For the teachers taking part in the study, one interview was designed.

- The interview was given at the end of the school's participation in the 'three good things in life' technique;
- The interviews were recorded at the school using a Dictaphone.
- The recordings were then transcribed in preparation for analysis.
- A coding method (thematic analysis) was used to analyse the transcripts.

- As part of the analysis, patterns of similar and dissimilar experiences were recorded to explore what the teachers considered they had learned from the process. Additionally, the teachers were invited to discuss any recommendations for future programmes.

### **3.11.2 Parental Interviews**

- For the parents an interview was created, but for those who did not attend a questionnaire based on the interview was created and sent. The interview was completed at the end of the use of the ‘three good things’ technique within the school.
- A coding method (thematic analysis) was used to abstract themes to summarise what the parents had learned from the experience, and what they advised for planning and delivery of future programmes.
- As was the case with the teachers, patterns of similar and dissimilar experiences were recorded to explore what the parents had learned from the process.

### **3.11.3 Pupil Focus Groups**

- For the pupils taking part in the study, one focus group with six pupils was used to gain the data within the available timeframe. The focus group was conducted at the end of the ‘three good things in life’ technique.

- The pupil responses in the ‘three good things’ booklet were also analysed.
- The focus group was recorded at the school by writing down the responses, but a Dictaphone was also used.
- The data was then transcribed in preparation for analysis.
- A coding method was used to analyse the transcripts using thematic analysis.
- As part of the analysis, patterns of similar and dissimilar experiences were abstracted to explore what the pupils had learned from the process. Additionally, the pupils were invited to discuss their recommendations for future techniques.

Through discussion between the school, and the University of East London supervisors it was decided that a one-week technique would afford an appropriate timeframe for the participants in the study to explore and experience the technique sufficiently to reflect and learn from the experience.

This length of time mimicked the timeframe of the original research (Seligman et al., 2005).

As shall be described in the findings sections the focus group were analysed separately from the teacher and parental interviews and then combined together at a later phase (see table 4 and Findings chapter).

### 3.12 Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to the British Psychological Society ethical principles (2006) addressing the following ethical requirements:

- *The objectives of the study are to be made clear to all those participating (3.1). This will be done in writing using an information sheet and also by asking for verbal consent during each interview or when questionnaires are filled in, for all participants.*
- *The participants' consent will be sought (3.2). For the pupils, written consent will be obtained from parents/guardians, as well as verbal consent from the pupils themselves, reinforced by the information sheet discussed previously.*
- *All participants have a right to withdraw from the study without having to state a reason (3.6). This will be made clear to all participants using the information sheet. Participants will be reminded of the confidentiality measures the researcher will be employing.*

The researcher works for a local educational authority and therefore is bound by a policy that all educational psychologists are required to have a Criminal Record Bureau assessment (CRB); that all interventions, consultations or

observations regarding a pupil are conducted with the knowledge and permission of the parent and are in line with the safeguarding policy of the local authority. All documentation is stored securely and information is shared on a need to know basis.

The British Psychological Society and the Association of Educational Psychologists offer guidelines in relation to the ethical practice of the practising psychologist. This guidance is reflected in the work of Robson (2000), Farrell (2005), and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003). The ethical approach to the study also has to meet the requirements of the University of East London and there was a robust system for ethical considerations and risk assessment, which led to a certificate being issued giving permission for the research to take place (see appendix 3).

Farrell (2005) provides an ethical framework for working with young people and collecting data. This includes:

- addressing the power relationship between researchers and participants;
- obtaining informed consent from parents and pupils;
- avoiding embarrassment and pain when asking questions;
- avoiding conclusions which emphasise problems and deficits;
- consulting with young people regarding the design of the research;

- identifying the risks of the research to young people;
- providing young people with an opportunity to give their views e.g. through a semi-structured interview; and
- explaining the research clearly enough so that anyone asked to take part can make an informed decision about whether they want to consent or refuse.

Cohen et al., (2003) adds to the above list: the potential for the research to improve the situation of the responder; guarantees that the research will not harm the responder; and the right of the responder to expect reliability and validity. The ethical guidance of Farrell (2005) and Cohen et al., (2003) was taken into account in the planning of research procedures and any work undertaken in the thesis.

Within this study, steps taken to adhere to ethical guidance and reduce risks posed by research include:

- setting up the research environment to be as non-threatening as possible;
- facilitating a high level of participation from the pupils within the research
- process i.e. through a pilot stage and in answering the research questions;

- providing information in a meeting with parents to enable informed consent to be made;
- selecting participants fairly on grounds of gender, age and ability;
- not selecting participants who might become vulnerable as a result of taking part in the research; and
- focusing results on progress and achievement.

For the purpose of this study, parent letters and a meeting with them provided all the information they needed, and their formal consent via letter and pupil consent was also sought at the interview stage; these letters gave brief information about the research, why it was being undertaken, what would happen during the research and how the research would help the school in the future.

To summarise, parents' and pupils' permission was gained for them to be involved in the research. Informed consent, including written consent, was obtained. The information given in obtaining consent outlined the actions the researcher would take and how the pupils would be involved.

The meeting and formal consent contribute to the ethical stance of the study because:

- The individuals have an understanding of the research, to enable them to consent to participate in the research.
- Communication about the activity uses an easy to understand language.
- The individual has consented without pressure and has also understood their right to withdraw from the process if they wish at any time.
- Consent is documented.

It was important that pupils understood the research process and the study's aim, and this was explained at the beginning of the one-to-one work through revisiting how the questions would be asked, how their responses would be recorded, and how the participants could view what the researcher writes. Pupils had the right to withdraw if they felt they could not participate (Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003).

The data is anonymous in the final report and this was made clear to teachers, pupils and parents at the meeting and during interviews. In the write-up of the thesis, pupils are allocated a letter in order to achieve anonymity. The identity of pupils in the study was shared only on a need to know basis. Pupils were initially allocated a key letter for use on documentation, for ease of recognition by the researcher. Senior staff at the school were aware of which pupils had been involved in the research, as they organised the appointments, but pupils are not easily recognised in the final documentation, which was be shared with staff

and will be kept in the school. Individual pupil details were not included in the report.

It was important that pupils felt that their views would be respected. It was agreed that the findings from individual interviews would only be shared with staff with consent from the pupils and on a need to know basis. The purpose of sharing this information would be to aid further planning or alert staff to safeguarding issues.

Participation in the study for any one pupil was not compulsory and although it was hoped that most pupils would want to participate, it was anticipated that some pupils or parents might decline. Successful engagement of participants in the research relied upon their trust in the researcher to represent their views accurately. If pupils or parents did not wish to participate in the 'three good things' technique, an alternative programme would be selected by the class teacher. This was not approached in a punitive fashion but as an alternative activity. It was important to ensure that this trust was not misused in any way.

In meeting the ethical requirements of research Flick (2007) emphasises that consideration has to be given to whether it is appropriate to undertake the research.

Cohen et al., (2003) advocate the importance of balancing harm and benefit, with the value of the research in terms of gains in knowledge, understanding, or effectiveness of practice, matched against strengths and difficulties of the research. In balancing harm with benefit Flick (2007) emphasises that it is important to have a clear idea of who the sample group will be and be precise as to why they will be interviewed. It is important that the research has a definite purpose, and by undertaking the research the participants will benefit rather than be put at risk. Flick (2007) argues that those who benefit most will be those who come after the research and that this should be made clear to participants of the research.

As a result of this study, it was anticipated that all pupils would benefit in the short term.

Benefits to the stakeholders of undertaking research can create a shared understanding of how to increase pupil wellbeing and their perceptions of further developments add to professionals' skills and pupils' experiences. The research also included the value of opening up opportunities for discussion and reflection across the school environment, initiated simply because of the positive nature of the research, and the value of obtaining evidence of pupil, child and parental perceptions to support future planning.

### **3.13 Justification, Rationale and Description for the Approaches Chosen During Data Analysis**

To justify the approach selected for data analysis, all the appropriate approaches are described first. Then a rationale is given for selecting the approach chosen.

Robson (2002, p.458) identifies four basic groups of qualitative analysis:

1. Quasi-statistical methods;
2. Immersion approaches;
3. Editing approaches; and
4. Template approaches.

Quasi-statistical approaches are used to ‘largely convert qualitative data into a quantitative format’. For the study, this approach is not congruent with the aims of the research and was not selected. In the findings section the data is coded and presented in numerical form but this was not analysed using a quantitative methodology; instead the approach was used to give an overview of the responses found. The aims of the study are not conducive to a quasi-statistical approach.

The immersion approach to data analysis is an unstructured analysis using a researcher’s creativity and interpretation. As the research has clear aims this

method of analysis is not necessary at this time and due to the relatively limited level of experience of the researchers in this area this was not considered to be a secure choice as a method of analysis. After this initial project, this approach may become a more viable method in the future.

In the editing approach, analysis is focused on the researcher coding the text to look for meaning or patterns. This approach would be more useful for a researcher who was not specifically looking for certain patterns and meaning in the text. The editing approach was not selected for this study because the researcher was looking for patterns and meaning in the experiences and reflections of the participants. As a consequence, a more structured approach was considered to be more appropriate.

The template approach is systematic to qualitative analysis (Robson, 2002). The researcher codes the data, looking for key areas which are pre-set; rather than emergent from the data, they are derived from the study's aims. These codes become templates for data analysis. This approach was selected as it can be structured around the study's aims, but is flexible enough to permit the analysis of unusual experiences or reflections that the participants may have. When analysing the participant's responses, a template approach was used to note the range of experiences at each stage of the process.

In order to analyse the data appropriately, a coded data analysis was used. The advantages and disadvantages of using this method are discussed by Robson (2002). This method of analysing the data allows rich data to be thoroughly analysed. The disadvantages are based on the potential deficiencies of the researcher as an analyst and the need for a clear explanation as to how conclusions were reached. However, safeguards were in place to address the potential disadvantages described by Robson (2002), as the researcher received training in using a coding approach and ongoing supervision from an experienced researcher and supervisor. This compensated for any ‘deficiencies’ of the individual researcher.

When analysing the responses, a template approach was used to note the range of experiences at each stage of the process. With the three samples taken on three separate occasions, marking the different phases of the study, the data analysis was geared towards looking at similarities and dissimilarities during each phase. In addition, overall patterns during and between the three phases were analysed for meaning. In analysing the pupil, teacher and parent interviews, and the recorded responses in the ‘three good things’ booklets, the template approach was used to look for meaning and pattern in the data describing their experiences.

Miles and Huberman (1994) identify two possible ways of presenting the results of single case studies. One is using matrices (tables with rows and columns) and the other is using networks (a set of boxes with links between them). For this study both were used to present the data to provide an overview of the findings and a foundation for the discussion section.

### **3.14 Procedure and Materials**

The ‘three good things in life’ technique was put into booklet form for ease of access for young pupils. The mechanism of the booklet was the same, as on each day of the week it asked pupils to write three good things that they had done, as per the original study (Seligman, 2005). As previously stated, the change from electronic form of completing the technique to writing it down on paper was straightforward (see appendix one) and presented no difficulties in its implementation.

Three semi-structured interview or focus group guides were structured, to use with the teachers, pupils and parent groups respectively. These were used to record the participants’ experiences and to endeavour to record their reflections on the ‘three good things’ technique accurately (see appendix two).

### **3.15 Coding Approach (Thematic Analysis)**

The coding approach used the process known as thematic analysis (Robson,

2002). The process of coding uses various phases and steps that the researcher uses (Braun and Clarke, 2006). See table 3 for an overview of the process.

**Table 3: Braun and Clarke’s (2006) phases of coding (thematic analysis) and steps undertaken by the researcher.**

Phase	Description
Phase 1 Researcher familiarises himself with the data	<p>Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) suggest using transcription as an active, as opposed to passive, process. The data was changed from raw data into useable information. Data was transcribed for content only. All verbal utterances were recorded verbatim, including non-word sounds, such as ‘um’ and ‘er’, coughing and laughing. In addition gestures were recorded including participants nodding their head in agreement or disagreement.</p> <p>Transcriptions of the interviews were word processed by listening to the audio transcript on a number of occasions to check for accuracy and to increase familiarity with the data (transcribed interviews are included in appendix seven).</p>
Phase 2 Generating initial codes	<p>The interview transcripts were then coded. Codes were applied to interview extracts and related solely to verbal content. Codes were applied to each individual interview; no attempt was made at this stage to identify themes recurring across the data or see how they related to the research aims.</p>
Phase 3 Searching for themes	<p>Once the three interviews were coded, the analysis began to search for themes within interviews by identifying patterns and similarities across coded extracts in transcripts using coloured highlighters (see appendix 8-11). After three cycles of this process, the coded extracts from all interviews were brought together and organised into theme areas that occurred across all three data sets.</p> <p>An initial list of themes, in the form of a visual thematic map was collated for each interview.</p>
Phase 4 Reviewing themes	<p>This phase was conducted in two parts. Part one involved reviewing all coded extracts and initial codes. New codes were identified and linked to themes identified in phase 3, and codes which were not previously linked to themes in phase three</p>

	were linked to a theme, or discarded. Part two of this phase involved a process of revision, during which the number, names and breadth of each theme was refined. The aim of this phase was to achieve a collection of themes and subthemes that represented the data.
Phase 5 Defining and naming themes	After reviewing the themes, the author referred back to the data extracts for each theme and collated these under each theme heading, along with a narrative account. Collating thematically-linked data extracts allowed for a clearer view of the essence of each theme and to therefore define it more clearly. It was at this stage that the final names for each of the identified themes were made.
Phase 6 Producing the report	At this stage, the final analysis and write up of the report was made, which is presented in this paper

The clear process initially looks at emerging codes based on the study's aims, and then works toward looking at themes which emerged from the data. The analysis then culminates with the final phase, which is presented in the findings section.

### **3.15.1 Method of Transcription**

According to researchers such as Davidson (2009), there is a growing recognition in the research literature for the need for researchers to be explicit about how they approach transcription. This includes the researcher's choice of a particular transcription method, which is discussed in more detail in this section.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) considered that transcription is an interpretative process where the conversational interaction becomes abstract and fixed. Tran-

scriptions are the researcher’s data and what they contain will ‘*influence and constrain what generalizations will emerge*’ (Ochs, 1979, p. 45). As discussed in the methodology, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) phases of coding were undertaken. The following is a step-by-step account of the thematic analysis results to demonstrate the process.

**Table 4: Thematic Analysis Process Based on Braun and Clarke (2006)**

Phases	Thematic Analysis Process
1.	Transcribing the interviews and focus groups (see appendix seven for the original transcriptions).
2.	Generating initial codes: During the first part of the analysis the transcript was read through on a number of occasions, initially looking at overall patterns that emerged. During the process it was noted that the participants referenced a number of positives about the technique but also gave feedback about potential changes, such as ways of using the technique differently, or views on its limitations (see appendix 8).
3.	Searching for themes: The initial noting of the transcripts was now made in a systematic way looking at each of the participant groups’ views, as reflected in the research questions and also potential improvements to using the technique. This allowed the researcher to

	begin to put together potential themes that were becoming apparent (see appendix 9).
4.	Reviewing themes: Re-reading through the data sets each in turn, the author began to note new themes that were emerging that occurred for each participant group, such as themes around happiness and positive self-reflection (see appendix 10).
5.	Naming themes: Additional themes that had been identified, such as the positive behaviour theme and an emerging theme on happiness were also identified. These themes were recorded initially during each participant group but they were now being combined to show an overall picture. Each theme had been analysed separately and a flow diagram on each data set was created (see appendix 11).
6.	Searching for connections across themes. The different themes were combined to create an overview and a timeline to look at the different phases of using the ‘three good things’ booklet, as explored in the discussion section.

Initially the transcripts were recorded and then read through together during phase 1-2 (see below) and then separated into the different participant groups i.e. parental, teachers and pupil views, during phase 3-5 (see below). The account will show how the data was analysed i.e. each participant group was ini-

tially assessed separately and then combined at a later date at phase 6 (see below); this approach was used in order to answer the research questions.

### **3.15.2 Phase 1: Transcription Approach**

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and include questions and comments made by the interviewer (Smith & Osborn, 2008) and therefore, interviews had to be recorded. In this study, the digital audio recordings of each interview were transcribed verbatim using a word processor. Data were typed onto a page with two columns, leaving space for note making and coding. A space was left between each turn in the conversation. At the coding stage, to provide more visual clarity in the lengthy texts, the author used a different colour for each theme that emerged.

The author included features of speech such as significant pauses, laughs and false starts, as recommended by Smith and Osborn (2008), and any features which the author thought would preserve the participants' intended meaning. The data sets were recorded separately as they were conducted during the interviews. The pupil, teacher and parent data sets are recorded in appendix seven.

### **3.15.3 Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**

Before reading over the transcripts with the development of codes in mind, the author read each text to try and capture the essence of the narrative. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) differentiated between the narrative told by a participant in an interview study and the analysis of elements of their story. The participant tells a story in an interview and the transcript is an approximate final form of that story.

The researcher translates and interprets the story told by the participant and presents this interpreted version to the audience. Braun and Clarke (2006) maintain that there should be a focus on the interview as a narrative, as this is the form it takes in the interview originally and this may make for better reading. Following each interview, the author recorded his impressions and recollections in the reflexive log. Each of the data sets was therefore read through separately at this stage.

### **3.15.4 Phase 3: Searching for Themes**

In this phase, the author re-read the transcripts. Willig (2012) discussed the relationship between analysis and interpretation; she noted that qualitative re-

searchers have preferred to use the term ‘analysis’ to ‘interpretation’ as analysis implies a more scientific and systematic approach to the organising of themes.

This step involves the examination of the semantic and prosodic features of language use (Robson, 2006). In this way, the researcher grows more familiar with the transcript data sets and aims to make comprehensive and detailed notes on the data. Comments should relate to descriptive, linguistic and conceptual features of the text, which capture details of the content of what the participant said. The manner in which the participant uses language can be described and the process of moving towards interpretation can begin. In this way the researcher engages in a detailed examination of the transcript, allowing him/her to explore different avenues of meaning and to start a more interpretative engagement with the text.

Initially the pupil focus group was analysed first and then the teacher and parental data sets were analysed. In this step, the researcher moves on to the next participant’s transcript and repeats this process. This may not be entirely possible as the researcher will be influenced by prior analysis. However, following the steps set out by Braun and Clarke (2006) in the analysis for each interview or focus group should enable the researcher to put the data in each individual tran-

script to the forefront and should help the researcher to deal with data from each transcript in its own right. The author made sure that each data set was fully explored before moving on to the next one; the author made attempts to treat each case separately and tried not to be influenced by what went before. In order to adhere to the procedure for initial noting outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), the author used different colours to highlight the text. In analysing and interpreting data in this study, the author focused on meaning. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) outlined ways in which a researcher can do this in an interview study, including meaning coding, meaning condensation and meaning interpretation. Coding can be concept driven or data driven. In the former, the researcher starts with theoretical assumptions and examines the data in the context of these assumptions. In data-driven coding the researcher develops codes through their reading of the data. Data that can be coded includes behaviours, specific acts, events, activities, strategies, meanings, relationships, interactions, settings, and the researcher's own role in the process (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). For the purposes of this research the coding was concept driven to reflect its methodological approach and its generated research questions.

Meaning condensation involves making shorter formulations of what the interviewee said. A stepped approach to meaning condensation includes reading through the entire text to get a sense of the narrative, determining natural mean-

ing units, identification of themes, interrogation of meaning units in terms of the purpose of the study, and compiling essential themes into a descriptive statement.

### **3.15.5 Phase 4: Developing Emergent Themes**

In the process of developing themes, the author thought about what the participants intended and what the meanings behind the stories they told might be. For example it was noted that the pupil data set was very positive, while the teacher data set was more critical and the parental data set was largely positive but lacking in detail. Meaning interpretation involves interpreting '*beyond what is directly said in the text to work out structures and relations of meanings not immediately apparent in a text*' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 207). Questions may arise for the researcher at this level of meaning analysis; for example, the researcher may need to make a decision about the type and level of interpretation made (empathic or suspicious, going beyond the manifest to the meaning behind what is said). Furthermore, the researcher may need to address philosophical questions such as whether a 'correct' interpretation exists, whether there is a 'real' meaning behind what is being interpreted and who owns the meanings of a statement; in other words, whether one person (the interviewer) can claim that their interpretation is the only correct one and that their interpretation captures the real meaning behind what the participant is saying or the

facts of the situation. Smith et al. (2009) maintained that there is no single, prescribed method for working with data. However, they outlined a set of common processes which could be applied flexibly to facilitate analysis in such a study. They proposed that the researcher can adhere to a number of key strategies beginning with a line-by-line analysis of the participant's experiences, concerns and understandings and the identification of patterns, or themes, in the text. This is followed by the development of a dialogue between the researcher, the data and the researcher's understanding of meaning for the participant, leading to the genesis of a more interpretative account. A framework which illustrates the relationships between themes can be developed and this material organised so data can be analysed and traced through the process of analysis. Supervision, collaboration or audit can be used to test and develop the validity of the interpretation. Finally, the development of a narrative account can occur, which takes the reader through the themes, and provides reflection on the researcher's own conceptions and perceptions. As detailed in the previous step, each data set was analysed separately and worked through systematically reflecting on the research questions. It was increasingly apparent that there were many interconnected themes within the data.

### **3.15.6 Phase 5: Naming Themes**

This is the part of the process that leads to naming the overarching themes and identifying overarching patterns. These processes involve the identification of patterns between themes; the identification of subordinate, and superordinate themes (also known as codes, Robson 2002) which could be condensed into overarching themes. At this point of the analysis the additional themes that had been identified, such as the positive behaviour and happiness themes were identified. These themes were recorded initially during each participant group but they were now ready to be combined to show an overall picture in the next step. In this step, the researcher attempts to reduce the amount of detail in the text while retaining the complexity of the data. The researcher moves away from the text and begins to focus on their own initial notes, attempting to map the relationships, patterns and connections between the initial notes and the data (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher focuses on both discrete pieces of the transcript and the general pattern of the narrative.

### **3.15.7 Phase 6: Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes**

In this step, the researcher looks at the way themes have identified fit together by noting any similarities and differences between them. Reference is made to the original research questions. Smith et al. (2009) suggest two basic ways of looking for connections, one of which the author adopted, as it was recommended for novice researchers. This method involved typing out themes in chrono-

logical order and identifying those that appeared to cluster together. Smith et al. (2009) described a number of specific ways of looking for patterns and connections between themes to aid in the analytic process, including abstraction, subsumption, polarisation, contextualisation, numeration, function, and bringing it all together; the focus on differences as well as similarities within themes; the focus on the context of the narrative which frames thematic development; the noting of the frequency with evidential support for a theme arising, and the function of language use. Having followed these steps, the researcher can begin to organise a graphic representation of the themes, which is included in the results and discussion section.

The analysis of the data sets showed that many of the questions covered a number of emerging narratives and the discussion led to conversation and interaction between the participants, which helped with the clarification of individuals' views within the group.

In order to maintain the integrity of the individual focus groups and interviews, each focus group was initially treated as a separate unit of analysis. Later the overall data was brought together to create a 'whole' to represent the participants' collective views.

### **3.16 The Analysis of 'Three Good Things' Booklet Material**

As detailed in section 4.3 the year five and years six booklets were analysed using thematic analysis to see what codes and emerging themes were found within the pupils' narrative within a writing format ; the raw data can be located in appendix five. During phases 3 and 4 of the thematic analysis (see 3.6.4) a number of themes emerged. These themes were: 1) subject improvements, 2) helping others, 3) being ready or finishing quickly, and 4) using or developing a core skill. The results of the analysis of the booklet are discussed below. It is important to query whether this study was using a thematic analysis with the booklet or whether it was using a content analysis, which will now be discussed.

### **3.16.1 Key Differences between Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis**

Within the area of conducting research, there are many types of data analysis that can be used by researchers; two examples are content analysis and thematic analysis (Robson, 2002). For most researchers, the difference between content analysis and thematic analysis can be quite confusing as both include going through the data to identify patterns and themes. However, it is important to highlight that the key difference between content and thematic analysis is that while in the content analysis the researcher can focus more on the frequency of occurrence of various categories, in the thematic analysis it is more about identifying themes and building up the analysis in the most cohesive manner (Robson, 2002). For this study it is the latter which is the focus of the research

and it is, in the author's view, an appropriate choice, as it is mainly used for qualitative research where the researcher gathers descriptive data in order to answer the research questions (Manion and Morrison, 2003). Once the data has been gathered, the researcher is then able to go through the data repeatedly with the intention of finding emerging patterns or themes, which is reported and discussed in figures 1, 2, and 3. This allows the researcher to categorise the data under different themes. There are many advantages of using a thematic analysis. Firstly it brings out the rich data that the researcher has gathered in the data gathering phase. Also, it provides a logical structure to the research as well as being in line with the author's research questions.

### **3.17 A Description, Justification and Rationale for the Methods of Data Gathering Adopted**

Table 5 (below) provides an overview of the method of data gathering adopted.

**Table 5: Overview of the Method of Data Gathered**

<b><u>Participants</u></b>	<b><u>Method of Data Gathering</u></b>
Teachers	One interview with the two class teachers (the learning support assistant was on long-term sick leave).
Pupils	Focus group with six children at the end of the programme.

	The pupils' responses in the 'three good things' booklet were also analysed.
Parents	One interview per parent at the end of the programme.

### **3.17.1 Rationale for using interviews**

There was one semi-structured group interview with the teachers during the study, so that data could be sampled at the end of the 'three good things' in life intervention. Additionally a group interview with a sample of pupil participants and a separate interview with their parents were held towards the end of the intervention. Initial drafts of the interviews were reviewed **during University supervision (Peterson, 2000)**. For this study, the interviews were designed with open-ended questions and the analysis was of the qualitative aspects of participant responses.

The justifications for using interviews in this study are described by Robson (2002, p.271). These are:

- *where a study focuses on the meaning of particular phenomena to the participants; and*

- *where individual perceptions of processes within a social unit – such as a work group, department or whole organisation – are to be studied prospectively using a series of interviews.*

The phenomena under study were the experiences encountered with the ‘three good things in life’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005). In conclusion, by following Robson’s (2002) guidelines, the use of interviews and focus groups was an appropriate choice to make, as the study to focus on recording the experiences and attitudes of the teachers, parents and pupils involved in the study using a series of data collection phases. The use of interviews for this study is considered relevant and necessary.

The use of questions for the teachers, parents and pupils was designed to meet the requirements of the research aims. The following tables are the rationales for the questions asked of the teachers, parents and pupils. The tables describe which questions fit into which research objective.

### **3.17.2 Rationale for the questions asked of the teachers**

These initial questions (see table 6) were focused upon the initial impressions of the participants and their experiences or perceptions of the ‘three good things in life’ technique. As a consequence there are more questions focused upon

research aims two and four.

**Table 6: A Rationale for the Teacher Questions**

<b><u>Interview questions for teachers and LSA</u></b>	<b><u>Research aims addressed in the teacher interview questions</u></b>
1. Now that the intervention has come to an end, what are your thoughts and feelings about using the ‘three good things’ booklet?	Rationale for doing the ‘three good things in life’ technique. What were their initial thoughts?
2. What are your reflections on what the booklet has achieved or influenced, if any?	Research aim two: what are the teachers’ perceptions of the children after they had completed the intervention? Also a generic open ended question on any changes in the pupil’s behaviours.
3. Have you noticed any changes in the pupils’ behaviour or attitude within the classroom since the start of the programme?	Research aim two: teachers’ perceptions and their interpretation of any differences within the class on how they approached the technique.
4. Any changes in the pupils’ behaviour or attitude outside the classroom?	Research aim two: Looking at changes outside the classroom from teacher’s perceptions and their interpretation of any differences.
5. What aspects of the intervention appear to have been the most successful?	Research aims two and four: What is the experience of school staff involved in the emotional literacy intervention? Are there any initial thoughts on improving the way that the technique is administered or making changes to the booklet/technique?
6. Has any part of the intervention been less successful?	Research aims two and four: What is the experience of the teachers and what did they observe about the pupils involved?

7. What would be your professional recommendations for future developments of the ‘three good things’ booklet?	Research aim four: What are the implications of the data collected for the further development and implementation of the ‘three good things in life’ intervention across the whole year-group?
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### **3.17.3 A Rationale for the parental questions**

These questions for phase two (see table 6) were focused on the parents’ experiences and perceptions of the on the ‘three good things in life’ technique. As a consequence, the questions were focused upon research aims three and four.

**Table 7: Interview Questions for Parents**

<b><u>Interview questions for parents</u></b>	<b><u>Research aims addressed in the parent interviews</u></b>
1. What is your understanding of the ‘three good things’ booklet?	Rationale for doing the ‘three good things in life’ technique. What were their initial thoughts? Have they been informed about the programme?
2. What are your thoughts and feelings about the ‘three good things’ booklet?	Research aim three: What is the experience of parents involved?
3. Since implementing the intervention, have you noticed any changes to your child’s behaviour at home or going to school?	Research aims three and four: What is the experience of parents involved and what are their views on changes in child behaviour, if any?

4. Has anything gone particularly well?	Research aims three and four: what are the views of parents about the technique and any opinions of any changes to child behaviour.
5. Is there anything else you think I should know?	As the interview uses open-ended questions, this final question is checking that nothing has been missed in terms of changes or experiences.

#### **3.17.4. Rationale for the questions asked of the pupils**

The questions were asking for a summary of what was experienced and witnessed over the whole of the intervention; thus questions were focused upon research aim one. The questions asked in the pupil interview (see table 7) focussed upon their experiences. There was also an expectation that they would be able to give their thoughts on how to improve the programme. The remaining questions asked about future programmes and reflected on what could be done differently.

**Table 8: Rationale for the Interview Questions for the Pupils**

<b><u>Interview questions for Pupils</u></b>	<b><u>Research aims addressed in the questions</u></b>
1 How did you feel or what did you think about doing the ‘three good things’ booklet?	Rationale for doing the ‘three good things in life’ technique. What were their initial thoughts?
2 Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful?	Research aims one and four: What is the experience of pupils involved in the positive psychology intervention?

3. Is there anything in the booklet that has helped you in how you see yourself or other people?	Research aim one and four: What is the experience of pupils involved in the positive psychology intervention?
4. Is there any way you think the booklet could be done differently?	Research aim four: What are the implications of the data collected for the further development and implementation of the positive psychology intervention across the whole year group?
6. Do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important?	Research aim one: What are the implications of the data collected for the further development and implementation of the of the positive psychology intervention across the whole year group?
6. Anything else you would like to tell me?	Open-ended questions to check if anything has been missed in the previous questions.

Overall the questions were structured to anticipate the process of introducing the intervention, using it, and then reflecting upon the experience as a whole.

### **3.17.5 Rationale for using questionnaires**

One semi-structured questionnaire was used during the study, to explore the perceptions of parents who did not attend the interview. The questionnaire was designed to sample the views of parents and used the same questions asked to parents during the interviews. With an open-ended format to the questions, the

aim was that varied data could be collected, meaning that the '*respondent has a broader range to express themselves*' (McNiff, et al., 1996, p.99), in contrast to where closed questions are used. After initial drafts, the questionnaire was discussed during supervision to make sure it could be used in a social environment (Peterson, 2000).

The justification of using the questionnaire for this study is based on the lack of parental interviews that were collected. Interviews were originally selected as the most appropriate method of data collection. However, due to the low parental participation, an alternative method of data collection was needed. McNiff et al. (1996) argue that a questionnaire should only be selected for two reasons:

- to find basic information that cannot be ascertained otherwise; and
- to evaluate the effect of an intervention when it is inappropriate to get feedback in another way.

For both of the above reasons using a questionnaire was a realistic choice to obtain the information needed from the parents. The method of using a questionnaire was necessary in order to record these parents' experiences, which otherwise could not have been collected for the study.

As the use of questionnaires and interviews has been discussed, there follows a review of their limitations.

### **3.18 A Review of the Limitations to the Study's Reliability and Validity and the Steps Taken to Control them**

#### **3.18.1 The Limitations to a case study**

For a case study design, a central criticism is that the results cannot legitimately be generalised to a wider population, which gives it a lack of external validity (Yin, 2013). For this study, rather than endeavouring to obtain general, stable results, the design seeks to give a rich picture of the perceived impact of the 'three good things' technique in a single school. Researchers argue that 'a genuine creative encounter can make new forms of understanding' (Simons, 1996 p.227). This study looks specifically at an individual case of a positive psychology technique; the intention is not that findings should be generalised to the total population.

With regard to ensuring construct validity, Yin (1994, p.34) identifies three steps that are required:

1. Select the specific types of changes that are to be studied (in relation to the original objectives of the study);

2. Demonstrate the selected measures of these changes; and
3. Reflect the specific types of change that have been selected.

In this case it is the experiences of teachers and pupils, and parental perceptions that are the focus of inquiry. The study focuses not on measuring the emotional wellbeing of people, but on the perceptions of those participating in the technique so that they can discuss and reflect on their experiences. In these regards the construct validity of this study appears to be good.

The next area of discussion relates to threats to reliability. Yin (2013) describes that following the design of a previous study and gaining similar results strengthens reliability. Unfortunately, as described previously, the current study is a unique case and the needs of the school shaped the methodology, rather than previous research. As a consequence, this first study may suffer low reliability. A traditional way of overcoming this is by repeating this study to look for similar results; however, at present, such a step has not been taken. A way to reduce the impact of this threat to the 'trustworthiness' of the study is to make sure that it does have good validity (as previously discussed), so that it has relevance to the school's needs.

In conclusion, although the study appears to have good validity, on the area of reliability it is less secure.

### **3.18.2 Limitations to an interview or focus group approach**

For the reliability and validity of interviews, Yin (2013) argued that the limitation of using this method of data collection is a possible response bias from the participants. Those taking part in the study may only give the response that they believe the researcher wants to hear. In addition, a bias may also develop due to poorly constructed questions. The risk of a response bias from the participants was reduced by using a script that was used as a reminder for participants to be as open and honest as they could (see appendix four). This may not completely address the threat to validity of biased responses, but it aimed to increase the participants' awareness that authentic answers were essential. To avoid poorly constructed questions in the current study, the interview questions were discussed with the research supervisor and a pilot study was conducted to check for appropriate and well-constructed questions, with minor alterations made to address questions that were considered to be ambiguous.

### **3.18.3 Limitations to questionnaires**

Questionnaires have similar criteria for reliability and validity to interviews. Saunders, et al. (1997) described the limitations to validity and reliability of questionnaire data:

*The data you collect and the response rate you achieve depend on the design of your questions, the structure of your questionnaire and the rigour of your pilot testing. (p.273).*

To overcome these threats in the areas of the design and structure of the questionnaire, the researcher discussed the draft questionnaires with the research supervisor to change any misleading or poorly constructed questions.

Another area of possible threat to the study is the use of open-ended questions. McNiff et al. (1996) argue that although open ended questions are good because they capture a broader range of experiences, they still have their limitations and so some relevant data not considered by the researcher may be lost. In order to overcome this, a final question was added to ask for any feedback on points not previously directly explored.

As the limitations of using interviews and questionnaires are discussed, a summary of the research methodology is given below, in order to combine all the elements presented in this chapter.

### **3.19 Summary of the Research Methodology**

The overall methodological approach adopted within the thesis is broadly demonstrated in table 9 below.

**Table 9: Overall Methodological Approach Selected**

<p><b>1. Ontology and Epistemology</b> <b>Interpretive</b></p> <p><b>2. Theoretical Perspectives</b> <b>a) Phenomenology, b) Hermeneutics</b></p> <p><b>3. Methodology</b> <b>Case Study</b></p> <p><b>4. Method</b> <b>Interviews and one questionnaire</b></p>
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In this chapter the selected epistemology and methodology was discussed, as were the reasons for selecting it. The main strengths and weaknesses of the methodology were discussed, as well as the ethical considerations that were made, and what was required to promote the rights of participants, followed by a summary of the overall methodology. In the next chapter, the findings of the research are discussed.

## **Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis of the Booklet and Interview**

### **Material**

#### **4.1 Overview of the findings section**

This chapter deals with the analysis of the material collected in the manner specified in the methodology chapter. The first section discusses the initial process of data collection and the next section presents the data collected from the completed ‘three good things’ booklet. **In the third section, the analysis of the discourses from the focus groups and interviews with the pupils, teachers and parents is presented. This chapter will also include an overview of the themes that was revealed by the analysis.** Following on from this each of the research aims are presented with the relevant data that was gathered and analysed.

The teacher and pupil focus groups, plus the parental interviews, created a significant amount of material. The first step was to organise this information. The type of analysis used for the focus group and interview data involved inductive thematic analysis both of the participants’ and the researcher’s understandings and interpretations of that material. One important element of this process was the researcher reflecting on his role as facilitator of the interviews and also his interpretation of the material.

## 4.2 Overall Data that was Collected in the Study and the Booklet Material

Table 10 (below) demonstrates the overall data collected during the study, among the different groups of participants. The raw data can be found in appendix five (booklets) and seven (interviews and focus groups).

**Table 10: Data Collected for the Study, by Participant Type**

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Parents</b>
<b>Data Collected</b>	Transcribed data and observational notes from the interview were analysed using thematic analysis.	Transcribed data and observational notes from the focus group were analysed using thematic analysis.  The ‘three good things’ booklets were analysed using thematic analysis.	Transcribed data from the individual interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.

The data collected were in line with the methodological aims and no major

changes were made.

Within this section is a description of the themes found during the thematic analysis. As discussed in the methodology, the data is presented to give an overall view and is not seeking to present complex statistical data, as it was collected for the purposes of qualitative analysis and not quantitative or mixed methods analysis. There is, however, a discussion on the number of codes and themes found, and at times percentages of occurrence are used to give a broad overview. This is done to enhance the qualitative information rather than to offer any additional epistemological information. Rubin and Saul (2009) report that *'it is a mistake to believe that the only distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is about whether counting takes place or statistics are used.'* (p.520). Therefore the author utilised some use of percentages because *'researchers who conduct qualitative studies rarely use elaborate statistical analysis but they often find that counting some things is the inescapable part of detecting patterns or developing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon they are studying.'* (Rubin and Saul, 2009, p.520).

The themes generated from the coded data, are derived from the study's aims, using a template approach, as proposed in the methodology. The thematic

analysis used for the interviews and focus groups and booklet analysis is discussed next.

### 4.3 Theme One: Subject Improvements

One theme identified was the pupils' narrative (discourse) of performing well or improving in subjects. An example of this theme is identified as follows (see table 11):

**Table 11: Extract 1 – An example of Pupil Responses on Subject Improvements (N/A indicates no data on this theme).**

Y5 Child Initials	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
CB	I concentrated really hard in maths today.	I worked hard in Maths.	N/A	I learned to cross stitch in Art.	I got all my spellings right first time.
ES	I got all of my work sheets done in Maths, in Art and in Literacy.	I did well in literacy with dashes.	I worked hard in literacy.	I wrote a page in Maths + Literacy.	I did extremely well in Literacy.
K	Getting told that my art was good by people.	N/A	Got told my work was good.  I have done well in Maths.	I got 10/10 in my spellings.  I worked well in literacy.	N/A

Doing well in subjects is a core theme that emerged from the analysis and shows how some children appear to be very subject driven. It was apparent that subjects like literacy and numeracy featured heavily in what children recorded as being helpful to themselves. It appears that these areas were of core interest to many pupils, which is reflected in the data.

Performance in subjects featured consistently, which may reflect that, in an educational setting, performing well in subjects reflects positively on pupils. To give an overview of the prominence of this theme, it featured in 35 codes year six codes from the ‘three good things’ diaries out of a possible 105 entries (5 days of entries and 21 children). Within maths there was a code which featured the importance of doing well or ‘doing amazing’, and a core sense of wanting to do well in terms of performance, which occurred frequently.

Overall there were 65 codes for maths and 41 for literacy for both year groups. As a percentage, of a possible 210 entries, maths featured for 31% of codes in the booklet and literacy featured for 20.5% of codes. Together these codes made up 51.5% of codes relating to the booklet. The percentages were worked out by dividing the number of codes by the total number of possible entries and then multiplying by a hundred. Clearly an important narrative for the pupils was in subject performance, which may reflect that the pupils are very aware that they

are in a school, and learning may be a core component for self-esteem, peer status and peer and adult recognition. It is interesting, however, that they recognised how doing well in a subject was helpful to themselves as this hints at their awareness of the need to perform well, and raises the question of whether this theme would be as prevalent for younger pupils i.e. years three and four. Alternatively would an older cohort of pupils have different views?

### 4.3.1 Theme Two: Helping Others

From the thematic analysis the next theme identified was that of pupils helping other children or adults. Example of the codes for this theme (see table 12) are given in Table 12.

**Table 12: Extract 2 - Examples of helping codes identified (N/A indicates no data on this theme).**

Y6 Pupils Initials	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
CH	Held doors for teachers.  Helped someone hand out the books.	Tidied up the log cabin.  Held door for a teacher.	N/A	Held the door for the teacher.  Helped a little boy open his yogurt.	Held door for teacher.  Held door for little ones.
JP	I helped Ben understand	Held the door for a teacher.	N/A	N/A	Took little children back to class.

	the work.  I helped pack away the art by taking other people's pencils when the lesson ended.	Helped a person pack away the straws.			
FW	By helping a reception child sort out a problem.  I helped the teacher carry something and got a golden card.	Today I helped set up a choir.  I helped a group in gym.  I helped tidy up choir.	I helped a reception child sort out a problem.  I helped Mrs Nicholson out with something.	Absent	I helped reception and year one with breakfast.

To see all the codes of this identified theme, see appendix seven. 24 children (14 for year six and 10 for year five) recorded that they had been helpful to other people. This coincides with the teachers' and pupils' perspective that there was an increase in prosocial behaviours, which is discussed later.

The pupils' narrative indicated that there are core children who recognise that they do helpful things for other people once a week or more. At this stage it was unclear if there was an actual increase in positive behaviour or whether the

pupils recognised their positive actions more as a result of using the technique, thus indicating an increased awareness. This question is addressed later in the teacher observations of pupil behaviour in section 4.4. It also raises the question of class dynamics: there are core children who are the ‘helpers’ in the class and consistently support others. The children discussed helping one another tidy things away or helping each other in different lessons, through to helping carry objects or do positive tasks for the class teachers.

34 codes for year six and 32 codes for year five, in total 66 codes out of a possible 210 were found. Thus the being helpful codes constituted 31% of the codes available.

### 4.3.2 Theme Three: Being Ready or Finishing Quickly

An unanticipated theme that emerged during the analysis was that some pupils reported how they valued being quick, feeling that this was a helpful behaviour.

Examples of the comments made in the booklet are as follows (see table 13):

**Table 13: Example Codes of Pupil Responses about Finishing Quickly in the ‘three good things’ booklet** (N/A indicates no data on this theme)

Y6 Pupil initials	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A	I was ready to learn quickly.	N/A	I finished my science on time.	N/A	I completed my literacy on time.

CH	Got things sorted quickly in the lesson.	N/A	Got ready quickly.	N/A	N/A
K	I was ready before anyone else.	Ready to learn.	I was ready first.	N/A	N/A

29 children (18 for year six and 11 for year five) recorded that they felt that working quickly was helpful to them. They wrote on how finishing before their peers was important. To these children, speed appears to mean competence or be considered as a strength. Is it possible that part of their sense of self, their self-esteem, is based on being quick? This code occurred 46 times out of a possible 210 entries. As a percentage, being quick featured in 22% of entries.

#### **4.3.3 Theme Four: Being given praise or being rewarded**

One theme that came from the analysis was that pupils found rewards or praise helpful. Examples of these responses were as follows (see table 14):

**Table 14: Extract 3– Examples of Pupil Responses about Being Given Praise or Being Rewarded (NA indicates no data on this theme)**

Y6 Pupil initials	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
LK	N/A	I got 5 house points.	I got ten house points.	I got ten house points for being ready first.	I got five house points.
BC	I got five house points by being the first to finish in Art.  I got fifteen house points from my co-ordinators in maths.	I got five house points in maths.	N/A	I got five house points for my homework .	I got twenty house points in my maths tests.  I got five house points for answering a question in R.E.

There were 52 codes (21 for year six and 31 for year five) of children reporting being praised or receiving rewards, from ten pupils. The rewards were mostly based on being good or doing good homework, with one being given for good behaviour. For these children it appears that a strong component of what they found helpful was being praised and rewarded. This is essentially an extrinsic reward and it is interesting that there are not more children reporting this. One key question could be how many children want praise and may rely on intrinsic motivation? The booklet may offer the opportunity for self-reward through a

self-administering system of the ‘three good things’ (Seligman et al., 2005) technique. The overall codes featured 52 out of possible 210 codes so this theme emerged in nearly a quarter of the overall entries, or 24%.

#### **4.3.4 Theme Five: Using or Developing a Core Skill within a Subject**

An emerging theme that was comparatively smaller than the other themes looked at how some pupils were developing core skills. For example pupils discussed how they had improved in concentration, developed their punctuation skills or physical skills. Below is an example of the codes found (see table 15).

**Table 15: Extract 4 – Example of Pupil Responses on Using or Developing a Core Skill**

Y5 Pupil initials	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A	I concentrated hard.	N/A	N/A	Correct punctuation.	N/A
KS	N/A	I did a good bridge in P.E.  I remembered the words in choir.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Some of the codes are about children developing skills e.g. concentration or being patient, while others appear to be related to memory skills, punctuation skills etc. Such codes only occurred 13 times and were reported mainly from 3 children. The 3 children who discussed developing skills appeared to focus on their performance in subjects. There were 8 codes for the year six group and 9 for the year five. Overall there were 13 codes from a possible 210, which, is 8%. This minor theme was reported as it may reflect how only a small number of children perceived improving skills, other than in subject areas, as helpful. One question could be do schools help children to see how they can improve as people as well as improve subject areas? Is there further work required on increasing pupil awareness of individual strengths?

#### 4.3.5 The Overall Data Collected from the Booklet

An overall summary of the data found in the booklets is given in table 16:

**Table 16: Summary of Data Found in the Booklets**

Theme Name	Theme 1: Subject improvements	Theme 2: Helping others	Theme 3: Being ready or finishing quickly	Theme 4: Being given praise or being rewarded	Theme 5: Using or developing a core skill
Number of Codes	106	66	46	52	13

Overall pattern	Overall there were 65 codes for maths and 41 for literacy across both year groups. As a percentage of a possible 210 entries, maths featured in 31% of codes in the booklet and literacy featured in 20.5% of codes.	In total 66 codes out of a possible 210 were found.	29 children recorded how they found working quickly was helpful. This code occurred 46 times out of a possible 210 entries.	Overall the codes featured 52 out of possible 210 codes so this theme emerged in a quarter of the overall entries available.	Overall there were 13 codes from a possible 210, or 8%.
Percentage of pupil responses	Maths and literacy featured in 51.5% of codes.	31% of codes.	22% of codes.	24% of codes.	8% of codes.

To summarise, the most frequently occurring theme was that of subject improvements, followed by helping others, then being rewarded or noticed. Being ready or finishing quickly was the next theme with the smallest one being developing a core skill. For this group of pupils these were the core experiences they have been recorded in the booklets. In the next section, the thematic analysis of group interviews with the pupils is reported.

#### **4.3.6 Themes from the Focus Group Material with Pupils**

During stage three and four of the thematic analysis (see 3.6.4) it became apparent that there was an overall pattern that was emerging from the data. During this phase of the analysis there was a great deal of positive feedback given by the participants, but also a small amount constructive feedback. This was initially masking the other themes in the data, so by creating an overview it allowed for a deeper level of analysis to occur at a later date.

After the initial phase of analysis, other themes began to emerge from the data. The themes that were generated were related to the research aims of the study. The themes that emerged from the data were: 1) positive and constructive criticisms from the pupils, 2) increases in positive self-reflection, 3) increase in reports of pupil happiness and 4) increases in prosocial behaviour. In the next sections each of the research aims is discussed along with the themes related to them.

#### **4.4 Initial Overview of the Analysis with Pupil's Views and Experiences of the Technique. Positive and Constructive Feedback Theme.**

As previously discussed, during the initial analysis a broad overview was created which will be discussed first. Following on from this, each theme is discussed and presented. A table summarising the themes is used along with a

flowchart that aims to show any interrelationships. A summary of the findings is included. In the following section the broad overview of the pupils' experiences is discussed. This is important as it demonstrates how the pupils experienced the 'three good things' technique (Seligman, 2005).

During the focus group interview, the questions were focused on asking the pupils about their views about the intervention and their experiences or beliefs about it. In addition there was a focus on what changes there could be to make the booklet better. At the start of the data analysis an overall perspective emerged from the thematic analysis and this was identified as either favourable (positive) responses and/or critical responses (see appendix eight). Overall initial findings were coded on what the pupils said that was positive and what were constructive criticisms, as this gave an overview of the pupils' perspectives. The following codes were identified during data analysis (see table 17).

**Table 17: Overall Pupil Responses About the 'Three Good Things' Technique**

<b>Theme: Pupil Experiences</b>	<b>No of times the code appears in the interviews</b>
Positive	44
Constructive criticisms	1

As indicated above there is a clear overall pattern in pupil's views, which were very positive, with 44 positive codes found in the question responses and only 1 constructive criticism. Pupils' enjoyment of intervention was reflected in their answers. Positive pupil codes were found such as appendix eight:

Child 1: 'It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy!'

The enjoyment factor appeared to be a frequent code in the analysis. Other comments made were:

Child 2: 'I felt happier doing it'

At this point of the analysis it became apparent that while there were a great deal of positive comments made about the intervention, there were additional views about pupils feeling happier, and pupils having positive self-reflections:

Child 3: 'It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.'

Pupils were making reference to increases in positive self-reflections about their behaviours.

The one constructive criticism that was made was:

Child 2: ‘...I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier [in the day]’.

This pupil had a clear preference for doing the intervention later in the day rather than earlier. Setting the time at 2 pm in the afternoon appears to have been the correct choice for the methodology design as it allowed children additional time to reflect on their day. If the intervention was done earlier there may have been less feedback from the pupils.

Overall, after the initial stages of data analysis, the codes were organised into the following themes (see figure 1):

### **Beginning Codes**

Initial analysis indicated 44 positive comment codes 1 one code on constructive feedback.

### **Positive Experiences And Constructive Criticisms Theme**

From the initial analysis an overview was created of the positive experiences and constructive criticisms of the pupils. Following on from this analysis a number of additional themes were found.



### **Increases in Positive Reflection Theme**

A number of pupils discussed how the booklet gave opportunities for positive self-reflection, both when they completed the booklet but also looking at it on a later date.

**Increased Happiness Theme**

A number of pupils reported feeling happier or more positive.

**Prosocial Behaviour Theme**

Prosocial behaviours were noticed within the discourse between pupils.

**Improvement Theme**

Areas of improvement that the pupils recommended.

**Figure 1: Flowchart of the Overall Themes of Pupils' Experiences**

The following sections discuss the themes that emerged: The theme of positive self-reflections is discussed first, then increases in happiness second, pupil reports on prosocial behaviours third and lastly the pupil views on improvement theme.

#### **4.4.1 Theme One: Increase in Pupils' Positive Self-Reflection**

In this stage of the analysis, the codes were organised into a theme and then summarised. The analysis went through the pupils' responses, question by question. The questions that were reflected in this theme were:

- Question one, how the pupils felt or thought about the three good things booklet, now they had completed it for a week;
- Question two, further self-reflections and initial discussions on improvements;
- Question three did not reflect anything for this theme;

- Question four focussed on any possible changes in perception or experience or belief that had not been documented or considered in the literature review; and
- Question five focussed on improvements or changes to the intervention so there were no comments made on positive self-reflection; however question six asked pupils what they had learned, if anything.

In question one there **were four incidents of pupils** making positive reflections about the booklet. Question one asked the pupils how they felt or thought about the three good things booklet, now that they had completed it for a week (see appendix 9 and 10).

Child 1: ‘You can forget all the time what you have done so you don’t forget it all.’

and

Child 3: ‘...you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did. If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.’

The pupils discussed how the three good things technique helped them to make

positive reflections about themselves. The positive reflection theme identified an interesting pattern about the technique, but the pupils also discussed how the technique helped them to consider what positive behaviours they could do in the future.

In question two there was a continuation of the positive self-reflection theme and initial discussions on improvements. There were six positive codes found for this theme, with a number of references to pupil enjoyment in doing the technique, as well as how it helped them to remember the positives (see appendix nine).

Child 2: ‘...we could put all the lessons down and then we think about a lesson we did well and write it down.’

The pupils’ discussions about increased self-reflection carried on from the previous question (see appendix nine).

Child 4: ‘You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you can’t do it. But you could write, if you couldn’t do the activity...you could write in the book...you can put what you have said.’

What was also discussed by the pupils was the impact of the booklet and how it

changed them, in other words how the intervention, with its central positive message, had an impact on the pupils' self-perceptions. A further point is earlier in the responses where a pupil said:

Child 1: 'It was really good to help remember the lessons you enjoy.'

There was another similar response, and so a theme began to emerge going through the questions about pupils' belief that it was helping them to remember the positive actions they were doing.

A further code was that of having a bigger booklet (two codes) and the amount of weeks that pupils could use the booklet for (one code).

The theme continued to emerge with positives found in using the booklet.

Child 2: 'I'm happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier [(in the day)].'

and

Child 3: 'I liked doing it last thing in the day.'

Question four focuses on any possible changes in perception or an experience or belief that had not been documented or considered in the literature view. There were four codes found on doing the intervention more, which are discussed later in the improvements to the intervention section. There were also two codes on improvements to pupil self-reflection.

Child 2: 'I felt happier doing it (laughs).'

Child 3: 'Yeah, me too. I wish we could do it more often. (Laughs)'

Child 2: 'Definitely. I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year! I think it's good as it also helps your handwriting!'

and

Child 4: 'It was good to look back at what we had done.'

Researcher: 'To see what you had done?'

Child 4: 'Yeah. So we could like do it more often.'

The pupils made reference to the importance of looking back in the intervention and seeing what had been done in the past that was positive. This is an interesting point, as by looking back in the booklet, as one would in a diary, the pupils felt that they were reminding themselves of the positives. Two further

codes were discussed on doing the intervention more often.

Question five focuses on improvements or changes to the intervention, so there were no comments made on positive self-reflection, but question six asked pupils what they had learned, if anything. There were three codes for increases in positive self-reflections made. For example:

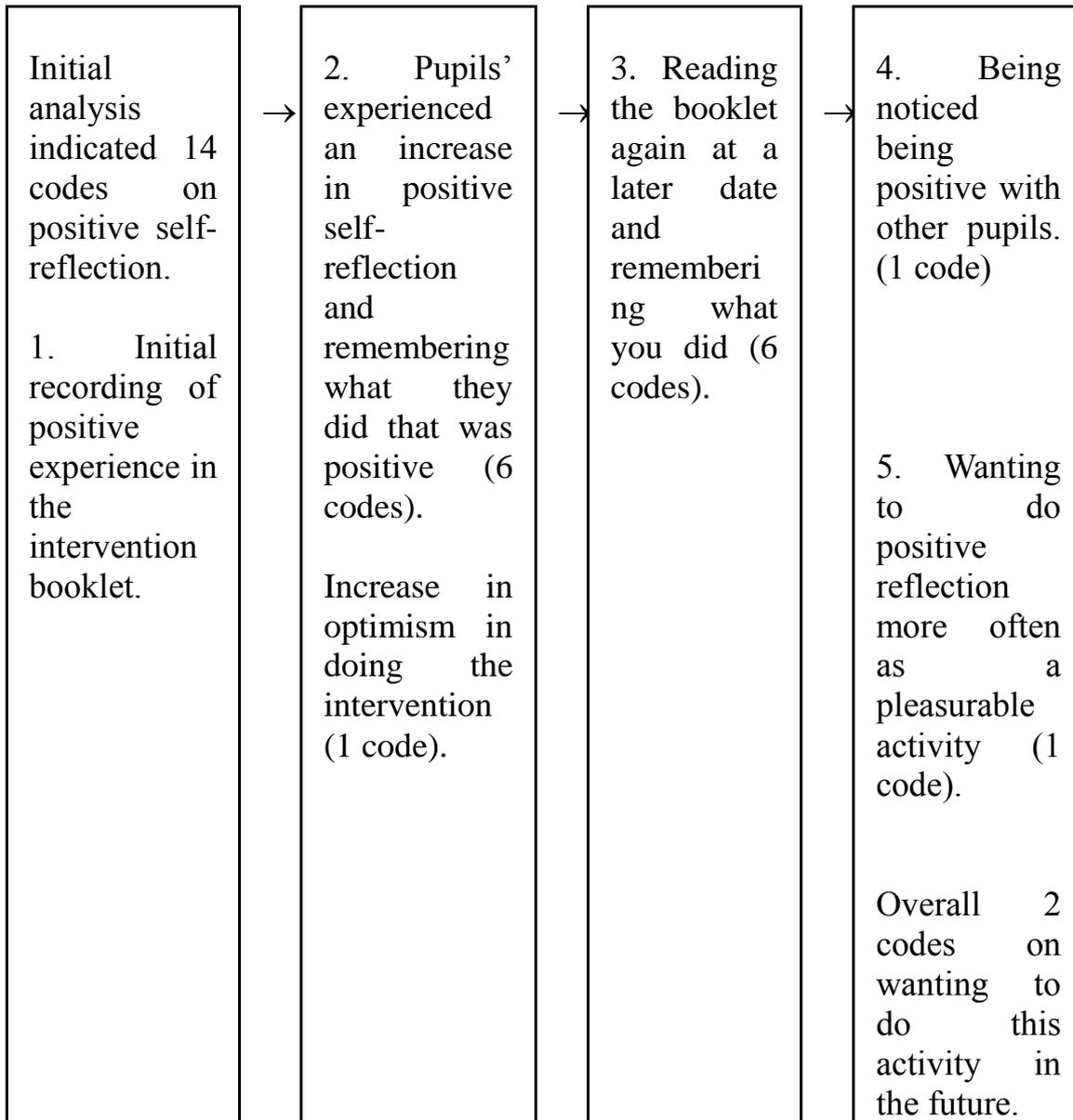
Child 1: 'It's really good as it makes you think about what you could do. I want to do more of it.'

The responses focused on self-reflection and looked to carry on doing positive self-reflection in the future. In addition there was a code on being noticed by others:

Child 1: '[...] the teacher noticed that I was helping others.' A social element is mentioned here of being noticed by the class teacher, of doing more positive behaviours and getting approval or positive attention as a result.

The final code was that when a pupil felt angry they would look at the booklet to cheer themselves up. It was a reference to using the booklet like a diary to help them remember the positives. In the final question no reference was made to increases in positive self-reflection.

Overall for all the questions, 14 codes were identified for the theme for an increase in positive self-reflection. The implications for this shall be discussed in the discussion section. The data was compiled to look at the sequence of positive self-reflection as discussed by the pupils (see figure 2).



**Figure 2: Flowchart of the Sequence of Positive Self Reflection**

What was interesting about the pupils' comments was that the initial experience they had with the technique was attributed to remembering the positives they

had done, thus indicating that memory may be a factor in the intervention. There is another opportunity for positive self-reflection with looking at the booklet at another date and thus increasing positive memories. In the final section there were only two codes on doing the activity in the future. The author would argue that this is low in light of the literature research on how the ‘three good things’ technique works, which is discussed in the next chapter.

#### **4.4.2 Theme Two: Pupils’ Increase in ‘Happiness’**

One theme that emerged from the analysis was the pupils’ reports of increases in happiness and also the intervention being fun overall.

The questions that related to this theme were:

- Question one asked the pupils for their overall view about the booklet and there was universal positive feedback of it being fun.
- Question two asked what was good or memorable about the intervention.
- Question three asked the pupils what they liked or didn’t like.
- Question four asked if there was any impact of the way pupils saw themselves.
- Question five had no codes relating to increased happiness, but question six, where the pupils were asked what (if anything) they had learned, did show some relevant codes.

In question one there were the following responses (see appendix six)

Child 2: 'It was fun!'

Researcher: 'It was fun?'

Child 2: 'Yes!'

Researcher: 'Did anyone else find it fun?'

All children: 'Yes!'

Child: 3: 'It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.'

Researcher: 'Oh I see. Can you say more?'

Child 4: 'If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.'

The excerpts above show universal positive feedback that filling in the booklet was fun. When asked to expand on the answer, the pupils explained that they experienced an initial 'fun factor' and a novelty of doing the technique but also reported that looking in the 'three good things' booklet at a later date was a positive. The fun was generated by looking back at positive memories. The fun element may therefore be linked to the positive self-reflections.

In question two it was asked what was good or memorable about the

intervention. The pupil reports feeling ‘good’ about the positive self-reflection and then proceeds to say:

Child 1: ‘Some lessons you don’t like but it was still a good lesson (laughs)’

The element of hard work or perseverance is mentioned at this stage and this may reflect how the booklet offers self-administering positive reinforcement.

This view was met with overall approval as all the children were smiling and nodding about this shared experience and it was reiterated how even if you did not enjoy the lesson you may have worked very hard. This was raised in a slightly different way later on in question three, which asks the pupils what they liked or didn’t like. The response was:

Child 2: ‘I’m happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon.’

A more direct connection is being made between being happy and the positive self-reflection of the booklet. The process of writing down what was positive appears to have been an important factor for the pupils, looking at their overall responses. **In the following question the pupils were asked if there was any impact on the way they saw themselves.** The responses were about the booklet

making them feel happier but also:

Child 3: 'I wish we could do it more often (laughs).'

Child 2: 'I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year! I think it's good as it also helps your handwriting!'

There is another direct reference to the booklet making two pupils happy and the motivation to do this booklet for longer than a week, with one pupil wanting to do it all year. There is a curious comment made by a pupil regarding the booklet helping their handwriting, which is interesting and unexpected.

In question five there were no codes found relating to increased happiness but in question six where the children were asked what they had learned (if anything) the responses were about how the children felt that they were self-reflecting more and when asked about whether they wanted to do more of this in the future:

Researcher: 'Okay. So you think we should do more of this (self-reflection exercises)?'

Child 2: 'It was good.'

There appears to be a code going from the fun of doing the booklet to the

increase in positive self-reflection being fun, and this being a powerful enough experience to make the pupil want to continue with it.

There was a final code that related to how the booklet helped them see the positives about themselves even when upset, which was discussed earlier but appears to relate to it being an 'emotional cushion' that aids the pupils' self-esteem.

Child 3: 'So we could look at it and say "ooh" and then when we are angry at some people we could, like not feel good and then we could look in the booklet and see what was good.'

Researcher: 'So you can see what you are good at?'

Child 3: 'Yeah.'

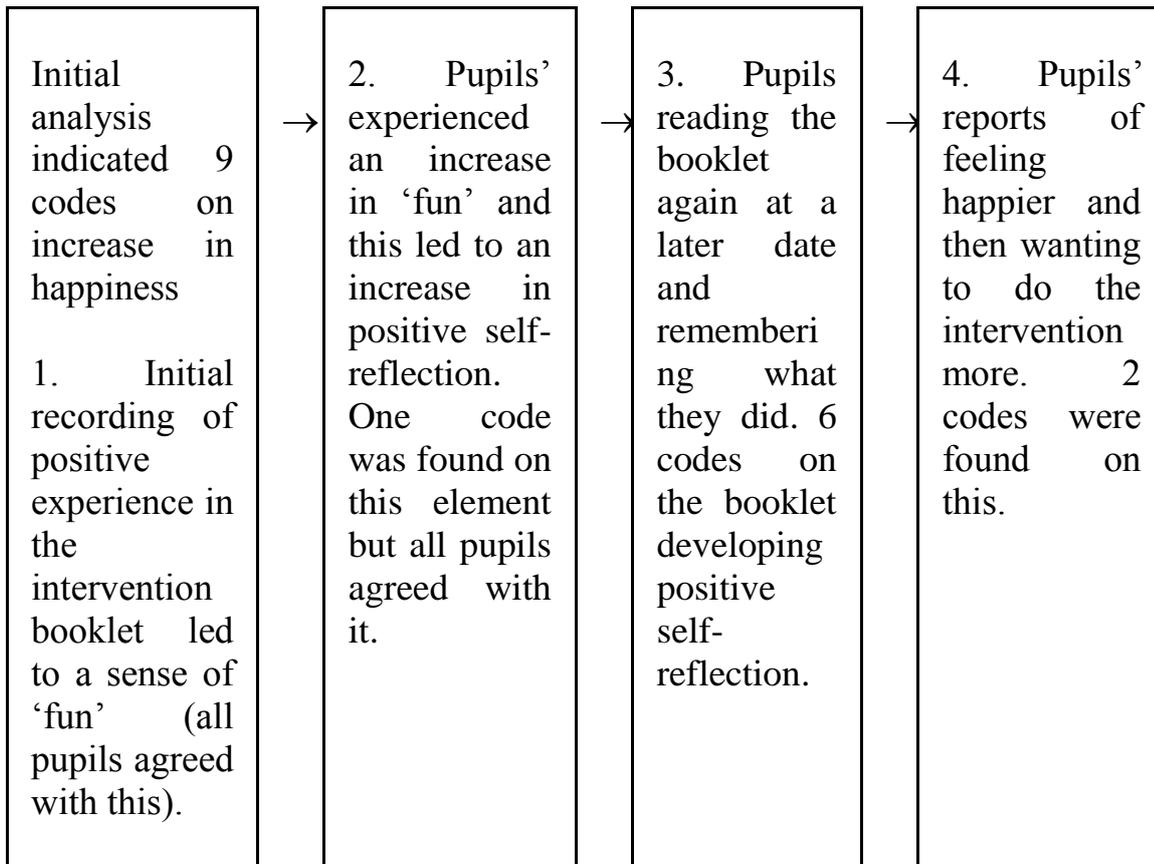
Researcher: 'Has anyone else had that experience?'

Child 1: 'Yes.'

Child 2: 'Yes.'

Child 5: 'Yes.'

The views of the pupils were that the booklet did have an influence on them. Overall, the pupils' answers led to nine codes related to the theme of increased happiness due to the increase in positive self-reflection. The following flowchart was then developed (see figure 3):



**Figure 3: Flowchart of the Sequence of Pupil Reported Increase in Happiness**

The pupils' initial experience was that of finding the experience fun and it appeared to be a novel experience for them. The enjoyment was attributed to the positive self-reflections, and developing the ability to reflect back on the booklet again at a later date. Finally some pupils reported feeling happier with no contradictory codes or counter-views (such as 'it made me sad') about this, and two pupils said they wanted to do the booklet again, to which all pupils present agreed.

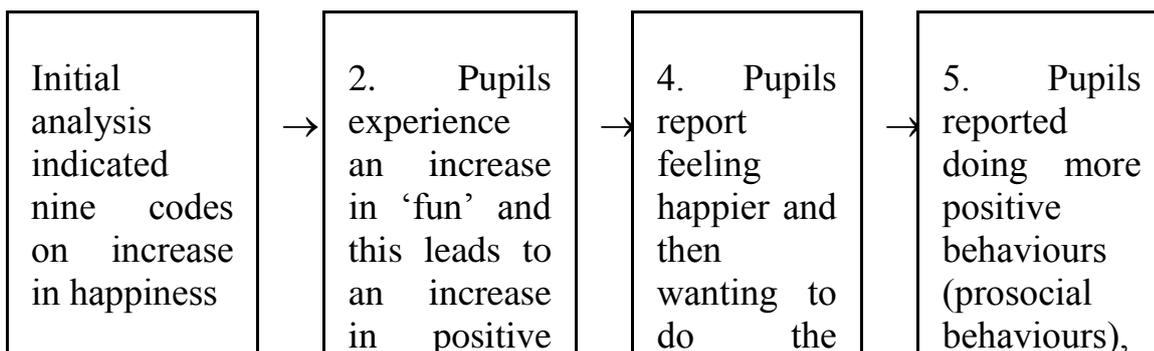
#### 4.4.3 Theme Three: Pupil reports of prosocial behaviours

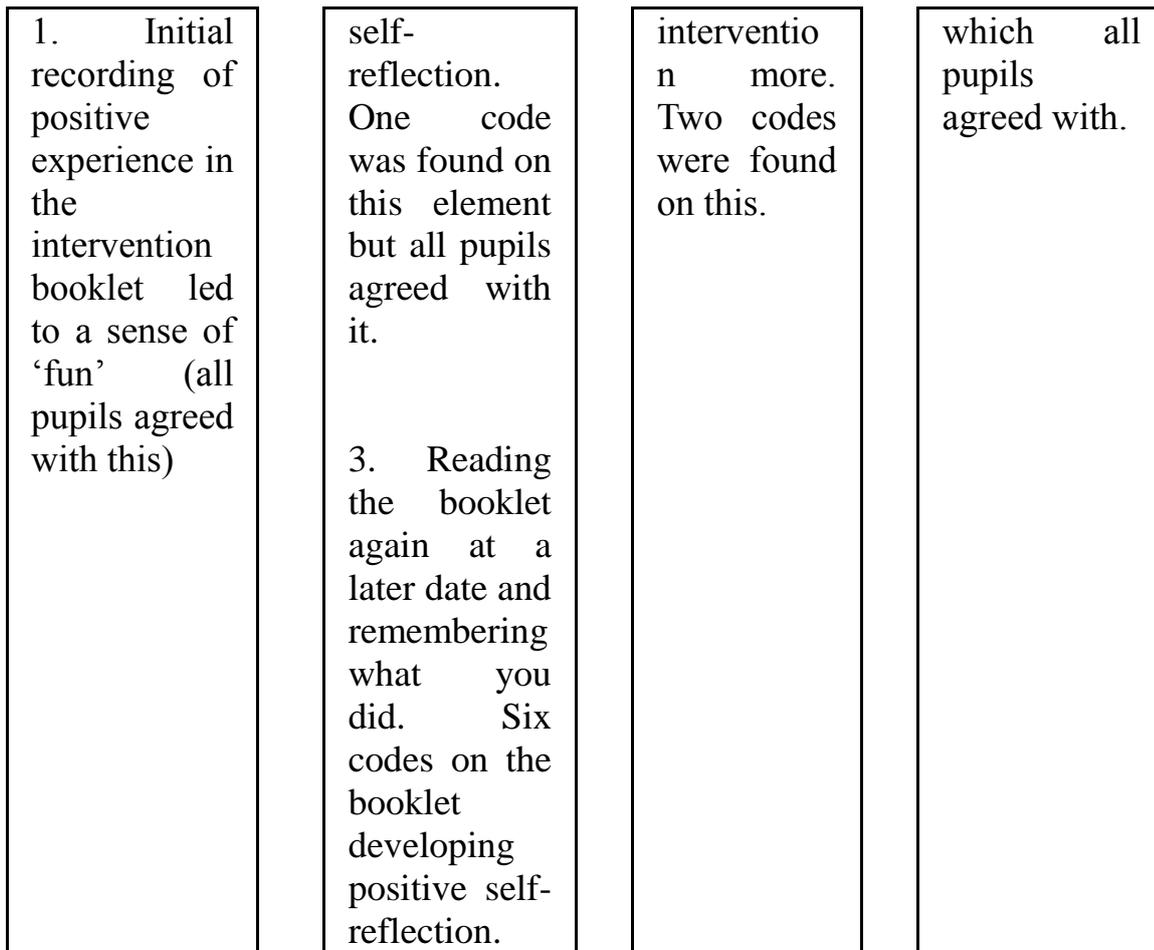
One emerging theme found during the analysis was based on pupil reports of increases in prosocial behaviours. Although it featured briefly in the discussion it was something that all the pupils agreed on.

Child 1: ‘I was looking at what I was doing (during the day) and the teacher noticed that I was helping others.’

Child 2: ‘Yes!’ (all children nod their heads in agreement).

This section reflects the universal experience of the pupils and they reported that they were helping others more. This broad example hints at how the pupils would look back in the diary if they were angry and see what good they had done for themselves and others. This theme occurred for only one question but the pupils were very clear that all had, in their view, done more helpful things for other people. This theme is picked up again in the next research question with teachers’ views. The overall data found from the pupils was collated into figure 4:





**Figure 4: Flowchart of the Sequence of Pupil Experiences of Doing the 'Three Good things' Technique**

#### **4.4.4 Theme Four: Pupil Views for Improving the Booklet**

An initial code for improvements was made in question two:

Researcher: 'So like sayings? Things like that.'

Child 6: 'Yeah, something enthusiastic! Yeah, something about emotions!'

This pupil's conversation is focused on having more uplifting statements within the booklet and a further request for focusing it on emotions. This could have been followed up by the researcher with further conversation but within the

context of the interview there was more focus on making improvements to the booklet, which is discussed next.

In question three there is a focus on making improvements. This was specifically used to request ideas for improvements to the booklet. There were 13 positive codes on the booklet and one on constructive feedback was discussed.

Child 2: 'It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself.'

The beginning section that the pupil refers to was an additional section to include name and a space which a lot of the children drew in to personalise their booklet. Pupils then said:

Child 2: 'I would like to draw pictures.'

and

Child 4: 'On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture!'

The pupil wished to use ICT to personalise the booklet further. Another three similar codes were made about using drawings or ICT i.e. photographs.

Child 4: 'I would like to draw about something like a movie or some work on other days.'

Overall all the children were very positive about personalising their booklet using a variety of methods. Another code for improvements was about the size of the booklet:

Child 4: 'For the booklet to be bigger.'

An explanation for this code was:

Child 4: 'If it was bigger you could add things to it.'

Having motivational sayings is mentioned again by the same pupil, which shows his interest. The other code found was that of drawing and how the pictures could be used. All the drawings were about the children and how their perception of having an image of them in the booklet would be a positive change to make. One pupil reported:

Child 4: '...you could have a picture in your head and like put it in.'

This was followed by other comments from the pupil:

Child 4: ‘On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture!’

Overall the code of having pictures of themselves and one reference to taking a picture in general was a central improvement that was requested by pupils.

In question five, ‘Is there any way you think the booklet could be done differently?’ there was a re-emergence of the codes from previous questions.

One was for photos and drawings and the other was:

Child 5: ‘If we did it on Monday we could write what you did in the lesson and then after break-time write what you did then and then all through the day.’

A request was made for the opportunity to write in the booklet more frequently.

This led to a request for the length of using the booklet. For the research it was used for the week but all the pupils felt it should be done for a longer time:

All children: (Do it) ‘longer!’

Child 5: ‘Half a year.’

Child 3: ‘Yeah, have it half a year and then a break.’

and:

Child 1: ‘How we have done over the year.’

Child 2: ‘Yeah!’

Child 3, 4 and 5: (Giggle) ‘Yeah!’

Child 3: ‘That would be great.’

Child 5: ‘Do it over the year but with breaks.’

The pupils all agreed that they wanted to do the booklet longer but were requesting different amounts of time. The most extreme (see above) was to do it half of the academic year and then have a break. This was more of an example of their enthusiasm but clearly indicates how much they enjoyed the technique.

In question six (what do you think you have learned from the booklet or has been useful or important?) there was a repeat request for drawings but on the back of the booklet. At this point all the children wanted more drawings and ways to personalise the booklet. The next statement made on improvements was:

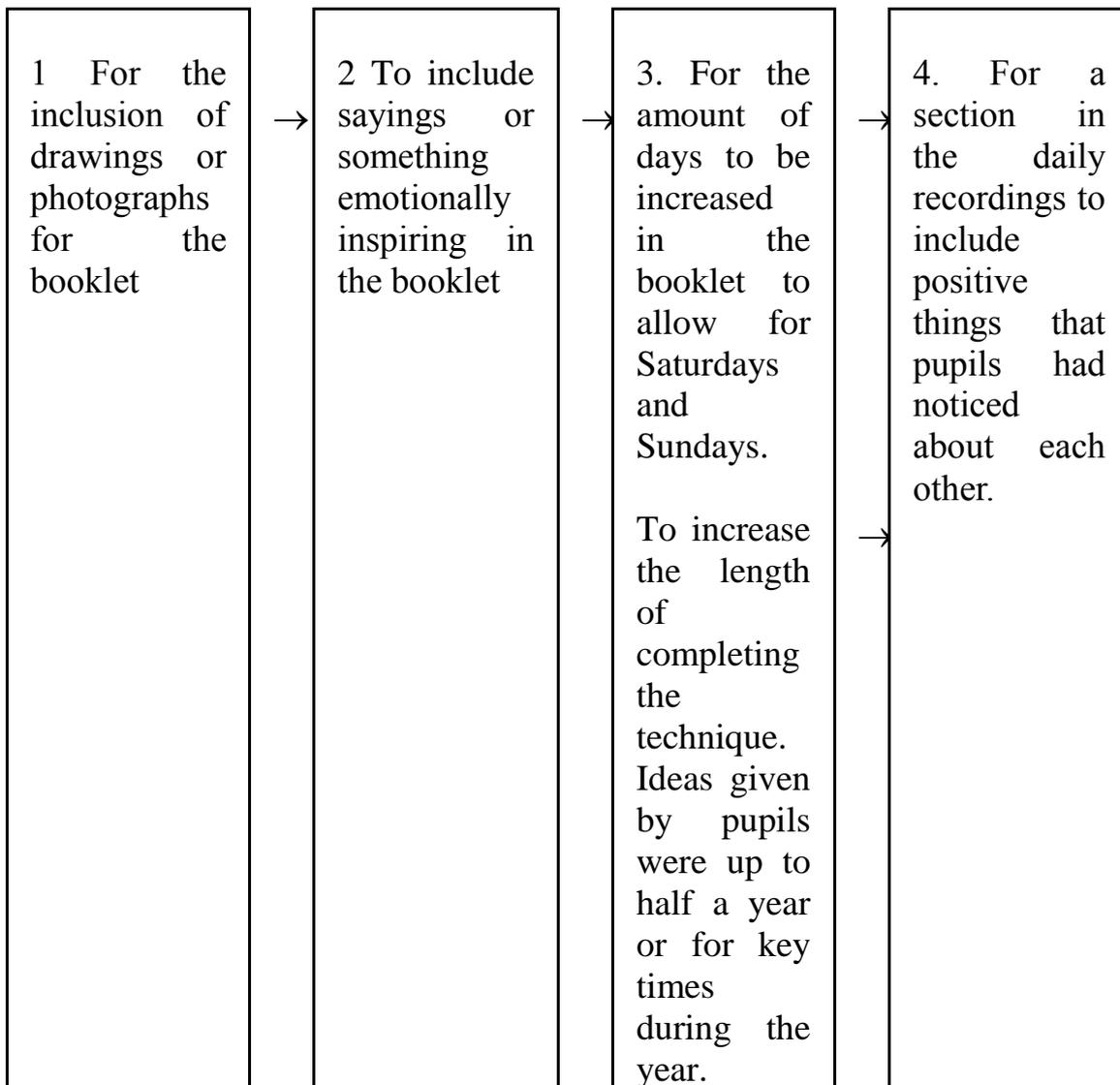
Child 5: ‘We could all put down what someone else has done that is good and tell them.’

All the children agreed with this view that it would be good to help other pupils record what they had done well. The last code for improvements related to the length of the booklet over the week:

Child 3: ‘We could do it all through the week and then I would also like extra days with Saturday and Sunday.’

This also had universal agreement; the pupils wanted to unite what they did for home and school.

Overall the pupil recommendations for changes that all agreed on are shown in figure 5.



## **Figure 5: Flowchart of Pupils' Views on Improving the 'Three Good Things' Booklet**

In this section the pupil interviews were presented and patterns of data emerging from the thematic analysis were examined. These patterns are explored further in the discussion section. In the following section the analysis of the data from the teacher interviews, and the data emerging from it, is discussed.

### **4.5 Teachers' Perceptions of the Effect on Pupils After They Completed the 'Three Good Things' Booklet**

In this section, the themes that were found during the analysis of the teachers' interviews is presented, examining whether teachers perceived any differences in the interactions and relationships of the children with others in their classrooms or within the wider school. Tables summarising the themes are used, as well as a flowchart that will show any overall interrelationships. A summary of the findings is included.

#### **4.5.1 Initial Analysis of the Teachers' Views: An Overview of the Material and What Themes Emerged from the Data**

In the initial data analysis, an overall pattern of positive and constructive feedback (codes) emerged from the data. During the interview the questions

were focused on asking the teachers about their views of the technique and their experiences or beliefs about its impact, if any. Overall initial findings were coded on the teachers' views of positive and negative experiences of the technique (see appendix nine), as this gave an overview of their perspectives and a sense of what the whole data set meant. The following codes were identified during data analysis (see table 18).

**Table 18: Overall Teacher's Responses About the 'Three Good Things' Technique**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of times the code appears in the interviews</b>
Positive Experiences	36
Constructive Feedback	10

Overall the teacher comments were largely positive and all were constructive.

An example of a positive comment was:

Teacher 2: 'When they were writing about [the booklet], on the next day they were looking at their strengths and what they were good at.'

Within the constructive feedback, it was largely contextual information on how pupils found the task. In the initial stages:

Teacher 1: 'We found it good. The children [in my class] could think of things

quite easily.’ (year 5)

However, in the other class there was a contrary view.

Teacher 2: ‘Erm, the children that did struggle, with the table that they are sitting on the other child would give them some feedback on what they’d seen and what they did that was good, which would lift their spirits.’ (year 6)

So overall the opinions of the class teachers were that the year five class did not experience any difficulties while part of the year six class did. This is discussed in more detail later. This was a consistent difference in the initial part of completing the booklet.

Another theme which emerged was of pupil positive self-reflection:

Teacher 1: ‘When we were looking at what they did over the week they became more aware of their strengths and they became quicker as the week went on.’

This theme occurred frequently in the analysis. In addition, thoughts on improvements to the booklet were made, which are discussed in research question four. Another component of the self-reflection theme was pupil enjoyment:

Teacher 1: ‘...children are not normally happy to write about their feelings.’

The theme that emerged was that of pupil engagement and the teacher’s view of how interesting it was that pupils enjoyed a writing activity about feelings. The codes of pupil self-reflection and their enjoyment of the activity were brought together into a theme.

The second theme was the teachers’ own views about the technique:

Teacher 2: ‘It’s been a good reminder for us to share times with the children, and not just the children. It’s like years ago, a push towards Circle Time about 10-15 years ago. So it’s like going back to principles, so it’s like that really.’

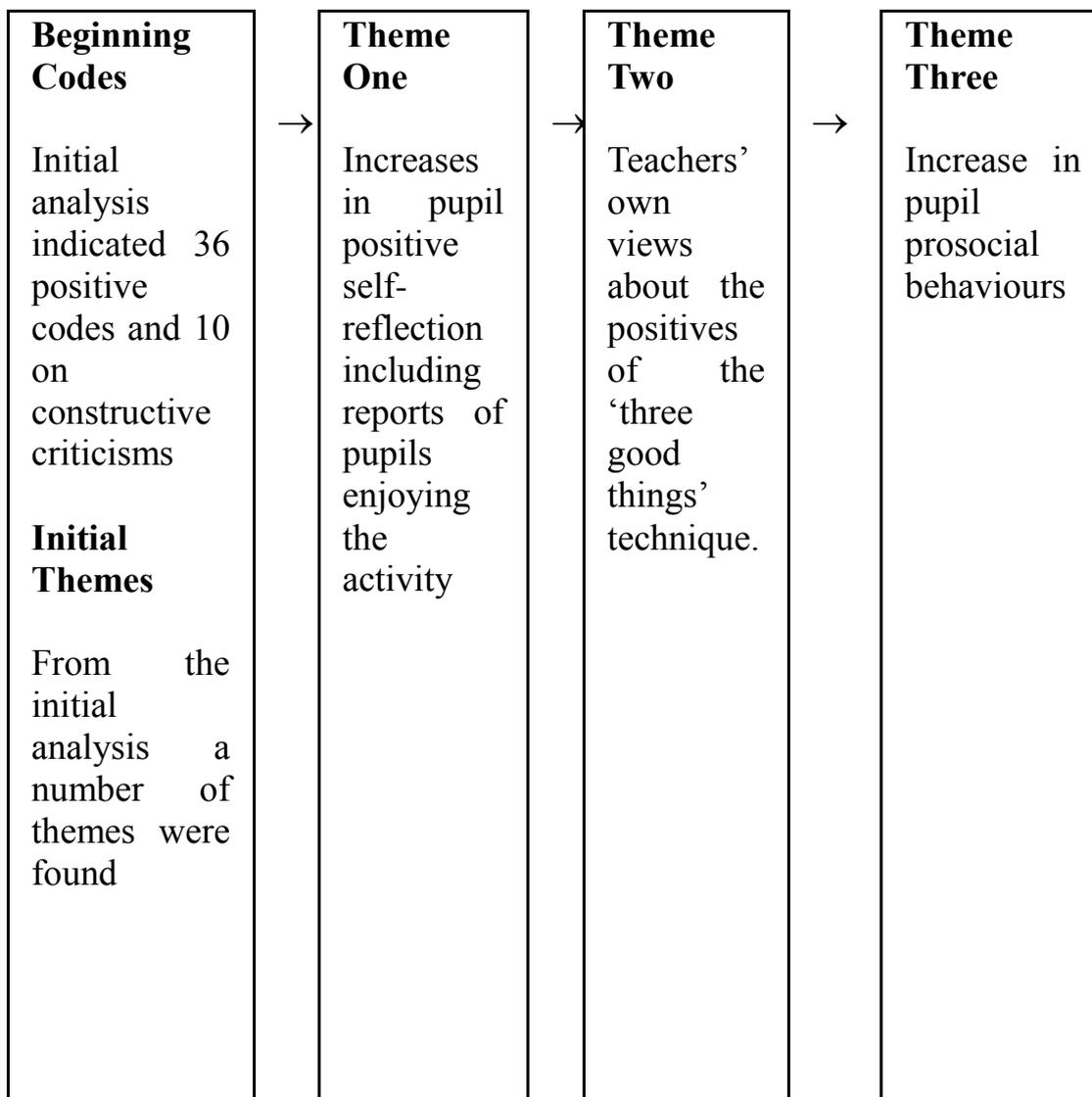
This was a consistent view from the teachers about their perspective on the technique, which became an important theme as it confirmed the pupils’ views.

Finally the last theme to emerge from the analysis was pupil increases in prosocial behaviour to one another. Teachers’ views of improvements in pupil positive behaviour were consistent.

Teacher 1: ‘They became more aware of their behaviour and their attitude on what they were doing at school.’

One theme that was consistent was the teachers’ views of improvements in pupil positive behaviour.

Overall the following themes were identified (see figure 6):



**Figure 6: Flowchart of the Overall Themes of Teachers’ Experiences**

In the next section each of the themes identified shall be reported, and the core patterns that emerged.

#### **4.5.2 Theme One: Teachers' Views of the Increase in Pupil Positive Self-Reflections**

In the next stage of the analysis the codes were organised into themes and then summarised. The analysis went through the teachers' responses, question by question. The questions that related to this theme were:

- Question one asked the teachers their feelings or their thoughts about doing the booklet.
- In question two the teachers were asked for their reflections on what the booklet had achieved or influenced, if anything.

#### **4.5.3 Teacher Question One**

In question one, there were six codes of pupil positive self-reflection that the teachers noticed when completing the booklet. Question one asked the teachers their feelings or their thoughts about doing the booklet. Two of the codes have already been discussed in the previous section on positive and negative comments. Further comments made were:

Teacher 2: ‘... the feedback thing is good to do. They enjoyed giving each other feedback on what they were doing.’

One teacher’s perspective was how the pupils enjoyed the process and were giving each other their positive reflections on one another, and this may hint that they were reinforcing the positives to one another. With positive self-reflections in the year six group which was observed to have had some difficulties:

Teacher 2: ‘...the children that did struggle, with the table that they are sitting on the other child would give them some feedback on what they seen and what they did that was good, which would lift their spirits.’

With the initial difficulties, other children were supporting one another and increasing positive self-reflection by making suggestions on what they had noticed the other children doing. The statement above is important as it identifies that there was only one table in the year six group that initially struggled, as the following code identified:

Teacher 2: ‘Some could [do the booklet]’

So while there were some difficulties, it would appear that the vast majority of year five and six were able to write down positive statements. The final code relating to positive self-reflections was:

Teacher 1: (Teacher quoting a pupil writing down what they had done): ‘I helped someone up when they fell over and that was a good thing.’

One of the class teachers noticed the positive and helpful behaviours that children were doing and approved of this.

#### **4.5.4 Teacher Question Two**

In question two the teachers were asked for their reflections on what the booklet had achieved or influenced, if anything. There were six codes on this theme:

Teacher 1: ‘...when they were writing about, on the next day they were looking at their strengths and what they were good at.’

This code identifies how the teacher noticed the pupils looking back in the booklet and reflecting on what they were good at. What was interesting is the use of the word ‘strengths’ as this was not mentioned in the booklet or during the planning stages of the research. It appears to be a term that naturally came from the teacher’s perspective.

Teacher 1: ‘When we were looking at what they did over the week, they became more aware of their strengths and they became quicker as the week went on.’

This extract indicates that this teacher went through the booklet with the pupils to help them see their strengths and increase their self-reflection. This teacher also uses the term ‘strengths’ in her discussion.

Another code was identified in this question that related to the same teacher repeating the same statement as before. One further key code was:

Teacher 1: ‘Yeah, they were quicker. They had an idea of what they were going to put in.’

This was deemed important as speed was noted in the process of a week as the pupils were seen to get faster at completing the booklet and faster at thinking of positive things to say.

Two further codes related to the nature of the task were:

Teacher 1: ‘Yeah, children are not normally happy to write about their feelings.’  
and:

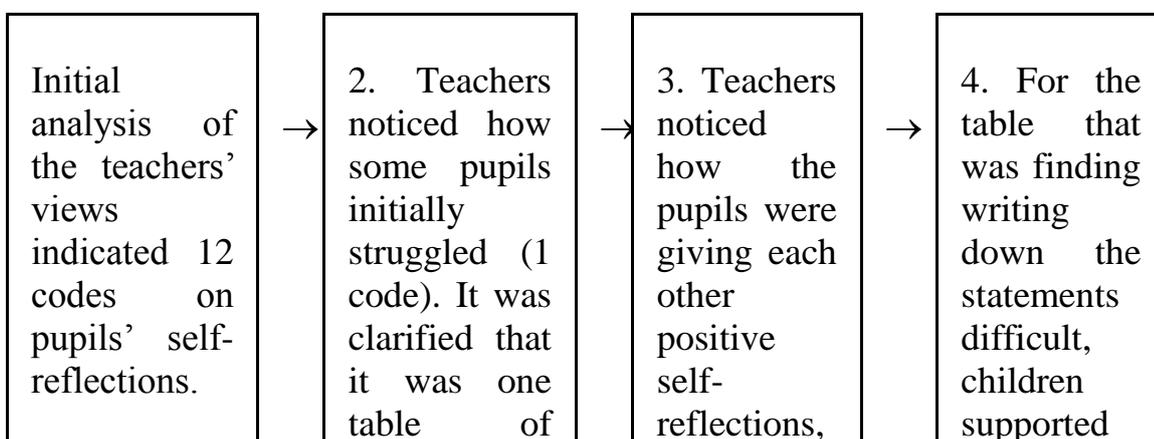
Teacher 1: ‘I noticed that they didn’t mind writing it down.’

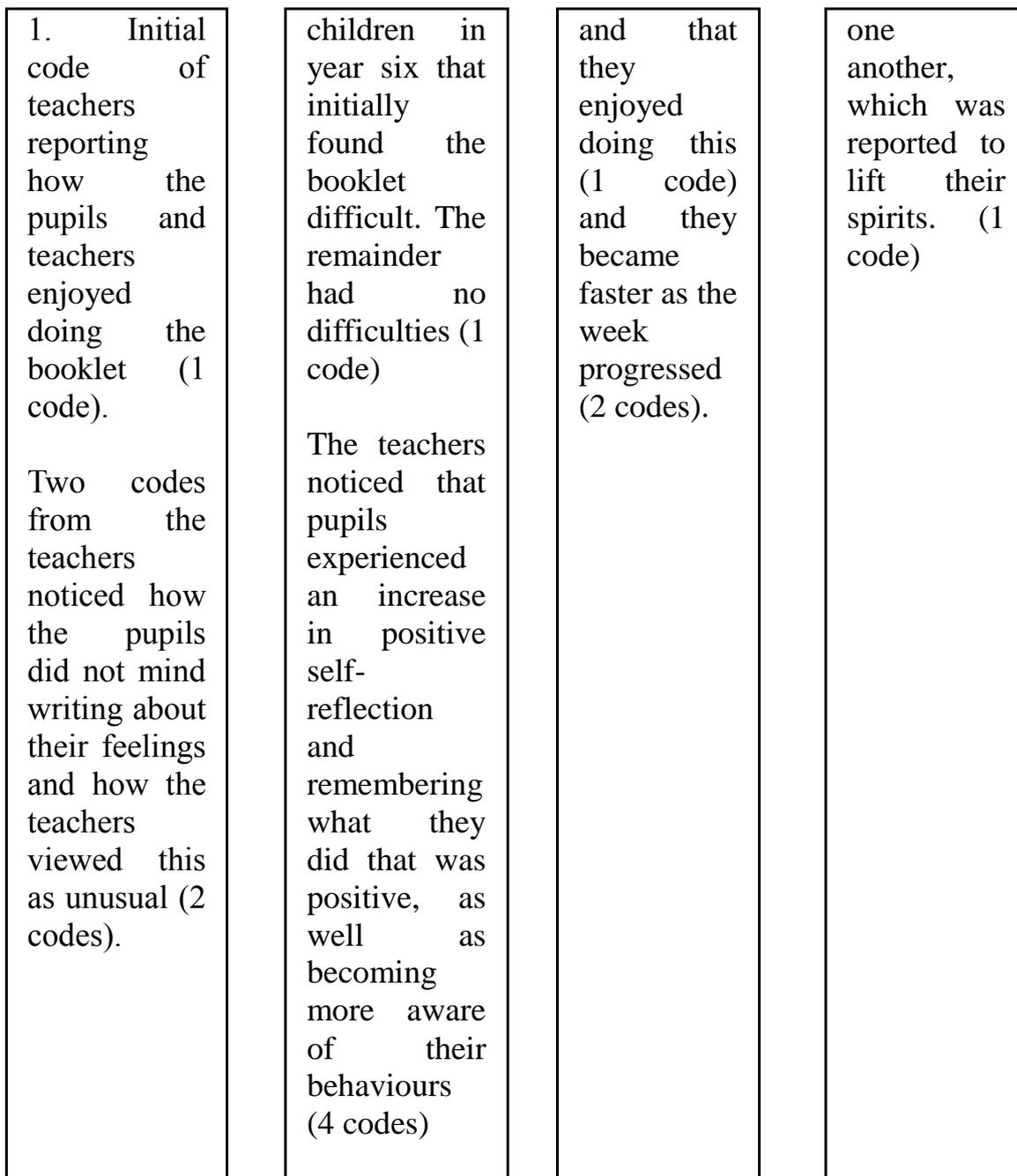
This was deemed to be part of the theme of positive self-reflection as it relates to one of the teachers being surprised that the children would write down their feelings and reflections. This statement hints that in the teacher’s experience this has been a difficult area.

The final code on self-reflection appeared on question five, which was:

Teacher 2: ‘... some of the children would say “You’ve been good in choir” and they have been spotting each other’s abilities.’

This data sample relates to the children supporting one another with the self-reflections and appears to have been a consistent behaviour, as Teacher 1 agreed with this statement and all previous statements with no alternative perspective given (see figure 7).





**Figure 7: Flowchart of the Sequence of Teachers' Views of Pupils' Positive Self Reflections**

#### **4.5.5 Theme Two: Teachers' Views About the 'Three Good Things technique'**

The theme that emerged in this section was around the positives of the technique but also another, wider view of techniques that were similar to it. The

first code occurred in question one:

Teacher 1: ‘We found it good. The children [in my class] could think of things quite easily.’

The initial feelings from both teachers were consistently positive and both enjoyed taking part in the study.

A further code on the teachers’ views on the technique occurred in question four:

Teacher 2: ‘It’s been a good reminder for us to share times with the children, and not just the children. It’s like years ago a push towards Circle Time about 10-15 years ago. So it’s like going back to principles, so it’s like that really.’

The class teacher reflected on a similar technique known as Circle Time and how she felt about going back to a key principle in teaching:

Teacher 2: ‘Yeah, it’s really nice as it seems to have been squeezed out of the curriculum.’

Researcher: ‘That’s a good point.’

Teacher 2: ‘So doing the good things was interesting and sometimes they would

smile at you and think “I wonder what I did do today at school”. So that’s good and for some of them it’s some attention.’

The data sample from the class teacher, which was agreed with by the other teacher, was how she felt this type of work had been ‘squeezed out’ of the curriculum. Overall it reflected how emotional wellbeing work was being pushed away, in the teachers’ views.

“Teacher 1: ‘... It reminds me how some of the children like the variety.’

It was reflected how children like variety and a reference to the difference the booklet had made in its delivery to the rest of the curriculum.

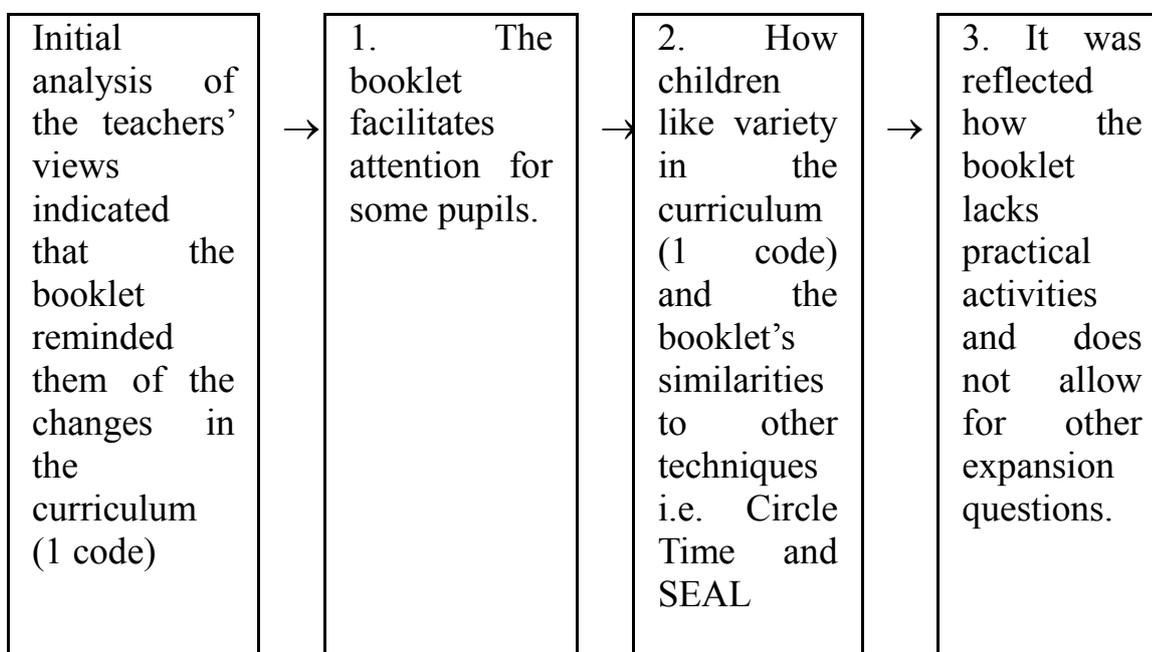
Teacher 2: ‘This is similar to what we do in PSHE, so we do touch upon this quite often, having this kind of discussion and sharing, so it is good for that. They can give you a statement and you have to delve into it, why it is important you. I would find that interesting but, erm, we do this kind of thing but that is more practical.’

This statement was elaborated in the next sentence:

Teacher 2: ‘Yes, in the SEAL its more scenarios, isn’t it, and different goals?’

Teacher 1: ‘We try to get them to reflect but I don’t know, you do it and it’s another curriculum lesson so it feels different to other lessons. Circle time does feel different.’

The class teachers discussed how they feel about the ‘three good things’ booklet, that it was different as it has less practical elements and did not allow for expansion exercises. This statement is interesting as the class teachers have seen other types of emotional wellbeing techniques but appear to find it different that no expansion exercises or practical activities are involved. This attributes to the uniqueness of the booklet’s approach (see figure 8).



**Figure 8: Flowchart of the Sequence of Teachers' Views**

#### **4.5.6 Theme Three: Teachers' Views on Increases in Pupils' Prosocial Behaviours**

In question one, the teachers were asked for their thoughts and feelings about the booklet. The first extract on prosocial behaviour was:

Teacher 2: '...the children that did struggle, with the table that they are sitting on the other child would give them some feedback on what they seen and what they did that was good, which would lift their spirits.'

This extract demonstrated how the children were helping one another with positive statements.

The second code appeared during question two when the teachers were asked to reflect on the booklet. It was useful as the teacher's opinion was based on what she thought the 'three good things' does.

Teacher 1: 'They became more aware of their behaviour and their attitude on what they were doing at school.'

The class teacher's belief is that the pupils became more aware of their behaviours and their own attitudes. As the context of the discussion at this time

was all positive it is interpreted that the pupils became aware of their positive behaviour and attitudes, as later on in the discussion no significant change of negative behaviour was noticed. There were no children, at this time, with behavioural needs.

Question three asked the teachers about any changes in behaviour:

Teacher 1: 'I said that they could write about things at home but here that's what you get. But they looked to become more aware, but I wouldn't want to say, but as we have an expectation [to have good behaviour].'

Teacher 2: 'Hard to say. Could you see anything?'

Teacher 1: 'With the booklet, I don't think I saw changes in behaviour.'

This point of view contradicted their previous point, as they had noticed changes in behaviour, but this was positive behaviour. This extract therefore shows that there were no noticed changes in negative or anti-social behaviour. It also highlights that Teacher 1 was more passive in her responses compared to Teacher 2, the more experienced teacher, who was more dominant during the discussion.

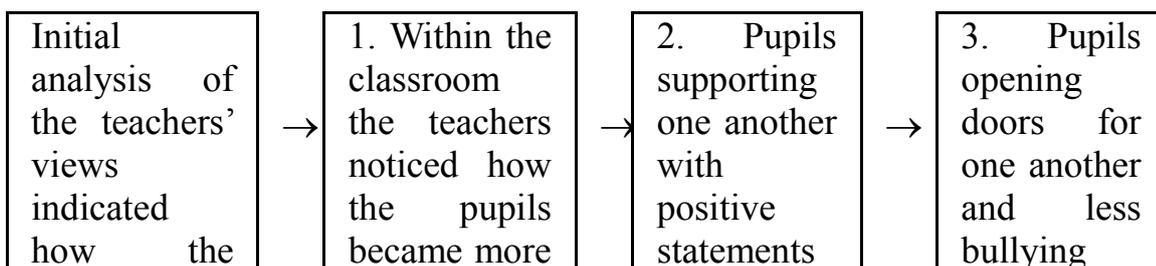
In question four, the teachers were asked if any changes outside of the classroom were noticed.

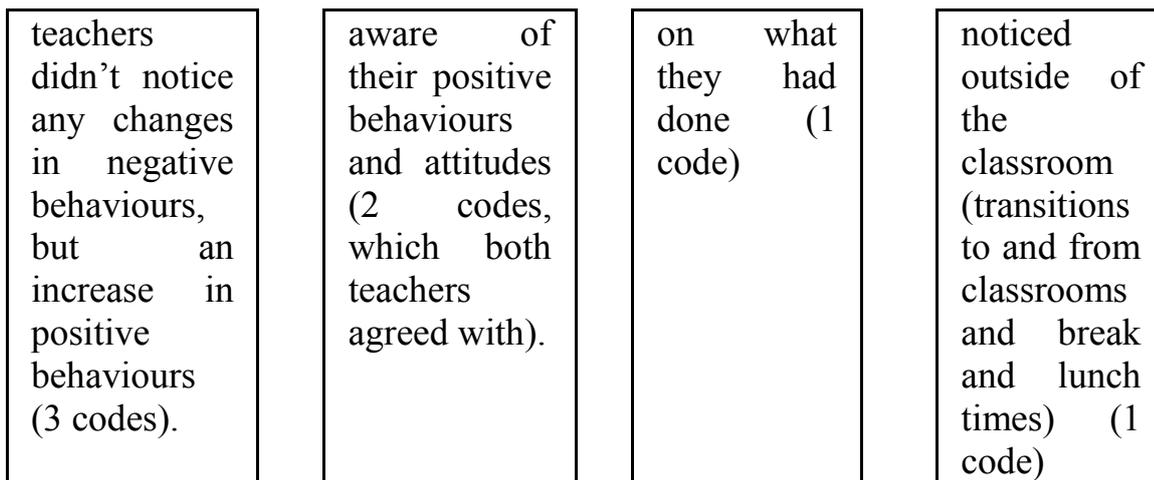
Teacher 1: ‘We see them holding open the doors and less bullying, so their behaviour has been good.’

This was agreed with by the other class teacher. It is a statement which contradicts the previous question, as discussed above. This code is important as it carries on the theme of changes in positive behaviours in the classroom but also outside of the classroom, holding doors and less bullying. There was also discussion on behaviour outside of school:

Teacher 1: ‘Because we are really good at saying, “That’s wonderful,” but we are hearing a lot about how they are helping mum in the morning or sister.’

This was not deemed an increase in prosocial behaviour but how the teachers were hearing more from the pupils about their life outside of school (see figure 9).





**Figure 9. Flowchart of the Sequence of Positive Behaviours**

#### **4.5.7 Theme Four: Teachers' Views on Improving the Booklet**

The class teachers gave a number of views on improvements to the booklet, but there was a difference of opinion for some of the codes:

Teacher 2: ‘...it might have been better to do it in the morning because they have good memories when they have done something good, don't they?’

The view that the booklet could be completed in the morning was not shared by the other class teacher.

**A further suggestion was also made:**

Teacher 2: ‘Yeah, in our classroom they initially struggled to figure out a good thing in terms of their work or whatever, so I gave an example that it could be something outside the classroom. So some clarity on that.’

Teacher 2 asked for clarity about whether information in the booklet had to be about school. The instructions in the booklet were that anything could be recorded and there were no restrictions. It does however, hint at the need for the instructions to be reviewed and, if possible, to be made even more clear.

The view of the first teacher was more about reflection time:

Teacher 1: ‘Yeah, and also I think that if they had more time it would be interesting to see if they could reflect more into it.’

A request was made for more time for the teacher to be able to interact more with the children to allow them more time to reflect. This idea was reflected in the idea that there could be more expansion exercises.

Teacher 2 also wanted more flexibility regarding when the booklet could be completed:

Teacher 2: ‘Finding the time could be difficult. You may spend too long and get

carried away, like on a Friday afternoon choir, so then when they come in they have to do it fast. The time could be quite rigid and at Xmas it's quite a busy time.'

and:

Teacher 2: 'It is something for them to keep with them somehow, I don't know. Somewhere they can write it down at a good time when the lesson is short.'

The response in the interview from the researcher was:

Researcher: 'Yes that's fine. For this piece of research we kept it at the same time to keep it consistent and have the same variables each day, but the time, that could become more flexible.'

Overall a more flexible approach was requested from Teacher 2. For further developments a request for a different approach to the booklet was made to boost self-reflection:

Teacher 1: 'We try to get them to reflect but I don't know, you do it and it's another curriculum lesson so it feels different to other lessons. Circle time does feel different.'

The class teacher was considering ways of using the ‘three good things’ technique not as a booklet but within a group. This was discussed further by the researcher:

Researcher: ‘So following that thought, if we had a smaller number to run a little group, so some target children, a smaller number, we could run that alongside the PSE lesson to target particular children. Would that be more realistic?’

In order to clarify what the teacher was considering the researcher asked about targeting smaller numbers of children. The other teacher’s response was:

Teacher 2: ‘We do that as well. We do small groups and after school groups. It’s always the same children though. It’s the ones who are failing or are struggling, and sometimes those who are successful; those are the ones that you miss, and I would want them in a focus group.’

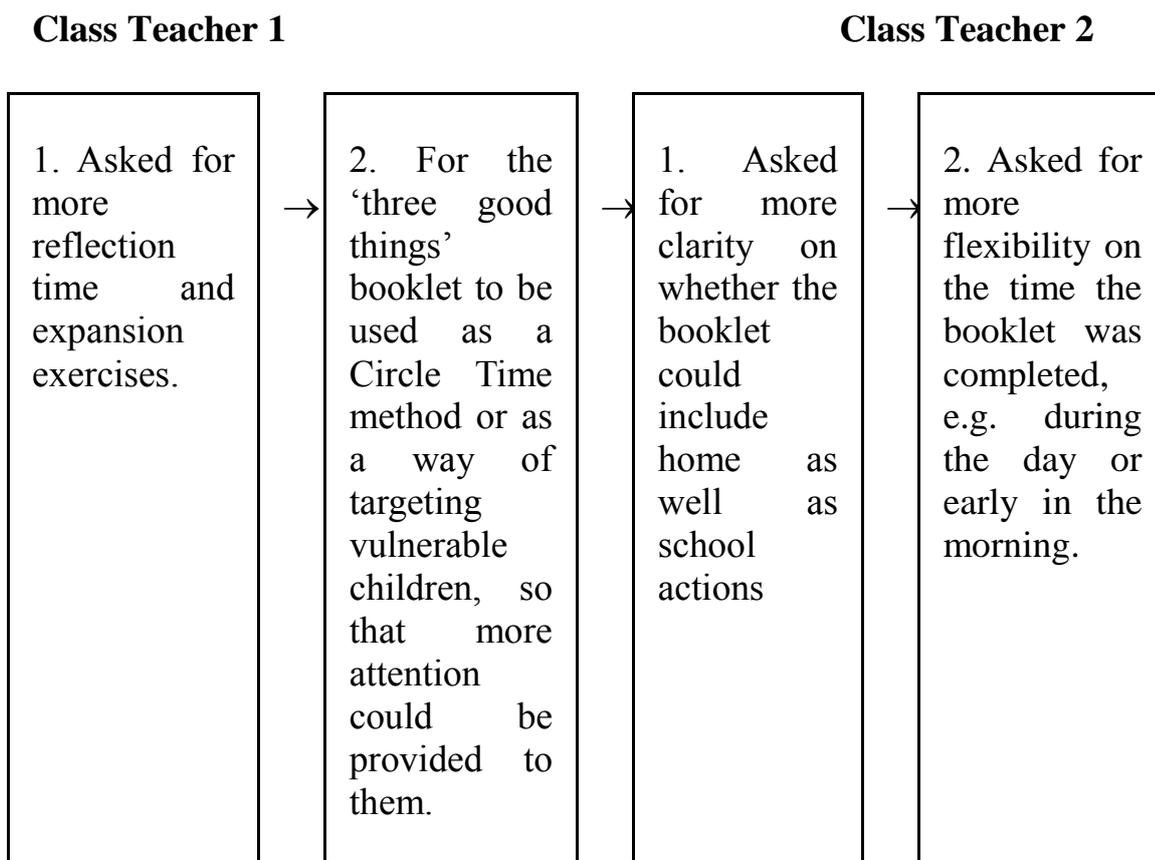
The researcher’s response was to ask if a smaller number of children were in a group, could it could run that alongside the PSE lesson to target particular children. The teachers agreed that this would be possible.

Essentially there was a request for smaller groups to target vulnerable children.

For example:

Researcher: ‘Hmmm. So perhaps some children who are emotionally literate and are doing quite well, so good role models naturally in class?’

Teacher 1: ‘Or the shy children, because when you are doing the register and you are ticking off you have to look up.’ (See figure 10).



**Figure 10: Teachers’ Views on Improvements to the ‘Three Good Things’ Booklet**

## **4.6 Themes that Emerged from the Parental Data**

Only two parents were available for the interviews from a possible twelve. The low turnout of parents led to follow-up requests for data with questionnaires based on the questions from the interview (see appendix 7). The response rate for the questionnaires was zero. Alternative dates and times were also offered.

From the analysis of the small amount of interview data, the themes of parental views about the booklet were made as well as a theme on changes in behaviour.

### **4.6.1 Theme One: Parental Views About the Booklet**

Parental views were very positive and six codes were identified:

Parent 1: 'It seems really nice. I like it being positive.'

and

Parent 2: 'Seeing it again, I think it's a good idea.'

Researcher: 'A good idea?'

Parent 2: 'Yes, definitely. Schools need to be positive places.'

No difficulties were attributed to the design of the booklet and there appeared to be a lack of concern about it. Another code identified was about how the children had spoken about the booklet to a parent:

Parent 2: 'He has mentioned that he liked the booklet.'

No negative information was given about the booklet and it appeared to be positively viewed:

Parent 2: 'Yeah, he really enjoyed the booklet and he said how much he would want to do it again.'

There was one extract from the data that was about a significant life event for a child and their family.

Parent 1: 'She has been really normal. Her father passed away two weeks ago and we have all been devastated. She has been surprisingly tough about this...'

It had been mentioned that one of the children in the interview had been through a significant event and the class teacher had given the pupil the option of not taking part. Rather than being reluctant, the pupil was reported to be eager to take part and had no difficulty completing the booklet. This was reflected in the

interviews as all the pupils had been very positive in the interviews. The pupil had come back on the week the booklet had started:

Parent 1: 'I wasn't sure when 'A' needed to go back to school so this was her first week when she was doing the booklets. She has been really positive about things. Behaviour-wise there have never been any problems. She did say how much she enjoyed the booklet though.'

This interview was cut short due to the nature of the recent life event but it was viewed by the author to have been an extremely brave thing for a parent to agree to come to an interview under the circumstances. This information highlights that when affected by a significant bereavement some individuals may wish to be positive, and further research on this area would be useful. If any pupil did not wish to complete the booklet they did not have to. What transpired is that all pupils completed the booklets despite difficulties in their lives.

Overall there was not enough data to create interrelated connections but it was communicated very clearly that parents were aware of the booklet, that it was deemed to be very positive and also that both pupils had enjoyed the booklet and communicated this to their parents.

#### **4.6.2 Theme Two: Behaviour Changes**

From the data, parents were very clear about a lack of changes in behaviour at home. The response was as follows:

Parent 1: 'No, I haven't noticed anything.'

and

Parent 2: 'No, she has been the same.'

A follow-up statement was also made about this theme:

Parent 1: 'She has been her usual self during this time.'

In the school environment and outside of class, reference to increases in prosocial behaviours has been mentioned, but in the context of the home no changes were communicated. This is interesting as it may be suggesting that the changes from the booklet may be context specific and may not transfer to other environments.

In the next section there is a discussion on the participants' views of improving the 'three good things' booklet.

It was apparent that the intervention was reviewed very positively and that a number of themes emerged. Consequently in the next chapter the data are discussed in more detail with regard to how they relate to the research aims and their implications.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

### **5.1 Overall Findings**

In this chapter each research aim is discussed. Following on from this there is a review of any threats to the validity and reliability of the study and a discussion on what aspects could have been better designed.

It is important to note that the scope of this research was very small, including a small sample of participants, which consequently led to a small amount of data being generated in this initial exploratory study. This was in order to explore the possibilities of using the ‘three good things in life’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) with children and therefore provide a ‘blueprint’ in order to allow future studies to be more substantive in their sample sizes and data collection and thus provide further developments in this area.

The overall findings of the study showed that the pupils and teachers enjoyed taking part in the ‘three good things’ technique. The perspectives from the interviews were very positive, including parental feedback, with the parents reporting that they noticed that the pupils enjoyed the technique. Pupils and teachers also reported seeing how beneficial it was for prosocial behaviours.

The pupils particularly valued the ‘fun factor’ of doing the technique, how it increased their awareness of their positive behaviours and positive self-reflections. This was also confirmed by the teachers, who noticed improvements in positive behaviours outside the classroom too. Teachers indicated that they felt that the pupils needed more time for reflection and more flexibility in the administration of the booklet so they could effectively implement the technique.

The overall conclusion is that the pupils benefited from the technique in terms of enjoyment, becoming engaged with the booklet and improving their prosocial behaviours. An overview of all the themes was created to present an overview of the experiences of the pupils, parents and teachers, which is discussed next.

### **5.1.1 Overall patterns of behaviour**

All the most relevant codes were summarised into one flowchart to give an overview of the interrelated nature of the data found. The data was put into different phases to demonstrate the process that emerged over time (see figure 11).

### Initial Phase

1. Pupils start to record what was helpful in the booklet. Pupils experience an increase in 'fun' in completing the booklet.

One teacher noticed how one table in year six initially struggled with the booklet but the remainder had no difficulties. Other children were observed to support the struggling pupils.

Teachers notice that the children don't mind writing about

### Early Phase

→ 2. Pupils experience an increase in positive self-reflection and remembering what they did that was positive.

Teachers notice this change in positive self-reflection.

Pupils report to parents that they are enjoying the booklet.

### Middle Phase

→ 3. Pupils read the booklet again at a later date, and remember their positive behaviours. Teachers also notice this behaviour.

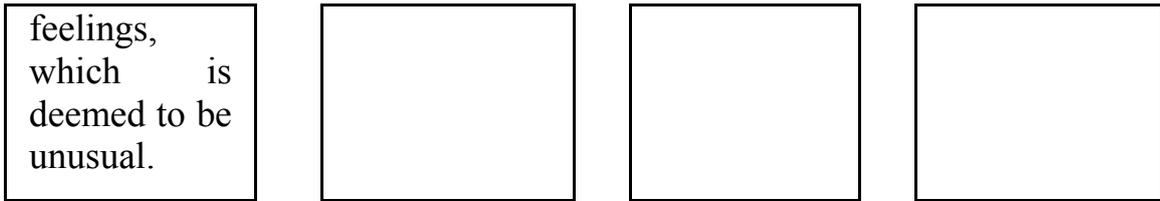
Pupil's report doing more positive behaviours (prosocial behaviours), also noticed by teachers in and outside the classroom.

Parents do not notice any changes at home.

### End Phase

→ 4. Pupils notice being positive to one another. Pupils want to do more positive reflection and find it a pleasurable activity. One teacher listens to the children's experiences and gives positive attention.

Pupils report feeling happier and then wanting to do the intervention more.



**Figure 11: Overall Experiences of the Participants using the ‘Three Good Things’ Booklet**

In the next sections is a more detailed discussion of each research aim, what was found in the results and the implication of this for the study and the positive psychology technique.

**5.2 Research Question 1: What are the Children’s Experiences and Perceptions of Using the ‘Three Good Things’ Technique for One Week?**

The results demonstrated that the pupils had an appreciation of the ‘three good things’ technique and the way that the booklet was constructed. All the pupils reported that they enjoyed using the technique and there was an initial ‘fun factor’ followed by an increase in their awareness of their positive behaviours. The pupils would then re-read the booklet again at a later date and this facilitated them in remembering what they did that was positive. Pupils reported feeling happier and then wanting to do the intervention more, beyond the one week of the technique. This may partly explain why long-term benefits are created by this technique. There was also an increase in prosocial behaviours as

the pupils felt that they were now communicating better with each other, and giving positive comments to those who were initially struggling to use the technique. On the final day of the technique, this view had not changed and the pupils appeared to have felt that the technique had been worthwhile and they wanted to continue with it. One pupil stated a preference for not using the technique in the morning. It would therefore appear that doing the technique later in the day is beneficial to completing the booklet. In the research period the booklet was not completed in the morning but later in the day, generally at 2 pm.

In the booklet the pupils wrote about improving in subjects like maths and English, helping others, being ready quickly or being fast, being given praise or rewarded and developing core skills e.g. concentration. There appeared to be a core reflection of what was discussed by pupils and teachers in the comments written in the booklet, plus some additional information that was useful.

### **5.3 Research Question 2: What are the Teachers' Perceptions of the Children after they have Completed the 'Three Good Things' Booklet?**

The data demonstrates that the teachers' perceptions of the pupils' experiences were very positive. Pupils were regarded by the teachers as being engaged in the technique, which was judged to be unusual as they did not normally enjoy discussing or recoding their feelings. It was observed that the pupils became more expressive, with positive comments to one another, and positive behaviours were noted outside the classroom, including holding doors for one another and the teachers, and a reduction in bullying. With regards to negative behaviours and attitudes, the teachers believed that the two classes did not have children with significant behaviour needs so this did not manifest itself during the research. Teachers noticed how some pupils initially struggled. It was clarified that one table of children in year six initially found the booklet difficult. The remaining children in both classes had no difficulties and the teachers noticed that pupils experienced an increase in positive self-reflection and remembered what they did that was positive, as well as becoming more aware of their prosocial behaviours. Teachers noticed how the pupils were giving each other positive reflections, and that they enjoyed doing this and they became faster as the week progressed. For the children that found writing down the statements problematic, other children supported them, which was reported to lift their spirits. One component of the research that was unexpected was the teachers' views of the observed improvements to pupils' prosocial behaviours, which is an encouraging sign. To have a technique that improves pupil behaviour at a class level has a lot of potential benefits and uses for a school.

However, it is important to note that this research is preliminary, in order to provide a basis for developing the research area, and therefore it has limitations. While the results are interesting the effects on behaviour were not quantified in terms of their frequency, duration or long-term outcomes. It is currently unknown whether there were small improvements to behaviour or more significant ones and how other classes, with different ages or needs, would be affected. The author would therefore suggest that future research is the next step in developing the evidence base of the ‘three good things in life’ technique (, which is discussed next.

The research area, in terms of using a qualitative approach, was limited by its small sample of six pupils, two teachers and two parents for a case study approach. There was a small amount of data in terms of the teachers’ views of the prosocial behaviour relating to this theme and therefore it could be an important next step to focus on the potential benefits of prosocial behaviour for future research. In the interim it was the subjective view of the teachers that the pupils did use more positive language to one another overall, and other behavioural effects such as opening doors to one another and a decrease in bullying were also observed. Future research can therefore build from this study and look to investigate the amount of progress, through either observation or other means.

### **5.4 Research Question 3: What are the Parental Perceptions of their Children's Involvement after the 'Three Good Things' Intervention has been Completed?**

The data demonstrated that parents were positive about the 'three good things booklet'. Only two parents came to the interview out of a possible twelve, and this low turnout had a negative impact on the data. There appeared to be little parental concern about the booklet, either as a threat or an interest, possibly because it was a small booklet and the intervention only took place for one week. It was however, communicated very clearly that the parents interviewed were aware of the booklet, that it was deemed to be very positive and also that both pupils had enjoyed the booklet and communicated this to their parents. In the school environment and outside of class, increases in prosocial behaviours were mentioned, but in the context of the home no changes were communicated. This is interesting as it may suggest that the behavioural changes from the intervention may be context-specific and may not transfer to other environments.

## **5.5 Research Question 4: What Are the Participants' Views on Improving the 'Three Good Things in Life' Intervention?**

### **5.5.1 Pupils' views**

Overall the children were very positive about personalising their booklet using a variety of methods. Another code for improvements was about the size of the booklet, with a desire for a bigger booklet to allow information to be put into it. One pupil also mentioned the possibility of motivational sayings.

A request was made for the opportunity to write in the booklet more frequently. This led to a request for an increase in the length of time the booklet was used for. For the research it was used for a week but the pupils all agreed that they wanted to do the booklet over a longer time, although they requested different amounts of time. The most extreme was to do it half of the academic year and then have a break. There was a key enthusiasm for drawings, but on the back of the booklet. At this point all the children wanted more drawings and ways to personalise the booklet.

All the children agreed with the view that it would be good to help other pupils record what they had done well. They also had universal agreement that the pupils wanted to unite what they did for home and school.

### **5.5.2 Teachers' Views**

The class teachers gave a number of views on improvements to the booklet. One teacher asked whether information in the booklet had to be about school. The instructions in the booklet were that anything could be recorded and there were no restrictions. It does, however, hint at the need for the instructions to be reviewed and, if possible, to be made even more clear.

A request was made for more time for the teachers to be able to interact with the children to allow them more time to reflect. This is an idea that was also reflected in the suggestion to have more expansion exercises. One class teacher was considering ways of using the 'three good things' technique not as a booklet but within a group. In order to clarify what the class teacher was considering the researcher asked about working with smaller numbers of children in order to target vulnerable groups. Based on the data, a method of using the three good things technique within a Circle Time format may prove to be useful.

Overall a more flexible approach was requested from one teacher, and for further developments a request for a different approach to the booklet was made, to boost self-reflection. More flexibility would mean the booklet could still be used at busy times or during holidays.

## **5.6 Threats to Validity and Reliability**

### **5.6.1 Validity**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss various threats to the validity of a qualitative design like this study. These threats are:

- reactivity;
- researcher bias; and
- respondent bias.

A reactivity bias may occur when the researcher's presence interferes in the study in some way (Robson, 2002). A respondent bias is where information is withheld for various reasons, and a researcher bias is when the assumptions and preconceptions of the researchers affect the data collected and their analysis.

In the area of a reactivity and researcher bias, the potential effect of the researcher is addressed in using less observational work and more upon interviews, and recording accurately the participants' views and perceptions. Participants were actively engaged in the process and were not changing behaviour because they were aware of being observed. Also by using a case study approach, the role of the researcher was to be actively involved during the process and offer research skills in order to clarify and expand what participants were saying without distorting their meaning. Qualitative research is based on the researcher taking a role during the process of the study, making changes and monitoring them as a learning process. By using a qualitative method, the research maintained its validity in the chosen methodology because the effect of the researcher was anticipated.

One key area of discussion is the respondent bias, where pupils', teachers' and parents' responses could have affected the data collected so that it did not accurately reflect what was really happening with the programme. Crotty (1998) argues that by acknowledging and being aware of potential biases with the social identity and backgrounds of research participants, a researcher can be attuned to these risks when collecting data. A way to see if the teachers' data is largely accurate is to compare them to the data gathered from the pupils. **In this**

chapter the results of the data analysis were presented together and they are broadly consistent. A teacher bias therefore, does not appear to be significant, as their comments on the success and difficulties of the programme were largely concordant with the pupils' answers. This means that the validity of the research does not appear to have been compromised.

With the chosen methodology of focus groups it could be argued that some of the teachers were showing more restraint on what they were saying in the presence of their colleagues in order to maintain their professional integrity during the study, but aside from this there appear to be no threats to this aspect of the research. The comparison of the pupils', teachers' and parents' responses is interesting because of the similar perspectives evident from their responses.

There is a difficulty in using interviews and this was considered in the methodology chapter. The data that was collected, however, validates the overall positive feedback given with the whole class approach in years five and six. It was noted in the pupil and teacher responses that prosocial behaviours increased and that negative behaviour did not, as there were no pupils with significant behavioural needs in the two classes. The positive responses and reflections appear to validate the impact of the 'three good things' technique within a whole class approach.

What has helped to address issues of validity in the areas of reactivity, respondent and researcher bias is the use of a triangulation method considered in the study's methodology. Robson (2002) argues that 'triangulation can help to counter all threats to validity' (p.175). Therefore comparing the information from the pupils, teachers and parents together gave greater detail and highlighted the differences between the three groups. This has strengthened the research evidence of the 'three good things' technique and the data has broadened the scope of the research and highlighted the need for future research, which is discussed later. The next area of discussion is the study's reliability.

### **5.6.2 Reliability**

Robson (2002) suggests that, in a general sense, researchers using qualitative designs do not need to take the question of reliability too seriously. It is however important to be 'thorough, careful and honest in carrying out research' (p.176). Easton et al. (2000) suggest that areas of difficulty with reliability can be overcome by good data collection, reduced environmental distractions and care to avoid transcription errors. This study had one researcher and two supervisors who could support the researcher and check his work. This supervision has reduced difficulties with reliability. The biggest threat,

however, is in the area of data analysis. The researcher as an analyst is prey to human error (Robson, 2002). The relative inexperience of the researcher in coding information could have resulted in mistakes being made if care had not been taken. The coding that took place was in relation to the researchers' objectives and this was structured to enhance accuracy in analysis. Careful preparation was made while collecting data and prior to analysis, so theoretically no major mistakes were made, but a more skilful analyst may have generated some more interesting insights in the course of the data analysis process.

Another area of discussion is in the study's methods. The use of case studies and interviews appeared to work well with this study, with its open and semi-structured approach. However, the use of questionnaires is an area that requires discussion. The decision to use a questionnaire was based on the low number of parents participating in the study. The difficulty with this is discussed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003), who argue that difficulties can arise through low response rates or volunteer bias. This was certainly the case as no responses were received, which may reflect the fact that parents were unconcerned about a positive booklet being used for one week with their children.

The limited response of parents to the interview-based approach for parental perspectives potentially lost a great deal of data that could have helped the study's findings, in spite of additional steps being taken with the use of questionnaires to maximise the responses available.

### **5.7 Critique of the Study and Possible Re-Designs**

As discussed in section 3.9.1 the study design is that of a case study (Yin, 2015). The purpose of using the case study was to gather data using a well-established research strategy that explores the context of the setting in its own right; while this has provided valuable information about the 'three good things' technique at the primary school level, it is limited by the chosen methodology and the small sample sizes. A case study is, by its nature a qualitative approach (Robson, 2002) and therefore cannot provide results generalisable to the total population. As discussed in the literature review there was a need to obtain qualitative information on the context of the 'three good things' technique and its potential impact. The author would now suggest that there is a need to expand the study and obtain further information that may lead to generalisable results, as well as, further developing the evidence base of the technique. Essentially the study is limited by its small sample size, its preliminary nature and the need to develop an evidence base, including developing information on the exact benefits to pupil prosocial behaviour of using the technique. In order

to find out whether the benefits in behaviour can be directly linked to the technique, or whether they were a correlation rather than a cause and effect (Robson, 2002), another factor such as another intervention being used at the same time, or simply a coincidence a different epistemological and methodological approach may be required.

In light of what has been discussed so far, a number of adjustments could be made to the research for future studies. The use of a case study in relation to the research questions worked well and so remains a suitable research design for the future. The focus on pupils and teachers as the main sources of information for this first study remains the same, as it **provided good result data to answer the research questions and it provided rich data for analysis.** The main improvements in the future would be to receive more parental feedback and to increase parental participation. In the study, parents' role was rather passive, which was reflected in the small number that attended the interview. **In addition, the study would have benefited from input from the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) involved, but sadly this person had become unwell and had recently gone on long-term sick leave.** In the future more classes and educational professionals, including lunchtime supervisors, could have been included in the study to give more detail on the pupils' behaviour. **Low participation in the study could also have been overcome by having the pupils, teachers and parents**

all complete the 'three good things' booklet. If all members of the school community had felt involved, this may have helped the parents to come forward to give their views.

To further the use of the triangulation method, lessons could have been observed while the 'three good things' technique (Seligman et al., 2005) was being used, to allow the researcher to note any changes in how pupils reacted, as either an adjunct or an alternative way of gaining perspective. Overall the study would have benefited from a wider range of methods to gain data and compare pupils' presentation in similar classes in the school, to understand what was happening across the curriculum. There were concerns that including observation in this study could have affected participants' behaviour, as the booklet was only used for a week and having someone observe may have made the booklet sessions feel artificial.

The difficulty is in quantifying the changes of behaviour and how much can be attributed to the booklet. In the context of the study the participants were confident that it had an impact. Prosocial behaviours manifested as saying positive things to one another during the sessions but also at break and lunchtimes. In the booklet there were a large number of helpful behaviours discussed around school. Prosocial behaviours outside of the classroom were

also mentioned, but further work is required on how much is generated and a more quantitative method would be suitable for this approach. Without further study, the level of behaviour change remains an unknown quantity. The contribution of this study is that in future studies other researchers will know what areas to look for and how incorporate these in the design.

### **5.8 How the Study's Results Relate to the Literature**

What has the study contributed to the evidence base for positive psychology research? The study has shown that the positive psychology technique the 'three good things' (Seligman et al., 2005) is well liked by pupils, teachers and parents in a primary school setting. Prior to this research there was no information on whether adults or children enjoyed the technique or what their perspective was. In addition new data has been provided on how the 'three good things' technique works in generating an initial novel and fun experience, which leads to pupils developing more self-awareness of their positive behaviours through positive self-reflection, looking back at the booklet at a later date, and then wanting to continue with this behaviour after the technique has finished. For the first time, using qualitative methods, the research has created more information on the technique's success and how new techniques can be created for the future.

This study contributes to the idea that for positive psychology to work you cannot just have one lesson per week or even confine teaching of positive psychology to one subject. It needs to become an ethos, as argued by Elias, Zins, Gaczyk and Weissberg (2003) to support students in their emotional development. This study of the ‘three good things in life’ technique highlights the possibility of using one universal technique, but using it with other techniques and lessons may have additional advantages, although this requires further exploration.

The study observed prosocial behaviour changes across years five and six. From the school’s point of view, the aim of the technique was for the teachers and senior teachers to decide whether it was worthwhile to use positive psychology techniques across year groups. The Deputy Head Teacher, on the basis of the current research, clearly believed there was sufficient evidence to justify the wider dissemination of the technique. What the findings have also shown is the need for good planning for pupils who may wish to have further support in focus groups and also for teachers to have support in order to become comfortable with using the technique.

Another area of the literature was how the ‘three good things’ technique worked. The theory is that ‘positive psychology interventions may boost

happiness through a common factor involving the activations of positive, self-relevant information' (Seligman et al., 2005, p.382). In this study the area of 'positive self-relevant data' was called positive self-reflections and was a consistent theme that emerged from the data. It can be hypothesised that the 'three good things' technique works by creating an initial 'fun' factor which then leads to participants experiencing more positive self-reflections. This technique works because participants self-administer it, thus leading to increased reinforcement of positive self-reflections. This is such a powerful experience that participants wanted to carry on with this approach after the one week period was over. According to Gander, Proyer, Ruch and Wyss (2013) when you extend the technique beyond the one-week period, the initial fun factor is lost and the participant chooses to not continue with the technique for the future (Gander, Proyer, Ruch and Wyss, 2013). As the technique is self-administering it also avoids difficulties experienced in the PENN programme (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins, 2009) which relied on the skill of the session facilitator.

As discussed in section 1.3 the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme for schools (DfES, 2005; DCSF, 2007) looked at promoting children's emotional wellbeing and how this impacts on peer relationships. Although the basis of the SEAL initiative was founded on small case studies, it

aimed to promote children's emotional wellbeing using a set of lesson plans that could be implemented in classes, as well as whole-school initiatives. As discussed in section 2.6.2, Humphrey, Lendrum, and Wigelsworth's (2010) national evaluation of SEAL found that there was no significant impact on pupil outcomes in terms of social and emotional skills, improvements in mental health and behaviour. Therefore the evidence base for the benefits of SEAL is thin and not quantifiable. Other similar interventions, such as the PATH programme, have also been criticised.

The Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies programme (Greenberg, Kusche, Cooke and Quamma, 1995), is known as the PATH programme. As explained by Matthews et al. (2004) programmes such as PATH were created for drug prevention or conflict resolution rather than to improve emotional wellbeing, and this presents a difficulty, as there is little empirical evidence to support an overall generalisable concept of the impact of emotional intelligence, thus raising questions about its validity. A lot of the research is based on correlations (Matthews et al., 2004) between an intervention and the behaviour observed, which does not establish cause and effect (Robson, 2002).

In comparison to the 'three good things in life' technique (Seligman et al., 2005), this study was based on a large sample of 411 participants. Independent researchers found similar effects, demonstrating the reliability of

this technique. Gander, Proyer, Ruch and Wyss (2013) researched nine strength-based positive interventions on wellbeing and depression and Mongrain and Anselmo-Matthews (2012) replicated the ‘three good things in life’ technique. The author’s study is therefore based on solid research that has demonstrated its effects and has also given some indications of other social benefits with pupils, albeit limited data at this preliminary stage. Therefore this research is based on good research evidence and it has expanded the research base on using the technique within education, but also suggests that there are potential systemic prosocial benefits; an area that can be researched further.

### **5.9 What Are the Implications of the Technique on Increasing ‘Happiness’ for the Participants?**

Seligman proposes that to increase happiness one needs to live a ‘full life’ (Seligman, 2002). One question that can be posed is what does the research evidence tell us about the effect the technique had on developing happiness with pupils? In order to answer this, the participants’ experiences of the technique as documented in figure 11 (page 213) are referred to.

The pleasant life is based on hedonistic theories of happiness discussed above, and is a life that pursues positive emotions about the present, past and future (Seligman, 2002). In the initial phase, where children had to think about what they had done that was helpful to themselves or others, there was the ‘fun’ factor for children as it was a novel experience that increased positive self-reflection. This initial phase of the booklet’s impact appears to correlate with the pleasant life (Seligman, 2002). This relates to the hedonistic theories of happiness and pursues positive emotions. This is corroborated as some pupils on one table in the year six group initially found this exercise difficult. This difficulty may reflect how this was a task may have been unusual or difficult for some pupils, as they were not used to reflect on pleasurable moments of their school life.

In the following phase, called the early phase, the pupils experienced an increase in their positive self-reflections and remembered what they had done that was positive. The author argues that this phase still relates to the pleasant life component of happiness (Seligman, 2002) and is increasing the pupils’ positive thinking in the present based on their recollection of their positive past, recorded in the booklet. The pupils then begin to reflect positive comments to one another.

In the middle phase, pupils began to read the booklet again, looking at the positive behaviours they had done. This was noticed by the teachers, which appears to reflect the pupils' positive reflections about the present. Then pupils reported positive behaviours in class and also out of the class, which was also noticed by teachers. At this point the children were still operating in the pleasant life theory of happiness but were looking to positive emotions in the future. This leads to the end phase, with pupils using positive comments to one another and also reflecting back on their booklet. The process of the three good things booklet appears to relate more to the pleasant life component with positive emotions from the past to the present and then thinking of and doing positive actions in the future. The experiences of the pupils do not appear to relate to the other routes of happiness with the engaged life (happiness follows after the flow experience, Seligman, 2002) or the meaningful life (which aims for an individual to find a 'higher purpose' and looks to religion, politics, family, community or nation (Seligman, Rashid, and Park, 2006). Within the three orientations to happiness (pleasure, meaning, and engagement), happiness can be pursued either independently or combined (Peterson et al., 2007).

In the literature review it was proposed that if following the theory of happiness proposed by Seligman (2002) on living a 'full life', then the technique should a) help pupils to gain enjoyment from the activity, b) engage them in the activity

and achieve a sense of flow, c) give them meaning and help them in their place in the school institution in some way, either socially or behaviourally. The research evidence is that these pupils did gain enjoyment from the activity and they were engaged, but there was no reports of a flow experience; it did appear to affect their 'place' in the school but more in making positive statements to one another and in positive actions such as opening doors to one another etc. Overall the pupils do appear to have had a positive experience, which relates to the 'pleasant life' component of happiness proposed by Seligman (2002).

In conclusion, it appears that there are core children who recognise that they do helpful things for other people once a week or more. Future research could explore the amount behaviour change, because at this stage it is not clear to what degree behaviour improves (the class teachers did notice improvements) and how much more the pupils recognise or remember their positive actions. This would be an important feature in a future study. It also raises the question of class dynamics, in that there are core children who are the 'helpers' in the class and consistently support others. The children discussed helping one another tidy things away or helping each other in different lessons, through to helping carry objects or doing positive tasks for the class teachers.

There is also the possibility that doing the 'three good things' technique (Seligman et al., 2005) in a group is self-administering. In the original theory of the three pillars of positive psychology (Seligman, 2000) (positive experiences, positive traits, and positive institutions), the 'pillar' of positive experiences is

thought to orientate in experiences from the past (for example contentment with life and satisfaction with life), the future (optimism and hope for the future), and the present (obtaining pleasures and physical gratifications). The ‘three good things’ technique) starts with the participants writing down what they did in the past. The research findings showed that the children then gained more self-reflection into the present and also looked back at what they did periodically (in the past). On this basis, a foundation of positive thinking is generated and then the children appeared to look at future behaviour. The ‘pillar’ of positive psychology reflects the process that the ‘three good things’ achieves. The theory does not, however, cover the role of the group and the peer support that was experienced by pupils and observed by teachers. To incorporate this into the findings would require additional use of the ‘pillar’ of the institution, which can be investigated further in future research. The role of the group with using this technique may be a strong component that is not currently reflected in the literature. As human beings are social creatures, the social experience of the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) was reflected in this research, but future research is required to investigate it further.

### **5.10 Further Research**

There is a great deal of further research that can be conducted in a school. For future research a more whole-school approach would be an excellent way to see if pupils can apply their emotional learning to all lessons as well as out of lesson activities. The perspectives of teachers could be used to explore this, as well as the ascertainable thoughts of pupils. Another aspect of research could be in small groups with individual pupils targeted for emotional development and so

supported in expressing their emotional wellbeing. The aspect of whether learning can be improved through positive psychology techniques would be a more long-term project, perhaps over an academic year. Evaluation of the impact could be achieved in comparison to another group of similar age and ability. Another approach would be to see if pupil referrals for aggressive or disruptive behaviour reduce for a year group while using the ‘three good things’ technique and whether teachers feel that a difference has been made because of it. In addition there is also benefit to teachers, pupils and parents in using the technique as a whole school and whole community approach. This would be a broad study but could have positive implications for the whole-school and home communities.

As the ‘three good things’ in life technique (Seligman et al., 2005) relies on a ‘self-administering’ method rather than a group intervention, it offers unique possibilities for future developments and initiatives. The technique itself could be utilised through technology, for example an app or computer programme. Given the availability of mobile phones, the creation of an app would potentially enable the recruitment of a much larger group of participants, much like the original study (Seligman et al., 2005). The implementation of an app or a programme could therefore be used in the area of positive psychology research in education in order to further develop the possible innovations and

developments. As well as increase in study size, the benefit of using an app or computer programme is that it allows for a lengthy instruction/tutorial to be included at the start of the app. It also removes any reliance of using the technique at a specific time of the day as it can be completed at any time. However, if it is not part of the school routine this could reduce the number of participants and it could also introduce a potential volunteer bias (Robson, 2002).

The area of customisation, as discussed by the pupils, could also be included within an app, including the ability to take photos, allowing the participants to make the experience of using the technique more customised and personal.

There are also potential benefits to using multiple techniques in the future, including the ‘three good things in life’ technique. One potential change would be the inclusion of other positive psychology techniques such as the ‘three funny things in life’ technique (Gander, Proyer, Ruch and Wyss, 2013) or the gratitude test (Seligman et al., 2005). These could be used at the same time but there is has an evidence base demonstrating that this would not provide any additional benefits (Gander et al., 2013). However, the techniques could be spread out through the year; for example the gratitude technique could be used first, which would provide an initial benefit to emotional wellbeing for one

month (Seligman et al., 2005). Following on from this there the ‘three good things in life’ technique could be used, which would potentially provide the participant with a six month benefit. After the six month period the use of the ‘three funny things in life’ technique could be used for a further benefit of six months. Theoretically by ‘lining up’ the techniques this could provide the participant with up to a year of cheap, time effective, and non-intensive therapeutic benefit. If a research base could be created then this could have potential benefits of reducing the costs involved of a CAMHS referral by providing an early intervention to children and young adults within an education context, before a serious mental health need develops. While these benefits could be significant, a good evidence base needs to be developed.

From what has been discussed, there is ample room for quantitative research within schools, as well as, more qualitative research and mixed method approaches. One key aspect of using quantitative or mixed method approaches will be the use of more scientific measurements of emotional wellbeing, or another method of identifying pupils’, teachers’ (including LSAs’) and parents’ emotional development that can be measured and subjected to scientific testing.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

### **6.1 Overview of Findings**

All pupils enjoyed the ‘three good things’ booklet and wanted to carry on using the technique beyond the one week period. There was an unequivocal positive view of the technique and this was reported by pupils, teachers and parents. Increases in prosocial behaviour were noticed by pupils and class teachers, for example children helping other children, making positive comments to one another or opening doors for one another, and a reduction in bullying incidents. There were no changes in negative behaviours, as the classes did not have pupils with behavioural issues. In the booklet the pupils wrote about improving in subjects like maths and English, helping others, being ready quickly or being fast, being given praise or rewarded and developing core skills e.g. concentration.

The use of a qualitative methodology appears to be well placed for exploring specific contexts within education and this kind of research can explore the participants’ views and experiences. A triangulation (Robson, 2002) method of data gathering from the pupils and teachers appears to have been an appropriate method of ensuring validity and reliability, and this approach also allows for a whole-school method of collecting data.

Recommendations for improving the booklet from the pupils' perspective related to the inclusion of drawings or photographs, sayings or something emotionally inspiring in the booklet; and for the amount of days to be increased in the booklet to allow for use at weekends. Pupils also wanted to increase the number of days spent using the technique. Ideas given by pupils were to use the booklet for up to half a year or for key times during the year. The pupils also asked for a section in the daily recordings to include positive things that other people had noticed about them or what they noticed about other people.

The teachers' perspective on improving the booklet included one class teacher asking for more clarity on whether the booklet could include home as well as school actions, and greater flexibility on the time of day when the booklet was completed. The other class teacher asked for more time for children to reflect on what to write down and for the 'three good things' booklet to be used as a Circle Time method or to use it as a way of targeting vulnerable children.

Pupil and teacher belief in the importance of the technique and its benefits highlights the quality of their educational experiences and how the qualitative method selected was ideally placed to explore these experiences. Implications

for future work highlight the need for a good support procedure for pupils experiencing emotional difficulties. The findings also suggest the benefits of a whole-school approach to this technique, as well as incorporating parental involvement, would be ideal to see if prosocial behaviours can be generalised to home and school. The data collected in this research and the literature on the subject suggests that the benefits perceived by pupils and teachers will not generalise across to the home environment without a better co-ordinated whole-school and home approach.

## **6.2 Implications for Educational Psychologists and Education**

This research identifies a number of important implications or points when utilising the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005). The research has demonstrated the unique and specific contribution that educational psychologists are able to bring in utilising knowledge of positive psychology interventions and implementing these in the classroom. Educational psychologists are uniquely placed in their knowledge of school systems to ensure that interventions can be developed and modified in consultation with teaching staff and also taking into account the views of pupils. With their knowledge of child development, educational psychologists have the knowledge base and skills to create resources and training for schools on developing the

emotional well-being of pupils. In the case of the ‘three good things in life technique,’ it can be used with school staff and parents, as well as pupils.

At a systemic level, educational psychologists may be well-placed to influence and promote the inclusion of evidence-based universal intervention programmes, using their skills of multi-agency work with healthcare professionals to share ideas about the use of strength-based positive psychology interventions such as the ‘three good things in life technique’ (Seligman et al., 2005), as opposed to focusing exclusively on children in difficulty. Educational psychologists through their regular work with schools, whether delivered free at the point of delivery or through commissioning, are well placed to support school staff to develop whole-school well-being policies, advise on the use of intervention programmes that have an evidence base and provide training and consultation to those delivering intervention programmes at a universal or targeted level. The educational psychologist can also consult and advise on collating data on emotional wellbeing and track effectiveness through the ‘assess, plan, do and review’ cycle, in line with the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2014). There are also potential applications of the research booklet to ascertain a pupils’ aspirations and desires to develop additional skills. This may also be useful for the aspirations section in an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP, DfE, 2014).

More specifically in terms of implications for the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005), the research demonstrates that it has an expanding evidence base, and appears to be able to promote pupils’ prosocial behaviours in certain contexts. Using all the information discussed in the literature review, results and discussions sections, this research highlights that educational psychologists have a tool that can be used with individual pupils but can also be used systemically with groups of children, including whole form groups or classes. What the thesis does highlight is that rather than relying on a ‘within’ child model we can focus on the strength of systemic support using a ‘self-administrating’ technique that accesses ‘self-relevant’ information (Seligman et al., 2005, p. 382) that is less limited by prior group work research and the limitation that it relied heavily on the skills of the group facilitator (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich and Linkins, 2009). This type of work still has its place, albeit with smaller groups, and with facilitators who are well trained. The advantage of the ‘three good things’ technique is its flexibility, in that it can be used with a whole-school community, including members of staff and parents, rather than just pupils. The technique could also potentially be further developed of moving it into an app and using ICT with larger groups, for example a large secondary school. This would give more flexibility in using the technique and also give the advantage of easier data collation, much like the original ‘three good things’ research, using computer-based data-collection with adults (Seligman et al., 2005). The data collected could also focus on

obtaining parental feedback and involvement and also teachers' or LSAs' views and involvement regarding any changes in prosocial behaviours, which will add considerably more information, including qualitative, contextual data. In terms of using the technique within the daily professional life of the educational psychologist, there is the 'within child' approach but also systemic methods of support. One example is the use of the 'three good things' technique (Seligman et al., 2005) to target very vulnerable children in a nurture group, or a whole class that has a high incidence of bullying behaviours or a class that has experienced traumatic events, although the timing of using this technique would need careful consideration. There is also potential crossover with using it with other group techniques i.e. social skills development like Circle Time (Mosely and Tew, 1999).

More frequent use of the technique within educational psychology would also open up the evidence base for the 'three good things technique' within education, which is the next stage of development. While this thesis has focused on the 'three good things' technique, the literature review also discussed other techniques that can be used, for example, the 'three funny things' technique and 'using signature strengths'. There is insufficient evidence in the use of combining these techniques (Gander, Proyer, Ruch and Wyss, 2013) but spreading them out over an academic year could potentially maximise emotional wellbeing and resilience among pupils.

Overall, this study has demonstrated the benefits of the ‘three good things’ technique (Seligman et al., 2005) and the ease of using it with children and also within education, thus making it an efficient tool for educational psychologists but also for educationalists in general. Pupils reported positive experiences in self-administering the booklet, with increases in positive self-reflection and reports of positive behaviour being noted by both pupils and teachers. Based on the literature review and also the results of this thesis the author would argue that the profession of educational psychology has a lot of offer in promoting the research on positive psychology and in the application of promoting the emotional wellbeing of pupils, and it is to be hoped that further research will expand on this initial research in the areas of qualitative analysis and provide further information for further studies and debate in the future.

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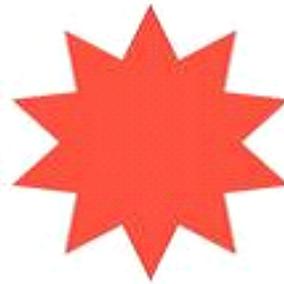
\*= journal or book identified by the literature search.

Appendix 1 Example Copy of the Three Things Intervention (actual copy was A5 size.)

# The Things That I Did Well Today!!



**Fantastic Work**



**Great Effort**



**Brilliant Thinking**



**Well Done**

Name:

Date:

David Lee Educational Psychologist

# MONDAY

## Three Good Things that I Did Today!

Write down three good things that have gone well today.  
How did you achieve this? What did you do that was helpful?

1)

2)

3)

# TUESDAY

## Three Good Things that I Did Today!

Write down three good things that have gone well today. How did you achieve this? What did you do that was helpful?

1)

2)

3)

# WEDNESDAY

## Three Good Things that I Did Today!

Write down three good things that have gone well today.  
How did you achieve this? What did you do that was helpful?

1)

2)

3)

# THURSDAY

## Three Good Things that I Did Today!

Write down three good things that have gone well today.  
How did you achieve this? What did you do that was helpful?

1)

2)

3)

# FRIDAY

## Three Good Things that I Did Today!

Write down three good things that have gone well today.  
How did you achieve this? What did you do that was helpful?

1)

2)

3)

## Appendix 2 Interview Questions for Pupils, Teachers and Parents

### **Pupil Questions**

1 How did you feel or think completing the three good things booklet?

2 Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful?

-examples

-illustrations

How was it useful?

3. Is there anything in the booklet that has helped in how you see yourself or other people?

-examples

4. Is there anyway you think the booklet could be done differently?

The amount of weeks you use the booklet?

Doing the lessons every day etc?

5 What do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important?

-how?

6 Anything else you would like to tell me?

## **Interview Questions for Teachers**

1. Now that the intervention has come to an end, what are your thoughts and feelings about using the three good things booklet?
2. What are your reflections on what the booklet has achieved or influenced?
3. What have you noticed any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude within the classroom since the start of the programme?
4. Any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude outside the classroom?
5. What aspects of the intervention appear to have been the most successful?
6. Has any part of the intervention been less successful?
7. What would be your professional recommendations for future developments of the three good things booklet?

## **Interview Questions for Parents**

1. What is your understanding of the three good things booklet?
2. What are your thoughts and feelings about the three good things booklet?
3. Since implementing the intervention have you noticed any changes to you child's behaviour at home or going to school?
4. Has anything gone particularly well?
5. Is there anything else you think I should know?

### Appendix 3 Ethical Approval Forms

## ETHICAL PRACTICE CHECKLIST (Professional Doctorates)

**SUPERVISOR:** Irvine Gersch

**ASSESSOR:** Caroline Edmonds

**STUDENT:** David Lee

**DATE (sent to assessor):** 21/05/2013

**Proposed research topic:** An interpretative, case study to explore children's experiences, perspectives and the impact of a positive psychology intervention called the three good things in life technique.

**Course:** Professional Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology

1. Will free and informed consent of participants be obtained? YES
2. If there is any deception is it justified? N/A
3. Will information obtained remain confidential? YES
4. Will participants be made aware of their right to withdraw at any time? YES
5. Will participants be adequately debriefed? YES
6. If this study involves observation does it respect participants' privacy? NA
7. If the proposal involves participants whose free and informed consent may be in question (e.g. for reasons of age, mental or emotional incapacity), are they treated ethically? NO – see below
8. Is procedure that might cause distress to participants ethical? NA
9. If there are inducements to take part in the project is this ethical? NA

10. If there are any other ethical issues involved, are they a problem? YES / NO / NA

**APPROVED**

YES		
-----	--	--

**MINOR CONDITIONS:**

**REASONS FOR NON APPROVAL:**

1. In my opinion you should be asking children to assent to taking part in the research in writing, not just verbally. So, an information sheet and an assent form for children is also needed.

2. Just to be clear - the consent form should be signed by all adults who participate in the interviews – this includes both teachers and parents.

Assessor initials: CJE

Date: 21.5.13

## RESEARCHER RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST (BSc/MSc/MA)

**SUPERVISOR:** Irvine Gersch

**ASSESSOR:** Caroline Edmonds

**STUDENT:** David Lee

**DATE (sent to assessor):** 21/05/2013

**Proposed research topic:** An interpretative, case study to explore children's experiences, perspectives and the impact of a positive psychology intervention called the three good things in life technique.

**Course:** Professional Doctorate in Applied Educational and Child Psychology

Would the proposed project expose the researcher to any of the following kinds of hazard?

- |    |  |    |
|----|--|----|
| 1  | Emotional                              | NO |
| 2. | Physical                               | NO |
| 3. | Other<br>(e.g. health & safety issues) | NO |

If you've answered YES to any of the above please estimate the chance of the researcher being harmed as: HIGH / MED / LOW

**APPROVED**

YES	YES, PENDING MINOR CONDITIONS	NO
-----	----------------------------------	----

**MINOR CONDITIONS:**

**Risk assessment approved, but conditions apply to ethical approval, see above.**

**REASONS FOR NON APPROVAL:**

Assessor initials: **CJE** Date: 21.5.13

**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

Dean: Professor Mark N. O. Davies, PhD, CPsychol, CBiol.



**School of Psychology  
Professional Doctorate Programmes**

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that the Professional Doctorate candidate named in the attached ethics approval is conducting research as part of the requirements of the Professional Doctorate programme on which he/she is enrolled.

The Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, University of East London, has approved this candidate's research ethics application and he/she is therefore covered by the University's indemnity insurance policy while conducting the research. This policy should normally cover for any untoward event. The University does not offer 'no fault' cover, so in the event of an untoward occurrence leading to a claim against the institution, the claimant would be obliged to bring an action against the University and seek compensation through the courts.

As the candidate is a student of the University of East London, the University will act as the sponsor of his/her research. UEL will also fund expenses arising from the research, such as photocopying and postage.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Mark Finn

Chair of the School of Psychology Ethics Sub-Committee

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#### **Appendix 4. Script to Address Threats to Validity**

“Thank you for coming here today. You/your parents(s) have just completed the interview consent form and now I would like to ask you to answer the questions as honestly and accurately as possible please. Our first question I would like to ask .....” (then ask the first question).

## Appendix 5: Data from the 'Three Good Things' Booklet Pupil Responses

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
A	Being focused at maths  Did great at art  I concentrated hard	Working as a team  Understanding the topic  Getting 13 out of 13 on my numbers test	I did good at Science  I did well in maths  Played fair at games	Good thinking in literacy  I got ten house points  Correct punctuation	Singing well in choir  Did well on maths test  Doing well at literacy
A	I worked hard in maths  I helped my friend  I was ready to learn quickly	I made a stable structure  I didn't talk when someone was distracting me  I did a good bridge position in P.E	I finished my science on time  I was organised  I didn't talk at the wrong time	I wrote five pages in literacy  I got 20/20 on my spellings  I did well in ICT	I was good in choir  I completed my literacy on time  I helped my friend
BC	Good at maths  Worked hard in art  I have been helpful	Worked hard at mats  Good at PE  Phone (?)	Absent	Getting four out of five in spellings  Good at maths	Good at choir
KS	Good at drawing  Did well in comprehension exercise  I played fair in a maths game	I did a good bridge in P.E.  I made a good square in maths  I remembered the words in choir	I worked well in science  I did well in D and T  I did some good estimates in Science	I did well in Science again.  I did a good plan in literacy  I got five house points	Sang well in choir  Wrote a good started for literacy  Sang well on the bus
CH	Got things sorted quickly in the lesson  Held doors for teachers  Helped someone hand	Tidied up the log cabin.  Held door for a teacher  Got organised quickly for	Did lots of question in maths  Got ready quickly  Sorted out my	Held the door for the teacher  Organised  Helped a little boy open his yogurt	Organised again  Held door for teacher  Held door for little ones

	out the books	lesson	timetables		
ES	<p>Writing my WALT quickly in lesson</p> <p>I remembered to pack away quickly and quietly</p> <p>I got all of my worksheets done in maths, art and literacy.</p>	<p>I did well in literacy</p> <p>I helped out the teacher in P.E</p> <p>I loved my maths lesson.</p>	<p>I worked hard in literacy</p> <p>I enjoyed playing basketball</p> <p>I liked my maths lesson</p>	<p>I wrote a page in maths and literacy</p> <p>I got ten house points for maths</p> <p>I loved my ICT lesson</p>	<p>I got eighteen on my mental maths</p> <p>I did extremely well in literacy</p> <p>I got thirty house points for maths.</p>
M	<p>I gave good answers in comprehension</p> <p>I got the teacher a chair</p> <p>I was on time for school</p>	<p>I made a medal</p> <p>I was good in PE</p> <p>I checked my maths work</p>	<p>I was good at maths</p> <p>I talked at the right time</p> <p>I was good in science</p>	<p>I was sensible in ICT</p> <p>I was good at dingbats club</p> <p>I had good ideas in literacy</p>	Absent
M	<p>Art</p> <p>Maths</p> <p>Mental maths</p>	<p>P.E</p> <p>Topic</p> <p>Science</p>	<p>Maths</p> <p>Science</p> <p>D and T</p>	<p>ICT</p> <p>Punctuation</p> <p>Literacy</p>	<p>RE</p> <p>Maths</p> <p>Literacy</p>
LF	<p>I did well on my maths</p> <p>I answered question well in writing</p> <p>I did well in art</p>	<p>I did well in maths</p> <p>The teacher were proud of my literacy work.</p> <p>I did well in PE</p>	<p>I did well in telling the time</p> <p>I did well in science</p> <p>I did well in everything today</p>	<p>I did well in ICT</p> <p>I did well with my teacher</p> <p>I did great in maths</p>	<p>I did well in choir</p> <p>I did well in maths</p> <p>I did well in literacy</p>
TH	<p>Being ready super fast</p> <p>I didn't cheat at the maths test</p> <p>Did well in mental maths</p>	<p>Completed my maths</p> <p>Did well in literacy</p> <p>Did good work overall</p>	<p>Explained what 80% meant in Science</p> <p>Finished maths</p> <p>Sang my heart out in assembly</p>	<p>Excellent in maths</p> <p>Finished literacy task</p> <p>Did well in a group task</p>	<p>Sang well in rehearsal</p> <p>Wrote the start of my novel</p> <p>Finished my work</p>
LK	I read a whole	I worked hard	I got ten	I got ten house	I got five house

	<p>book and concentrated</p> <p>Scored twenty hoops in basketball</p> <p>I got eleven out of twelve on a spelling test</p>	<p>in maths</p> <p>finished my work on a topic</p> <p>I got 5 house points</p>	<p>house points</p> <p>I finished two pages in maths</p> <p>I did a good project</p>	<p>points for being ready first</p> <p>I finished first in ICT</p> <p>I came up with a good word in class</p>	<p>points</p> <p>I finished first</p> <p>I did really good in mental maths</p>
L	Absent	<p>Learnt how to use a dash in literacy</p> <p>Used more skills in PE</p>	<p>Shared WW2 model and read my poem with it.</p> <p>Concentrated hard in maths</p> <p>Sang without words in assembly</p>	<p>Used very descriptive writing in literacy</p> <p>I did well in maths</p> <p>I got a golden card for completing my work</p>	<p>I got 18 out of 20 in maths</p> <p>Wrote a paragraph in a story I am writing</p> <p>I got twenty house points for maths</p>
BC	<p>I got five house points by being the first to finish in Art</p> <p>I helped the receptionist</p> <p>I got fifteen house points from my co-ordinators in maths</p>	<p>I got five house points in maths.</p> <p>I got a golden card for good behaviour.</p> <p>I helped to move the desks in class.</p>	<p>I got a golden card for holding open a door.</p> <p>I scored a goal in football</p> <p>I showed my project that I had made in class.</p>	<p>I scored a goal in football.</p> <p>I got five house points for my homework.</p> <p>I got 19/20 for my spellings test.</p>	<p>I got twenty house points in my maths tests.</p> <p>I got five house points for answering a question in R.E.</p> <p>I scored a goal in football.</p>
K	<p>I was ready before anyone else.</p> <p>Getting told that my art was good by people.</p> <p>Showing that I was ready to learn.</p>	<p>Was ready before any one else.</p> <p>Ready to learn.</p> <p>Learnt how to use a dash in spelling.</p>	<p>I was told my work was good.</p> <p>I have done good in maths.</p> <p>I was ready first.</p>	<p>I got five house points in my homework.</p> <p>I got ten out of ten in spellings.</p> <p>I worked well in literacy.</p>	<p>I got twenty house points in mental maths.</p> <p>I finished first.</p> <p>I was ready to learn.</p>
WG	Being fast at writing the WALT and not	I did well in my maths facts test.	Listened well.	Exciting adjectives. No talking in	Being good in mental maths.

	<p>messing around.</p> <p>Getting all my maths right</p> <p>Completing my comprehension exercise.</p>	<p>I behaved well in P.E</p>	<p>Did all my maths.</p> <p>Neat handwriting</p>	<p>speed reading.</p> <p>Tidied my desk.</p>	<p>Helping others in the morning.</p>
JP	<p>I helped Ben understand the work.</p> <p>I was ready before anyone else.</p> <p>I helped pack away the art by taking other peoples pencil when the lesson ended.</p>	<p>Held the door for a teacher.</p> <p>Helped a person pack away the straws.</p> <p>Finished the topic work quickly.</p>	<p>Answered lots of questions.</p> <p>Did one and a half pages in maths.</p> <p>I shared my project clearly.</p>	<p>Completed my literacy work on time.</p> <p>I finished my ICT earlier than expected.</p> <p>Put my hand up lots in literacy.</p>	<p>Packed away yellow cards sheets.</p> <p>Did work on time in R.E</p> <p>Took little children back to class.</p>
NC	<p>I got my work done quickly and correctly.</p> <p>I made sure I remembered my square number and ex times tables in a game Fizz/Bang.</p> <p>I got my resources ready for literacy,</p>	<p>I got the WALT and date done quickly.</p> <p>I did well in maths.</p> <p>I listened carefully in P.E.</p>	<p>I read well to Mrs B.</p> <p>I played my Clarinet well.</p> <p>I did well in Maths.</p>	<p>I did a good detective description.</p> <p>I did a lot of work in maths.</p> <p>I worked well in a team in ICT.</p>	<p>I did well in literacy.</p> <p>I worked hard in P.E.</p> <p>I did okay in mental maths (18-20).</p>
OM	<p>Scored a try in Rugby</p> <p>Helped people in maths.</p>	<p>Scored a basket in basketball.</p> <p>Made Football</p>	<p>Did well in Science</p>	<p>Wasn't being silly in maths.</p> <p>Got eight out of ten in my spellings.</p>	<p>Scored in football.</p> <p>Got thirty five house points.</p> <p>Got twenty out of twenty.</p>
MH	<p>I did well in literacy by working hard and not talking.</p>	<p>I worked well in my group making the shapes.</p>	<p>I showed my project with a loud voice and clear voice.</p>	<p>I worked well in maths when I was working with Ben.</p> <p>I got ten house</p>	<p>I did write a good detective opened.</p> <p>I went to choir.</p>

	<p>I worked hard in my maths group by helping people when they're stuck.</p> <p>I helped the teacher get ready for arts by getting out the pencils ready.</p>	<p>I did well in P.E. by showing the class on how to do a bridge.</p> <p>In maths I know the strategy that Miss G taught the class.</p>	<p>I was being a good friend by caring for O.</p> <p>I was writing good facts for my shelter.</p>	<p>points for writing my magazine article.</p> <p>I looked after Reception child at lunch because shew as crying and lonely.</p>	<p>I got worker of the week.</p>
FW	<p>Getting told that my art was good by using good textures.</p> <p>By helping a reception child sort out a problem.</p> <p>I helped the teacher carry something and got a golden card.</p>	<p>Today I helped set up a choir.</p> <p>I helped a group in gym.</p> <p>I helped tidy up choir.</p>	<p>Good doubling and halving at maths.</p> <p>I helped a reception child sort out a problem.</p> <p>I helped Mrs Nicholson out with something.</p>	Absent	<p>I helped with breakfast club.</p> <p>I did good literacy.</p> <p>I helped reception and year one with breakfast.</p>
A S-T	<p>Being ready before anyone</p> <p>Working well as a team</p> <p>Tried my hardest at everything.</p>	<p>Worked well as a team.</p> <p>Took charge and got it all done.</p> <p>Worked quickly.</p>	<p>Worked well as a pair.</p> <p>Had fun and did the work.</p> <p>Focused at science with no distractions.</p>	<p>Turned off the monitors in ICT.</p> <p>Fifteen house points for my homework.</p> <p>Drew a picture.</p>	<p>Sang heart out</p> <p>Was amazing at maths.</p>

Y6	M	T	W	Th	F
A	Being focused at maths	Working as a team	<p>I did good at Science</p> <p>I did well in</p>	Good thinking in literacy	<p>Singing well in choir</p> <p>Did well on maths test</p>

	Did great at art I concentrated hard	Understanding the topic Getting 13 out of 13 on my numbers test	maths Played fair at games	I got ten house points Correct punctuation	Doing well at literacy
A	I worked hard in maths I helped my friend I was ready to learn quickly	I made a stable structure I didn't talk when someone was distracting me I did a good bridge position in P.E	I finished my science on time I was organised I didn't talk at the wrong time	I wrote five pages in literacy I got 20/20 on my spellings I did well in ICT	I was good in choir I completed my literacy on time I helped my friend
BC	Good at maths Worked hard in art I have been helpful	Worked hard at mats Good at PE Phone (?)	Absent	Getting four out of five in spellings Good at maths	Good at choir
KS	Good at drawing Did well in comprehension exercise I played fair in a maths game	I did a good bridge in P.E. I made a good square in maths I remembered the words in choir	I worked well in science I did well in D and T I did some good estimates in Science	I did well in Science again. I did a good plan in literacy I got five house points	Sang well in choir Wrote a good started for literacy Sang well on the bus
CH	Got things sorted quickly in the lesson Held doors for teachers Helped someone hand out the books	Tidied up the log cabin. Held door for a teacher Got organised quickly for lesson	Did lots of question in maths Got ready quickly Sorted out my timetables	Held the door for the teacher Organised Helped a little boy open his yogurt	Organised again Held door for teacher Held door for little ones
ES	Writing my WALT quickly in lesson I remembered	I did well in literacy I helped out	I worked hard in literacy	I wrote a page in maths and literacy I got ten house points for maths	I got eighteen on my mental maths I did extremely well in literacy

	to pack away quickly and quietly  I got all of my worksheets done in maths, art and literacy.	the teacher in P.E  I loved my maths lesson.	I enjoyed playing basketball  I liked my maths lesson	I loved my ICT lesson	I got thirty house points for maths.
M	I gave good answers in comprehension  I got the teacher a chair  I was on time for school	I made a medal  I was good in PE  I checked my maths work	I was good at maths  I talked at the right time  I was good in science	I was sensible in ICT  I was good at dingbats club  I had good ideas in literacy	Absent
M	Art  Maths  Mental maths	P.E  Topic  Science	Maths  Science  D and T	ICT  Punctuation  Literacy	RE  Maths  Literacy
LF	I did well on my maths  I answered question well in writing  I did well in art	I did well in maths  The teacher were proud of my literacy work.  I did well in PE	I did well in telling the time  I did well in science  I did well in everything today	I did well in ICT  I did well with my teacher  I did great in maths	I did well in choir I did well in maths  I did well in literacy
TH	Being ready super fast  I didn't cheat at the maths test  Did well in mental maths	Completed my maths  Did well in literacy  Did good work overall	Explained what 80% meant in Science  Finished maths  Sang my heart out in assembly	Excellent in maths  Finished literacy task  Did well in a group task	Sang well in rehearsal  Wrote the start of my novel  Finished my work
LK	I read a whole book and concentrated  Scored twenty hoops in basketball	I worked hard in maths  finished my work on a topic	I got ten house points  I finished two pages in maths	I got ten house points for being ready first  I finished first in ICT  I came up with a	I got five house points  I finished first  I did really good in mental maths

	I got eleven out of twelve on a spelling test	I got 5 house points	I did a good project	good word in class	
L	Absent	Learnt how to use a dash in literacy  Used more skills in PE	Shared WW2 model and read my poem with it.  Concentrated hard in mats  Sang without words in assembly	Used very descriptive writing in literacy  I did well in maths  I got a golden card for completing my work	I got 18 out of 20 in maths  Wrote a paragraph in a story I am writing  I got twenty house points for maths
BC	I got five house points by being the first to finish in Art  I helped the receptionist  I got fifteen house points from my co-ordinators in maths	I got five house points in maths.  I got a golden card for good behaviour.  I helped to move the desks in class.	I got a golden card for holding open a door.  I scored a goal in football  I showed my project that I had made in class.	I scored a goal in football.  I got five house points for my homework.  I got 19/20 for my spellings test.	I got twenty house points in my maths tests.  I got five house points for answering a question in R.E.  I scored a goal in football.
K	I was ready before anyone else.  Getting told that my art was good by people.  Showing that I was ready to learn.	Was ready before any one else.  Ready to learn.  Learnt how to use a dash in spelling.	I was told my work was good.  I have done good in maths.  I was ready first.	I got five house points in my homework.  I got ten out of ten in spellings.  I worked well in literacy.	I got twenty house points in mental maths.  I finished first.  I was ready to learn.
WG	Being fast at writing the WALT and not messing around.  Getting all my maths right  Completing my comprehension exercise.	I did well in my maths facts test.  I behaved well in P.E	Listened well.  Did all my maths.  Neat handwriting	Exciting adjectives.  No talking in speed reading.  Tidied my desk.	Being good in mental maths.  Helping others in the morning.
JP	I helped Ben	Held the door	Answered	Completed my	Packed away yellow

	<p>understand the work.</p> <p>I was ready before anyone else.</p> <p>I helped pack away the art by taking other peoples pencil when the lesson ended.</p>	<p>for a teacher.</p> <p>Helped a person pack away the straws.</p> <p>Finished the topic work quickly.</p>	<p>lots of questions.</p> <p>Did one and a half pages in maths.</p> <p>I shared my project clearly.</p>	<p>literacy work on time.</p> <p>I finished my ICT earlier than expected.</p> <p>Put my hand up lots in literacy.</p>	<p>cards sheets.</p> <p>Did work on time in R.E</p> <p>Took little children back to class.</p>
NC	<p>I got my work done quickly and correctly.</p> <p>I made sure I remembered my square number and ex times tables in a game Fizz/Bang.</p> <p>I got my resources ready for literacy,</p>	<p>I got the WALT and date done quickly.</p> <p>I did well in maths.</p> <p>I listened carefully in P.E.</p>	<p>I read well to Mrs B.</p> <p>I played my Clarinet well.</p> <p>I did well in Maths.</p>	<p>I did a good detective description.</p> <p>I did a lot of work in maths.</p> <p>I worked well in a team in ICT.</p>	<p>I did well in literacy.</p> <p>I worked hard in P.E.</p> <p>I did okay in mental maths (18-20).</p>
OM	<p>Scored a try in Rugby</p> <p>Helped people in maths.</p>	<p>Scored a basket in basketball.</p> <p>Made Football</p>	<p>Did well in Science</p>	<p>Wasn't being silly in maths.</p> <p>Got eight out of ten in my spellings.</p>	<p>Scored in football.</p> <p>Got thirty five house points.</p> <p>Got twenty out of twenty.</p>
MH	<p>I did well in literacy by working hard and not talking.</p> <p>I worked hard in my maths group by helping people when they're stuck.</p> <p>I helped the teacher get ready for arts by getting out the pencils ready.</p>	<p>I worked well in my group making the shapes.</p> <p>I did well in P.E. by showing the class on how to do a bridge.</p> <p>In maths I know the strategy that Miss G taught the class.</p>	<p>I showed my project with a loud voice and clear voice.</p> <p>I was being a good friend by caring for O.</p> <p>I was writing good facts for my shelter.</p>	<p>I worked well in maths when I was working with Ben.</p> <p>I got ten house points for writing my magazine article.</p> <p>I looked after Reception child at lunch because shew as crying and lonely.</p>	<p>I did write a good detective opened.</p> <p>I went to choir.</p> <p>I got worker of the week.</p>
FW	<p>Getting told that</p>	<p>Today I helped</p>	<p>Good</p>	<p>Absent</p>	<p>I helped with</p>

	<p>my art was good by using good textures.</p> <p>By helping a reception child sort out a problem.</p> <p>I helped the teacher carry something and got a golden card.</p>	<p>set up a choir.</p> <p>I helped a group in gym.</p> <p>I helped tidy up choir.</p>	<p>doubling and halving at maths.</p> <p>I helped a reception child sort out a problem.</p> <p>I helped Mrs Nicholson out with something.</p>		<p>breakfast club.</p> <p>I did good literacy.</p> <p>I helped reception and year one with breakfast.</p>
A S-T	<p>Being ready before anyone</p> <p>Working well as a team</p> <p>Tried my hardest at everything.</p>	<p>Worked well as a team.</p> <p>Took charge and got it all done.</p> <p>Worked quickly.</p>	<p>Worked well as a pair.</p> <p>Had fun and did the work.</p> <p>Focused at science with no distractions.</p>	<p>Turned off the monitors in ICT.</p> <p>Fifteen house points for my homework.</p> <p>Drew a picture.</p>	<p>Sang heart out</p> <p>Was amazing at maths.</p>

### Appendix 6: Thematic Analysis Results of the Booklets

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
A	Being focused at maths  Did great at art	Getting 13 out of 13 on my numbers test	I did good at Science  I did well in maths	Good thinking in literacy	Singing well in choir  Did well on maths test  Doing well at literacy
A	I worked hard in maths			I wrote five pages in literacy  I got 20/20 on my spellings  I did well in ICT	I was good in choir
BC	Good at maths  Worked hard in art	Worked hard at mats	Absent	Getting four out of five in spellings  Good at maths	Good at choir
KS	Good at drawing	I made a good square in maths	I worked well in science  I did well in D and T  I did some good estimates in Science	I did well in Science again.  I did a good plan in literacy	Sang well in choir  Wrote a good started for literacy
CH			Did lots of question in maths		

ES	I got all of my worksheets done in maths, art and literacy.	I did well in literacy  I loved my maths lesson.	I worked hard in literacy  I enjoyed playing basketball  I liked my maths lesson	I wrote a page in maths and literacy  I loved my ICT lesson	I got eighteen on my mental maths  I did extremely well in literacy
M		I was good in PE	I was good at maths  I was good in science	I had good ideas in literacy	Absent
M	Art  Maths  Mental maths	P.E  Topic  Science	Maths  Science  D and T	ICT  Punctuation  Literacy	RE  Maths  Literacy
LF	I did well on my maths  I answered question well in writing  I did well in art	I did well in maths  I did well in PE	I did well in science	I did well in ICT  I did great in maths	I did well in choir  I did well in maths  I did well in literacy
TH	Did well in mental maths	Completed my maths  Did well in literacy	Finished maths	Excellent in maths  Finished literacy task	

		Did good work overall			
LK	I got eleven out of twelve on a spelling test	I worked hard in maths			I did really good in mental maths
L	Absent	Learnt how to use a dash in literacy  Used more skills in PE	Concentrated hard in maths	I did well in maths	I got 18 out of 20 in maths  Wrote a paragraph in a story I am writing
BC				I got 19/20 for my spellings test.	
K				I got ten out of ten in spellings.  I worked well in literacy.	
WG		I did well in my maths facts test.			
JP			Did one and a half pages in maths.		

NC		I did well in maths.	I did well in Maths.	I did a lot of work in maths.	I did well in literacy.  I worked hard in P.E.  I did okay in mental maths (18-20).
OM	Helped people in maths.				
MH	I did well in literacy by working hard and not talking.  I worked hard in my maths group by helping people when they're stuck.	I worked well in my group making the shapes.  I did well in P.E. by showing the class on how to do a bridge.  In maths I know the strategy that Miss G taught the class.	I showed my project with a loud voice and clear voice.  I was being a good friend by caring for O.  I was writing good facts for my shelter.	I worked well in maths when I was working with Ben.	
FW	Getting told that my art was good by using good textures.		Good doubling and halving at maths.	Absent	I did good literacy.
A S-T					Was amazing at maths.

Red = subject improvements

Some children appear to be very subject driven. Subjects like literacy and numeracy feature heavily in what children recorded as being helpful to themselves. Maths featured forty times in the three good things diaries out of a possible 105 entries (five days x twenty one children). Within maths doing well or amazing were core areas and a sense of doing well in terms of performance occurs frequently.

Blue = helping others

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
A		Working as a team			
A	I helped my friend				I helped my friend
BC	I have been helpful				
CH	Held doors for teachers  Helped someone hand out the books	Tidied up the log cabin.  Held door for a teacher		Held the door for the teacher  Helped a little boy open his yogurt	Held door for teacher  Held door for little ones
ES		I helped out the teacher in P.E			
M					Absent

	I got the teacher a chair				
BC	I helped the receptionist	I helped to move the desks in class.			
WG					Helping others in the morning.
JP	I helped Ben understand the work.  I helped pack away the art by taking other peoples pencil when the lesson ended.	Held the door for a teacher.  Helped a person pack away the straws.			Took little children back to class.
OM	Helped people in maths.				Got twenty out of twenty.
MH	I helped the teacher get ready for arts by getting out the pencils ready.			I looked after Reception child at lunch because shew as crying and lonely.	
FW	By helping a reception child sort out a problem.  I helped the teacher carry something and	Today I helped set up a choir.  I helped a group in gym.  I helped tidy up	I helped a reception child sort out a problem.  I helped Mrs Nicholson out with	Absent	I helped reception and year one with breakfast.

	got a golden card.	choir.	something.		
A S-T			Worked well as a pair.		

Fourteen children recorded that they had been helpful to other people. This coincides with the teacher perspective that there was an increase in pro-social behaviours. It appears that there are core children who recognise that they do helpful things for other people once a week or more. At this stage we don't know if there is an actual increase in positive behaviour or whether the pupils recognise their positive actions more. This would be an important feature in a future study. It also raises the question of class dynamics that there are core children who are the 'helpers' in the class and consistently support others.

The children discussed helping one another tidy things away or help each other in different lessons through to helping carry objects or do positive tasks for the class teachers.

Orange = Being ready/finishing quickly

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
A	I was ready to learn quickly		I finished my science on time		I completed my literacy on time
CH	Got things sorted quickly in the lesson		Got ready quickly		
ES	Writing my WALT quickly in lesson  I remembered to pack away quickly and quietly				

M	I was on time for school				Absent
TH	Being ready super fast				Finished my work
K	I was ready before anyone else.	Ready to learn.	I was ready first.		.
WG	Being fast at writing the WALT and not messing around.				
JP	I was ready before anyone else.	Finished the topic work quickly.			
NC	I got my work done quickly and correctly.				
A S-T	Being ready before anyone	Worked quickly.			

Eighteen children recorded that they felt that working quickly was helpful to themselves. They discuss beating everyone and represents children who feel that speed = competence. Is it possible that their self esteem is based on being quick ?

Green = Being given praise/reward

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
A				I got ten house points	
KS				I got five house points	
ES				I got ten house points for maths	I got thirty house points for maths.
LF		The teacher were proud of my literacy work.			
LK		I got 5 house points	I got ten house points	I got ten house points for being ready first	I got five house points
L					I got twenty house

					points for maths
BC	I got five house points by being the first to finish in Art  I got fifteen house points from my co-ordinators in maths	I got five house points in maths.		I got five house points for my homework.	I got twenty house points in my maths tests.  I got five house points for answering a question in R.E.
K			I was told my work was good.	I got five house points in my homework.	I got twenty house points in mental maths.
MH				I got ten house points for writing my magazine article.	
A S-T				Fifteen house points for my homework.	

Twenty one references to being praised or receiving a reward by ten pupils. The rewards are based on good work/homework, and one with reference to good behaviour.

Purple = using or developing a skill (a core skill that may be found in a subject)

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
A	I concentrated hard			Correct punctuation	
A		I made a stable structure  I didn't talk when someone was distracting me  I did a good bridge position in P.E	I didn't talk at the wrong time		
BC			Absent		
KS		I did a good bridge in P.E.  I remembered the words in choir			

Some of the codes were about children developing skills i.e. concentration, being patient etc. This only occurred eight time but from three children. There few children who discussed developing skills but focused instead on performance in subjects.

Yellow =Social

Leadership roles ?

Responses were positive self reflection on a subject. Succeeding on a subject.

## Summary of Findings

### Theme One - Subject Improvements

One theme identified was that of pupil's feeling that they were doing well or improving in subjects. An example of the codes identified are as follows:

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
CB	I concentrated really hard in maths today.	I worked hard in Maths.		I learned to crosshatch in Art.	I got all my spellings right first time.
A	I worked hard in Maths.	I did a good bridge position in P.E.		I wrote 5 pages in Literacy.  I got 20/20 on my spellings.  I did well in ICT.	
B	Maths counting back.  I worked hard drawing pictures in Art.	Math counting ... 10 more and 10 less. I try hard.		I got 4-5 in my spellings.  Maths counting in 10 less and 10 more and less.	
KS	I've drawn a good drawing it helps my art skills.	I did a good bridge in P.E.	I guessed well in science.	I planned a very good plan in literacy.	Wrote a good starter for the literacy
CH			Did lots of questions in		.

			Maths.		
ES	I got all of my work sheets done in Maths, in Art and in Literacy.	I did well in literacy with dashes.	I worked hard in literacy.	I wrote a page in Maths + Literacy.	I did extremely well in Literacy.
M		I was good in P.E.	I was good at Maths.  I was good in science.	I had good ideas in Literacy.	Absent
M	Art.  Maths.  Comprehension.	P.E.  Topic.	Maths.  Science.  D.T.	ICT.  Punctuation.  Literacy.	P.E.  Maths.  Literacy.
L	I did well in Maths today.    I did well in Art today.	I did well in Maths.	I did well in science.	I did well in ICT.    I did great in Maths.	Did well in Maths    Did well in literacy.
TH	I didn't cheat in the Maths test so the teachers didn't give me a too hard lesson.	Completed my Maths	Finished Maths second page.	Excelled in Maths by practising SATS.    Finished Literacy task with time to spare.	
L	Reading a whole book.  Scored 20 hoops in Basketball  I got 11 out of	I tried hard in Maths.	I finished 2 pages in Maths.  I did a good project.		I did really well in Mental Maths.

	12 on a spelling test.				
L		Learnt properly how to use a dash.  Used more skills in P.E.	Shared WW2 model and read my poem with it.  Concentrated harder in Maths.	Used very descripted writing for writing a detective.  I wrote my Maths in chronological order.	Got 18 out of 20 in Maths test.  Wrote a paragraph of detective story in literacy.
BC	I helped the receptions round the tyres.			I scored a goal in Football.  I got 19/20 in my spelling test.	I got 20hp in Maths test.
K	Getting told that my art was good by people.		Got told my work was good.  I have done well in Maths.	I got 10/10 in my spellings.  I worked well in literacy.	
W	Getting all my Maths right.	I did well in my Maths.			Being good in Mental Maths.
J			Did 1 ½ pages of work in Maths.		
NC	I made sure I remembered my square number	I got the W.A.L.T and date	I did well in Maths.	I did a lot of work in Maths.	I did well in Literacy

	and 7X tables in a game of fizz/bang	done quickly.  I did well in Maths.		I worked well in ICT.	
OM	Scored a try in Rugby.	Scored a basket in Basketball	Did well in science.	Got 8/10 in my spellings	
M	I did well in Literacy by working hard and not talking.  I worked hard in my Maths group by helping people when they're stuck	I did well in P.E showing the class how to do a bridge.		I worked well in Maths when I was working with Ben	
FW	Getting told that my art was good by using good textures.		Good doubling and halving.		I did good literacy

The theme that emerged from the analysis is how some children appear to be very subject driven. Subjects like literacy and numeracy feature heavily in what children recorded as being helpful to themselves.

For the year six group Maths featured 40 times in the three good things diaries out of a possible 105 entries (five days x twenty one children). Within maths the codes featured around doing well or doing amazing etc and a core sense and of doing well in terms of performance which occurred frequently. For the year six

group there was thirty two codes for maths and literacy was mentioned twenty times out of possible 105 entries (five days x twenty one children).

Overall maths featured thirty two times for years five and six thirty three times for year six. Sixty fives entries were made out of a possible 210 entries This theme emerged from the data for 31 percent out of possible entries (65 x 210 = 30.95 (31% rounded).

Theme Two - Helping Others

The next theme identified was that of helping other children or adults. An example of the codes identified are as follows:

Table Nine – Helping Codes Identified

Y6	M	T	W	Th	F
A		Working as a team			
A	I helped my friend				I helped my friend
BC	I have been helpful				
CH	Held doors for teachers  Helped someone hand out the books	Tidied up the log cabin.  Held door for a teacher		Held the door for the teacher  Helped a little boy open his yogurt	Held door for teacher  Held door for little ones
ES		I helped out the teacher			

		in P.E			
M	I got the teacher a chair				Absent
BC	I helped the receptionist	I helped to move the desks in class.			
WG					Helping others in the morning.
JP	I helped Ben understand the work.  I helped pack away the art by taking other peoples pencil when the lesson ended.	Held the door for a teacher.  Helped a person pack away the straws.			Took little children back to class.
OM	Helped people in maths.				Got twenty out of twenty.
MH	I helped the teacher get ready for arts by getting out the pencils ready.			I looked after Reception child at lunch because shew as crying and lonely.	
FW	By helping a reception	Today I helped set	I helped a reception	Absent	I helped reception and

	child sort out a problem.  I helped the teacher carry something and got a golden card.	up a choir.  I helped a group in gym.  I helped tidy up choir.	child sort out a problem.  I helped Mrs Nicholson out with something.		year one with breakfast.
A S-T			Worked well as a pair.		

Twenty four children (Fourteen for year six and ten for year five) recorded that they had been helpful to other people. This coincides with the teacher's perspective that there was an increase in pro-social behaviours.

It appears that there are core children who recognise that they do helpful things for other people once a week or more. At this stage we don't know if there is an actual increase in positive behaviour or whether the pupils recognise their positive actions more. This would be an important feature in a future study. It also raises the question of class dynamics that there are core children who are the 'helpers' in the class and consistently support others. The children discussed helping one another tidy things away or help each other in different lessons through to helping carry objects or do positive tasks for the class teachers.

Thirty four codes for year six and thirty two codes for year five so sixty six codes out of a possible two hundred and ten. So the being helpful codes features thirty one percent of the codes available (66 divided by 31 = 31.4).

### Theme Three - Being ready or Finishing Quickly

A theme that emerged which was unexpected was how pupils reported being quick and how this was a helpful behaviour. An example of the comments made in the booklet are as follows:

Y6	M	T	W	Th	F
----	---	---	---	----	---

A	I was ready to learn quickly		I finished my science on time		I completed my literacy on time
CH	Got things sorted quickly in the lesson		Got ready quickly		
ES	Writing my WALT quickly in lesson  I remembered to pack away quickly and quietly				
M	I was on time for school				
TH	Being ready super fast				Finished my work
K	I was ready before anyone else.	Ready to learn.	I was ready first.		
WG	Being fast at writing the WALT and not messing around.				

JP	I was ready before anyone else.	Finished the topic work quickly.			
NC	I got my work done quickly and correctly.				
A S-T	Being ready before anyone	Worked quickly.			

Twenty nice children (eighteen for year six and eleven for year five) recorded that they felt that working quickly was helpful to themselves. They wrote on how beating their peers with speed is important and how it appears to represent children who feel that speed means competence or is a strength. Is it possible that part of their sense of self, their self esteem is based on being quick ? This code occurred forty six times out of a possible 205 entries. As a percentage being quick featured 22% of possible entries.

## Theme Four - Being Given Praise or Being Rewarded

One theme that came from the analysis was pupil's reporting getting reward or praised and how they felt this was helpful. An example of these responses were as follows:

Y6	M	T	W	Th	F
A				I got ten house points	
KS				I got five house points	
ES				I got ten house points for maths	I got thirty house points for maths.
LF		The teacher were proud of my literacy work.			
LK		I got 5 house points	I got ten house points	I got ten house points for being ready first	I got five house points
L					I got twenty house points for maths
BC	I got five house	I got five house points		I got five house points	I got twenty house points in

	points by being the first to finish in Art  I got fifteen house points from my co-ordinators in maths	in maths.		for my homework.	my maths tests.  I got five house points for answering a question in R.E.
K			I was told my work was good.	I got five house points in my homework.	I got twenty house points in mental maths.
MH				I got ten house points for writing my magazine article.	
A S-T				Fifteen house points for my homework.	

Fifty two codes (twenty one for year six and thirty one for year five) to children being praised or receiving a reward by ten pupils. The rewards are based on good or good homework, and one with reference to good behaviour. The overall codes featured fifty two out of possible two hundred and ten codes so this theme emerged one quarter of the overall entries available. As a percentage the codes featured 24% of the codes available.

Theme Five - Using or Developing a core skill (which may be found in a subject)

An emerging theme was a comparatively smaller which looked at how some pupil's looked at how they improved in concentration, developing their punctuation or physical skills. Below is an example of the codes found:

Y5	M	T	W	Th	F
A	I concentrated hard			Correct punctuation	
A		I made a stable structure  I didn't talk when someone was distracting me  I did a good bridge position in P.E	I didn't talk at the wrong time		
BC					
KS		I did a good bridge in P.E.  I remembered the words in choir			

Some of the codes were about children developing skills i.e. concentration, being patient etc. This only occurred eight time but from three children. There few children who discussed developing skills but focused instead on performance in subjects. There was eight codes for the year six group and nine for the year five. Overall there was thirteen codes from a possible two hundred and ten, which, as a percentage is 8% (17 divided by 210 and multiplied by

100= 8%). This minor occurring theme was reported as it may reflect how children may not see how improving skills is helpful other than their subject areas. Do schools help children to see how they can improve as people as well as improve skills areas. Is there further work required on increasing pupil awareness of individual strengths.

## Appendix 7: Transcripts from the Focus Groups/Interview Questions

### **Focus Groups for Pupils**

1 How did you feel or think about doing the three good things booklet?

Child 1: It helps you to think about what you have done.

DL: remember what you have done?

Child 1: You can forget all the time what you have done so you don't forget it all.

DL: Right. So it helps you to remember what you have done is that right?

Child 1: Yes.

DL: thank you is there anything else?

Child 2: It was fun!

DL: It was fun?

Child 2: Yes!

DL: Did anyone else find it fun.

All children say: Yes!

DL: In what way?

Child: 3: It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.

DL: Oh I see. Can you say more?

Child 4: If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.

DL: Right! So you can right it down and get it recorded. There is a bit later about what we can do to make things better so ideas like that would be really good.

Child 4: Okay!

DL: Okay then, anything else on your thoughts and feelings?

No sound but all the children nod their heads smiling.

DL: Well that's great thank you.

2 Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful?

-examples

-illustrations

How was it useful?

Child 5: I think it helped me to write down interesting words!.

DL: That's interesting can you tell me more about that? (4 minutes 15 seconds).So in the book you would like interesting words?

Child 5: Yeah!

DL: So like sayings? Things like that.

Child 6: Yeah something enthusiastic!

DL: Enthusiastic? So like sayings?

Child 3: Yeah something about emotions!

Child 6: Yeah:

DL: That's interesting. Anything else?

Child 1: It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy!

DL: Ahh

Child 1: Some lessons you don't like but it was still a good lesson (laughs).

DL: (Laughs) so it was good to remember a good lessons even if it was hard?

Child 1: (Laughs) yes!

Child 2: We could, we could put all the lessons down and then we think about a lesson we did well and write it down.

( Child 4 puts p there hand) DL: its okay were not in a lesson so you don't need to put your hand up.

Child 4: You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said.

Child 3: Sometimes it is a difficult lesson.

DL: So sometimes...

Child3: you can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).

DL (laughs) so you don't give up?

Child 3: Yes! (laughs).

Is there anything in the booklet that you liked or didn't like?

-examples

DL: That's really helpful that's thanks. So is there something you really liked about the booklet? (6:55).

Child 2: It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself?

DL: Would you like some more?

All children say: Yes!

Child 1: That would be great.

DL: Would you like to draw every day?

Child 1: Yes!

Child 5 No!

Child 2 Some days.

Child 3 yeah. (7:47)

Child 2: I would like to draw a pictures.

Child 4: On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture!

DL: Draw or take a picture?

Child 4: Yeah so I could on Monday take a picture and on Tuesday take a picture of me (laughs).

DL: So take or draw a picture?

All children: Yes (all looking excited at this point).

Child 1: I would like Monday to do a picture or Thursday do something else. I would also like to do Monday on Friday.

DL: oh

Child 2: and do Tuesday on Monday.

DL: Ahh so do it the day before?

Child 2: Yeah.

DL: Absolutely. So in the next booklet you would like the option of doing a drawing or taking some pictures. What would you like to draw about? Something you did on the day?

Child 4: I would like to draw about something like a movie or some work on other days.

DL: That's great thanks.

The amount of weeks you use the booklet?

Doing the lessons every day etc?

DL: ahh. So what would you like to add to the booklet? Add something else. What would it look like if you did something different? (9:45)

Child 4: For the booklet to be bigger.

DL: The booklet to be bigger? Would it need to be made out of card?

Child 4: (laughs) if it was bigger you could add things to it.

DL: Hmm that makes sense.

Child 4: You could add things like your picture on the front. (10:37).

DL: Hmm

Child 4: You could have a picture in your head and like put it in.

DL: Hmm that makes sense a bit more of that.

Child 6: The booklet could be all about you (cough cough).

DL: Hmm.

Child 6: You could make it a bit bigger so if you have glasses it would go in.

DL: Hmm thank you.

DL: So is there anything that you enjoyed or liked about the booklet?

(11:35).

Child 2: Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier.

Child 3: I liked doing it last thing in the day.

DL: You liked doing it in the afternoon?

Child 3: We could do it and then it would be nearly home time.

DL: Right

Child3: So it was better.

DL: So did you all like to do this at the end of the day to see how the day had gone or....  
(children start to smile and nod their head).

DL: Do you like that idea at the end.

Child 4: You can do it at the end and it was a lot better.

DL: Do it at the end right.

4. So was there anything that helped you to see other people different or yourself differently or see yourself.

DL: Its okay if not as I'm just wondering. (Children are thinking).

Child 2: I felt happier doing it (laughs).

Child 3: I wish we could do it more often (laughs).

Child 2: I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year! I think its good as it also helps your hand writing

Child 4: It was good to look back at what we had done.

DL: To see what you had done?

Child 4: Yeah. So we could like do it more often.

DL: Thanks was there anything else?

Children say no.

4. Is there anyway you think the booklet could be done differently?

(14:40).

So far we have had drawings and having photos and doing the booklet a bit longer and looking at it in the future like at the end of the school day erm anything else at all. It is really your choice, and what you would like.

Child 1: I think it would be cool if we could do it again.

DL: Do it again in the future?

Child 1: Yeah.

Child 5: If we did it on Monday we could write what you did in the lesson and then after break time write what you did then and then all through the day.

DL: okay

Child 5: and write it down and try to think what you did.

DL: okay so write down things like you liked, that makes sense. Is one week enough or a bit longer.

All children: longer!

5 What do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important?

-how?

6. Anything else you would like to tell me?

## Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Now that the intervention has come to an end, what are your thoughts and feelings about using the three good things booklet?

Teacher 1: We found it good. The children could think of things quite easily. We needed the day to be longer because they would be writing things down and saying oh I've got music and I will be good in that so they felt that they had missed a lot of achievements and some are better out of school than in. So that was their moment lost so it might have been better to do it in the morning because they have good memories when they have done something good don't they.

DL: hmmm some children do. Out of school activities. That's helpful thank you. Any other views?

Teacher 2: Yeah in our classroom they initially struggled to figure out a good thing in terms of their work or what ever so I gave an example that it could be something outside the classroom. So some clarity on that.

DL: So did you find the children could write about the good things?

Teacher 2: Some could and some couldn't. Erm the children that did struggle, with the table that they are sitting on the other child would give them some feedback on what they seen and what they did was good which would lift their spirits.

DL: oh so the other children...

Teacher 2: Gave the feedback thing is good to do they enjoyed giving each other feedback on what they were doing.

Teacher 1: Yeah that was certainly true.

DL: interesting

(three minutes in)

Teacher 1: Year 5 could find things to say but you know when you ask them how it made them feel or try to give you some more information about things they find it really hard.

DL:hmmm

Teacher 1: They can find this hard in general, yeah in RE weve talked about this. They say if something is good.

DL: So some reflection time.

Teacher 1: Yeah.

DL: and what it means for them.

Teacher 1: Yeah and also I think that if they had more time it would be interesting to see if they could reflect more into it. "I helped someone up when they fell over" and that was a good thing but that's very basic so you need to try and get more out of them. "I felt good because I was his friend and I was there from him" I would want more from them but they struggle.

DL: So it would be having a foundation stone and then from this draw more from them. That's helpful.

2. What are your reflections on what the booklet has achieved or influenced if any?

Teacher 2: I don't know, when they were writing about, on the next day they were looking at their strengths and what they were good at.

DL:hmmm

Teacher 1: when we were looking at what they did over the week they became more aware of their strengths and they became quicker as the week went on.

Teacher 2: yeah

Teacher 1: They became more aware of their behaviour and their attitude on what they were doing at school.

DL: well that's interesting so they wrote down more quickly. So you noticed that they became more quick at it:

Teacher 1: Yeah they were quicker they had an idea of what they were going to put in. I don't know if its because it was more repetitive or the fact they became more aware of it.

Teacher 2: yeah

DL: so the children lifted each others spirits and they became quicker as the week went on. Anything else you noticed or is that it.

Teacher 1: No that's it

Teacher 2: yeah

Teacher 1: Yeah children are not normally happy to write about their feelings.

Teacher 2: yeah.

Teacher 1: I noticed that they didn't mind writing it down.

3. What have you noticed any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude within the classroom since the start of the programme?

7 minutes 9 seconds

Teacher 2: Hard to say. Could you see anything? (to Teacher 1)

Teacher 1: with the booklet. I don't think I saw changes in behaviour.

Teacher 1: I said that they could write about things at home but here that's what you get. But they looked to become more aware but I wouldn't want to say but as we have an expectation. Do you know what I mean.

Teacher 2: yeah.

Teacher 1: Because we are really good at saying that's wonderful. But we are hearing a lot about how they are helping mum in the morning or sister.

4. Any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude outside the classroom?

Teacher 1: we see them holding open the doors and less bullying so there behaviour has been good.

5. What aspects of the intervention appear to have been the most successful?

Teacher 2: Its been a good reminder for us to share times with the children and not just the children. Its like years ago a push towards Circle Time about 10-15 years ago. So its like going back to principles so its like that really.

DL:I hadn't really thought about it.

Teacher 2: Yeah its really nice as it seems to have been squeezed out of the curriculum.

DL: that's a good point.

Teacher 2: so doing the good things was interesting and sometimes they would smile at you and think I wonder what I did do today at school. So that's good and for some of them its

some attention. I thought it was interesting what they did at home or claimed to do!

(everyone laughs)

Teacher 2: its like you said some of the children would say 'you've been good in choir' and they have been spotting each others abilities.

Teacher 1: yeah

DL: yes that's quite nice. They have to think about the compliment

Teacher 1 and 2: yes.

6. Has any part of the intervention been less successful?

Teacher 2: Finding the time could be difficult. You may spend to long and get carried away like on a Friday afternoon choir so then when they come in they have to do it fast. The time could be quite rigid and at Xmas its quite a busy time.

DL: yes so at the end of the academic year would be busy and easter too. Would there be a way you would prefer to us it.

Teacher 2: it is something for them to keep with them somehow I don't know. Somewhere they can write it down at a good time when the lesson is short.

DL: yes that's fine for this piece of research we kept it at the same time to keep it consistent and have the same variables each day but the time that could become more flexible. Brilliant.

7. What would be your professional recommendations for future developments of the

three good things booklet?

Teacher 1: Can I see the booklet again. It reminds me how some of the children like the variety. Some of the children.

DL: Its interesting what you mentioned about Circle Time. Could you imagine it in a Circle Time format?

Teacher 2: this is similar to what we do in PSHE so we do touch upon this quite often. Having this kind of discussion and sharing so it is good for that. They can give you a statement and you have to delve into it why it is important you. I would find that interesting but erm we do this kind of thing but you can loss its more practical.

DL: more practical.

Teacher 2: yes in the SEAL its more scenarios isn't it and different goals.

Teacher 1:we try to get them to reflect but I don't know you do it and its another curriculum lesson so it feels different to other lessons. Circle time does feel different.

DL: So following that thought if we had a smaller number to run a little group so some target children a smaller number. We could run that alongside the PSSE lesson to target particular children. Would that be more realistic?

Teacher 2: we do that as well. We do small groups and after school groups. Its always the same children though. It's the ones who are failing or are struggling and sometime those who are successful those are the ones that you miss. And I would want them in a focus group.

DL: hmmm. So perhaps some children who are emotionally literate and are doing quite well, so good role models naturally in class.

Teacher 1: or the shy children because when you are doing the register and you are ticking off you have to look up.

Teacher 2: yes.

Teacher 1: you have to see who is not speaking and there can be two or three.

DL: that's a good point. Right anything else?

Teacher 2: I think that's everything.

Teacher 1: yes.

DL: well that was really good you have come up with ideas that are really interesting and I hadn't thought about. So thank you very much.

Teacher 1 Your welcome.

Teacher 2: Thanks

## **Interview Questions for Parents**

1. What is your understanding of the three good things booklet?

Parent 1: It started Monday to Friday and she filled it in.

Parent 2: Its that booklet she's been doing.

2. What are your thoughts and feelings about the three good things booklet?

Parent 1: It seems really nice like it being positive.

Parent 2: Seeing it again I think it's a good idea.

3. Since implementing the intervention have you noticed any changes to you child's behaviour at home or going to school?

Parent 1: No I haven't noticed anything.

Parent 2: No she has been the same.

4. Has anything gone particularly well?

Parent 1: She has been her usual self during this time.

Parent 2: He has mentioned that he liked the booklet.

5. Is there anything else you think I should know?

No she has been really normal. Her father passed away two weeks ago and we have all been devastated. She has been surprisingly tough about this. He had been ill for a while.

DL: Im sorry to hear that.

Parent 1: Its okay. I wasn't sure when A needed to go back to school so this was her first week. She has been really positive about things. Behavior wise there have never been any problems. She did say how much she enjoyed the booklet though.

DL: She enjoyed the booklet.

Parent 1: Yeah she has been mentioning it. Can we stop there as this is quite upsetting.

DL: Yes of course I understand this isn't an easy time. Thank you for coming.

Parent 1: Thanks.

**Appendix 8:**

**Phase 1 – The Original Transcription Data**

Interview Questions for Pupils

1 How did you feel or think about doing the three good things booklet ?

Child 1: It helps you to think about what you have done.

DL: remember what you have done ?

Child 1: You can forget all the time what you have done so you don't forget it all.

DL: Right. So it helps you to remember what you have done is that right ?

Child 1: Yes.

DL: thank you is there anything else ?

Child 2: It was fun !

DL: It was fun ?

Child 2: Yes !

DL: Did anyone else find it fun.

All children say: Yes !

DL: In what way ?

Child: 3: It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.

DL: Oh I see. Can you say more ?

Child 4: If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.

DL: Right ! So you can right it down and get it recorded. There is a bit later about what we can do to make things better so ideas like that would be really good.

Child 4: Okay !

DL: Okay then, anything else on your thoughts and feelings ?

No sound but all the children nod their heads smiling.

DL: Well that's great thank you.

2 Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful ?

-examples

-illustrations

How was it useful ?

Child 5: I think it helped me to write down interesting words !.

DL: That's interesting can you tell me more about that ? (4 minutes 15 seconds).So in the book you would like interesting words ?

Child 5: Yeah !

DL: So like sayings ? Things like that.

Child 6: Yeah something enthusiastic !

DL: Enthusiastic ? So like sayings ?

Child 3: Yeah something about emotions !

Child 6: Yeah:

DL: That's interesting. Anything else ?

Child 1: It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy !

DL: Ahh

Child 1: Some lessons you don't like but it was still a good lesson (laughs).

DL: (Laughs) so it was good to remember a good lessons even if it was hard ?

Child 1: (Laughs) yes !

Child 2: We could, we could put all the lessons down and then we think about a lesson we did well and write it down.

( Child 4 puts p there hand) DL: its okay were not in a lesson so you don't need to put your hand up.

Child 4: You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said.

Child 3: Sometimes it is a difficult lesson.

DL: So sometimes...

Child3: you can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).

DL (laughs) so you don't give up ?

Child 3: Yes ! (laughs).

Is there anything in the booklet that you liked or didn't like ?

-examples

DL: That's really helpful that's thanks. So is there something you really liked about the booklet ? (6:55).

Child 2: It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself ?

DL: Would you like some more ?

All children say: Yes !

Child 1: That would be great.

DL: Would you like to draw every day ?

Child 1: Yes !

Child 5 No !

Child 2 Some days.

Child 3 yeah. (7:47)

Child 2: I would like to draw a pictures.

Child 4: On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture !

DL: Draw or take a picture ?

Child 4: Yeah so I could on Monday take a picture and on Tuesday take a picture of me  
(laughs).

DL: So take or draw a picture ?

All children: Yes (all looking excited at this point).

Child 1: I would like Monday to do a picture or Thursday do something else. I would also like  
to do Monday on Friday.

DL: oh

Child 2: and do Tuesday on Monday.

DL: Ahh so do it the day before ?

Child 2: Yeah.

DL: Absolutely. So in the next booklet you would like the option of doing a drawing or taking  
some pictures. What would you like to draw about ? Something you did on the day ?

Child 4: I would like to draw about something like a movie or some work on other days.

DL: That's great thanks.

The amount of weeks you use the booklet ?

Doing the lessons every day etc ?

DL: ahh. So what would you like to add to the booklet ? Add something else. What would it look like if you did something different ? (9:45)

Child 4: For the booklet to be bigger.

DL: The booklet to be bigger ? Would it need to be made out of card ?

Child 4: (laughs) if it was bigger you could add things to it.

DL: Hmm that makes sense.

Child 4: You could add things like your picture on the front. (10:37).

DL: Hmm

Child 4: You could have a picture in your head and like put it in.

DL: Hmm that makes sense a bit more of that.

Child 6: The booklet could be all about you (cough cough).

DL: Hmm.

Child 6: You could make it a bit bigger so if you have glasses it would go in.

DL: Hmm thank you.

DL: So is there anything that you enjoyed or liked about the booklet ?

(11:35).

Child 2: Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier.

Child 3: I liked doing it last thing in the day.

DL: You liked doing it in the afternoon ?

Child 3: We could do it and then it would be nearly home time.

DL: Right

Child3: So it was better.

DL: So did you all like to do this at the end of the day to see how the day had gone or....

(children start to smile and nod their head).

DL: Do you like that idea at the end.

Child 4: You can do it at the end and it was a lot better.

DL: Do it at the end right.

4. So was there anything that helped you to see other people different or yourself differently or see yourself.

DL: Its okay if not as I'm just wondering. (Children are thinking).

Child 2: I felt happier doing it (laughs).

Child 3: I wish we could do it more often (laughs).

Child 2: I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year ! I think its good as it also helps your hand writing

Child 4: It was good to look back at what we had done.

DL: To see what you had done ?

Child 4: Yeah. So we could like do it more often.

DL: Thanks was there anything else ?

Children say no.

4. Is there anyway you think the booklet could be done differently ?

(14:40).

So far we have had drawings and having photos and doing the booklet a bit longer and looking at it in the future like at the end of the school day erm anything else at all. It is really your choice, and what you would like.

Child 1: I think it would be cool if we could do it again.

DL: Do it again in the future ?

Child 1: Yeah.

Child 5: If we did it on Monday we could write what you did in the lesson and then after break time write what you did then and then all through the day.

DL: okay

Child 5: and write it down and try to think what you did.

DL: okay so write down things like you liked, that makes sense. Is one week enough or a bit longer.

All children: longer !

5 What do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important ?

-how ?

6 Anything else you would like to tell me ?

## Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Now that the intervention has come to an end, what are your thoughts and feelings about using the three good things booklet ?

Teacher 1: We found it good. The children could think of things quite easily. We needed the day to be longer because they would be writing things down and saying oh I've got music and I will be good in that so they felt that they had missed a lot of achievements and some are better out of school than in. So that was their moment lost so it might have been better to do it in the morning because they have good memories when they have done something good don't they.

DL: hmmm some children do. Out of school activities. That's helpful thank you. Any other views ?

Teacher 2: Yeah in our classroom they initially struggled to figure out a good thing in terms of their work or what ever so I gave an example that it could be something outside the classroom. So some clarity on that.

DL: So did you find the children could write about the good things ?

Teacher 2: Some could and some couldn't. Erm the children that did struggle, with the table that they are sitting on the other child would give them some feedback on what they seen and what they did was good which would lift their spirits.

DL: oh so the other children...

Teacher 2: Gave the feedback thing is good to do they enjoyed giving each other feedback on what they were doing.

Teacher 1: Yeah that was certainly true.

DL: interesting

(three minutes in)

Teacher 1: Year 5 could find things to say but you know when you ask them how it made them feel or try to give you some more information about things they find it really hard.

DL:hmmmm

Teacher 1: They can find this hard in general, yeah in RE weve talked about this. They say if something is good.

DL: So some reflection time.

Teacher 1: Yeah.

DL: and what it means for them.

Teacher 1: Yeah and also I think that if they had more time it would be interesting to see if they could reflect more into it. "I helped someone up when they fell over" and that was a good thing but that's very basic so you need to try and get more out of them. "I felt good because I was his friend and I was there for him" I would want more from them but they struggle.

DL: So it would be having a foundation stone and then from this draw more from them.

That's helpful.

2. What are your reflections on what the booklet has achieved or influenced if any ?

Teacher 2: I don't know, when they were writing about, on the next day they were looking at their strengths and what they were good at.

DL:hmmm

Teacher 1: when we were looking at what they did over the week they became more aware of their strengths and they became quicker as the week went on.

Teacher 2: yeah

Teacher 1: They became more aware of their behaviour and their attitude on what they were doing at school.

DL: well that's interesting so they wrote down more quickly. So you noticed that they became more quick at it:

Teacher 1: Yeah they were quicker they had an idea of what they were going to put in. I don't know if its because it was more repetitive or the fact they became more aware of it.

Teacher 2: yeah

DL: so the children lifted each others spirits and they became quicker as the week went on. Anything else you noticed or is that it.

Teacher 1: No that's it

Teacher 2: yeah

Teacher 1: Yeah children are not normally happy to write about their feelings.

Teacher 2: yeah.

Teacher 1: I noticed that they didn't mind writing it down.

3. What have you noticed any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude within the classroom since the start of the programme?

7 minutes 9 seconds

Teacher 2: Hard to say. Could you see anything ? (to Teacher 1)

Teacher 1: with the booklet. I don't think I saw changes in behaviour.

Teacher 1: I said that they could write about things at home but here that's what you get. But they looked to become more aware but I wouldn't want to say but as we have an expectation. Do you know what I mean.

Teacher 2: yeah.

Teacher 1: Because we are really good at saying that's wonderful. But we are hearing a lot about how they are helping mum in the morning or sister.

4. Any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude outside the classroom?

Teacher 1: we see them holding open the doors and less bullying so there behaviour has been good.

5. What aspects of the intervention appear to have been the most successful?

Teacher 2: Its been a good reminder for us to share times with the children and not just the children. Its like years ago a push towards circle time about 10-15 years ago. So its like going back to principles so its like that really.

DL: I hadn't really thought about it.

Teacher 2: Yeah it's really nice as it seems to have been squeezed out of the curriculum.

DL: that's a good point.

Teacher 2: so doing the good things was interesting and sometimes they would smile at you and think I wonder what I did do today at school. So that's good and for some of them it's some attention. I thought it was interesting what they did at home or claimed to do !

(everyone laughs)

Teacher 2: it's like you said some of the children would say 'you've been good in choir' and they have been spotting each other's abilities.

Teacher 1: yeah

DL: yes that's quite nice. They have to think about the compliment

Teacher 1 and 2: yes.

6. Has any part of the intervention been less successful?

Teacher 2: Finding the time could be difficult. You may spend too long and get carried away like on a Friday afternoon choir so then when they come in they have to do it fast. The time could be quite rigid and at Xmas it's quite a busy time.

DL: yes so at the end of the academic year would be busy and Easter too. Would there be a way you would prefer to us it.

Teacher 2: it is something for them to keep with them somehow I don't know.

Somewhere they can write it down at a good time when the lesson is short.

DL: yes that's fine for this piece of research we kept it at the same time to keep it consistent and have the same variables each day but the time that could become more flexible. Brilliant.

7. What would be your professional recommendations for future developments of the three good things booklet ?

Teacher 1: Can I see the booklet again. It reminds me how some of the children like the variety. Some of the children.

DL: Its interesting what you mentioned about circle time. Could you imagine it in a circle time format ?

Teacher 2: this is similar to what we do in PSHE so we do touch upon this quite often. Having this kind of discussion and sharing so it is good for that. They can give you a statement and you have to delve into it why it is important you. I would find that interesting but erm we do this kind of thing but you can loss its more practical.

DL: more practical.

Teacher 2: yes in the SEAL its more scenarios isn't it and different goals.

Teacher 1: we try to get them to reflect but I don't know you do it and its another curriculum lesson so it feels different to other lessons. Circle time does feel different.

DL: So following that thought if we had a smaller number to run a little group so some target children a smaller number. We could run that alongside the PSSE lesson to target particular children. Would that be more realistic ?

Teacher 2: we do that as well. We do small groups and after school groups. Its always the same children though. It's the ones who are failing or are struggling and sometime those who are successful those are the ones that you miss. And I would want them in a focus group.

DL: hmmm. So perhaps some children who are emotionally literate and are doing quite well, so good role models naturally in class.

Teacher 1: or the shy children because when you are doing the register and you are ticking off you have to look up.

Teacher 2: yes.

Teacher 1: you have to see who is not speaking and there can be two or three.

DL: that's a good point. Right anything else ?

Teacher 2: I think that's everything.

Teacher 1: yes.

DL: well that was really good you have come up with ideas that are really interesting and I hadn't thought about. So thank you very much.

Teacher 1 Your welcome.

Teacher 2: Thanks

## Interview Questions for Parents

1. What is your understanding of the three good things booklet ?

Parent 1: It started Monday to Friday and she filled it in.

Parent 2: Its that booklet she's been doing.

2. What are your thoughts and feelings about the three good things booklet ?

Parent 1: It seems really nice like it being positive.

Parent 2: Seeing it again I think it's a good idea.

3. Since implementing the intervention have you noticed any changes to you child's behaviour at home or going to school ?

Parent 1: No I haven't noticed anything.

Parent 2: No she has been the same.

4. Has anything gone particularly well?

Parent 1: She has been her usual self during this time.

Parent 2: He has mentioned that he liked the booklet.

5. Is there anything else you think I should know ?

No she has been really normal. Her father passed away two weeks ago and we have all been devastated. She has been surprisingly tough about this. He had been ill for a while.

DL: Im sorry to hear that.

Parent 1: Its okay. I wasn't sure when A needed to go back to school so this was her first week. She has been really positive about things. Behavior wise there have never been any problems. She did say how much she enjoyed the booklet though.

DL: She enjoyed the booklet.

Parent 1: Yeah she has been mentioning it. Can we stop there as this is quite upsetting.

DL: Yes of course I understand this isn't an easy time. Thank you for coming.

Parent 1: Thanks.

**Appendix: 9**

**Phase 2 – Generating Initial Codes**

orange = views and perceptions (to regard in a particular way and how it is regarded))

purple = experiences (observation of facts or events)

**Interview Questions for Pupils**

- What are the children’s views, experiences or perceptions of using the three good things questions for two weeks ?

View and Perceptions	Responses
1.	Child 1: <i>It helps you to think about what you have done.</i> (also an experience)  Child 1: <i>You can forget all the time what you have done so you don't forget it all.</i> (also an experience)
2.	Child 4: <i>If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.</i>  DL: <i>Right ! So you can write it down and get it recorded.</i> There is a bit later about what we can do to make things better so ideas like that would be really good.

Overall responses to question one was that it helped them to think about what they had done and to stop them forgetting the positives. The other response discusses that it helped them in thinking about the positives they can do in the future.

Experiences	Responses
1.	<p>Child 2: It was fun !</p> <p>DL: It was fun ?</p> <p>Child 2: Yes !</p>
2.	<p>DL: Did anyone else find it fun.</p> <p>All children say: Yes !</p> <p>DL: In what way ?</p> <p>Child: 3: It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.</p>

The pupils discuss that they found the booklet fun and all the children agreed so it did appear to be a universal experience and this was also reported by the class teachers and parents which shall be discussed later.

2 Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful ?

View and Perceptions	Responses
1.	<p>Child 5: I think it helped me to write down interesting words !.</p> <p>Child 5: Yeah !</p> <p>DL: So like sayings ? Things like that.</p> <p>Child 6: Yeah something enthusiastic !</p> <p>DL: Enthusiastic ? So like sayings ?</p> <p>Child 3: Yeah something about emotions !</p> <p>Child 6: Yeah:</p>
2.	<p>Child 2: We could, we could put all the lessons down and then we think about a lesson we did well and write it down.</p>

A clear interest in saying enthusiastic things i.e. something motivational that was not considered in previous research or this studies research questions. Another pupils comment about how the booklet aids reflection of positive behaviors.

Experiences	Responses
1.	<p>Child 1: Some lessons you don't like but it was still a good lesson (laughs).</p> <p>DL: (Laughs) so it was good to remember a good lesson even if it was hard ?</p> <p>Child 1: (Laughs) yes !</p>
2.	<p>Child 4: You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said.</p> <p>Child3: you can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).</p> <p>DL (laughs) so you don't give up ?</p> <p>Child 3: Yes ! (laughs).</p>

A direct experience of the pupils in the intervention was to look at the positives. A pupil reports that even though he had a hard lesson he can still see the positive impact it is

having. This is followed up in the conversation by another child who also confirms that they had experienced the same.

3. Is there anything in the booklet that you liked or didn't like ?

-examples

Experiences	Responses
1.	<p>Child 2: It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself ?</p> <p>DL: Would you like some more ?</p> <p>All children say: Yes !</p>
2.	<p>DL: So is there anything that you enjoyed or liked about the booklet ?</p> <p>(11:35).</p> <p>Child 2: Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier.</p> <p>Child 3: I liked doing it last thing in the day.</p> <p>DL: You liked doing it in the afternoon ?</p>

	<p>Child 3: We could do it and then it would be nearly home time.</p> <p>DL: So did you all like to do this at the end of the day to see how the day had gone or.... (children start to smile and nod their head to say yes).</p> <p>DL: Do you like that idea at the end.</p> <p>Child 4: You can do it at the end and it was a lot better.</p> <p>DL: Do it at the end right.</p>
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In this question the participants discussed how they enjoyed drawing themselves but also how they enjoyed doing it near the end of the day as it helped them to reflect about it.

View and Perceptions	Responses
1.	<p>Child 2: I would like to draw a pictures.</p> <p>Child 4: On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture !</p> <p>DL: Draw or take a picture ?</p>

	<p>Child 4: Yeah so I could on Monday take a picture and on Tuesday take a picture of me (laughs).</p> <p>DL: So take or draw a picture ?</p> <p>All children: Yes (all looking excited at this point).</p>
2.	<p>Child 1: I would like Monday to do a picture or Thursday do something else. I would also like to do Monday on Friday.</p> <p>DL: oh</p> <p>Child 2: and do Tuesday on Monday.</p> <p>DL: Ahh so do it the day before ?</p> <p>Child 2: Yeah.</p>
3.	<p>DL: Absolutely. So in the next booklet you would like the option of doing a drawing or taking some pictures. What would you like to draw about ?</p> <p>Something you did on the day ?</p> <p>Child 4: I would like to draw about something like a movie or some work on other days.</p>

4.	<p>Child 4: For the booklet to be bigger.</p> <p>DL: The booklet to be bigger ? Would it need to be made out of card ?</p> <p>Child 4: (laughs) if it was bigger you could add things to it.</p> <p>DL: Hmm that makes sense.</p>
5.	<p>Child 4: You could have a picture in your head and like put it in.</p> <p>DL: Hmm that makes sense a bit more of that.</p>

A number of pupils asked for more on drawing the booklet. The interest in personalizing the booklet occurred a number of times in the discussions. There was also a request to add drawings. In addition there was differencing views on when to include drawings or pictures but all children were interested in recording work or aspects about their life.

4. So was there anything that helped you to see other people different or yourself differently or see yourself ?

Experiences	Responses
1.	<p>DL: Its okay if not, as I'm just wondering. (Children are thinking).</p> <p>Child 2: I felt happier doing it (laughs) (all the children nod)</p> <p>Child 3: I wish we could do it more often (laughs).</p> <p>Child 2: I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year ! I think its good as it also helps your hand writing It makes you really happy !</p>
2.	<p>Child 4: It was good to look back at what we had done.</p> <p>DL: To see what you had done ?</p> <p>Child 4: Yeah. So we could like do it more often.</p> <p>DL: Thanks was there anything else ?</p> <p>Children say no.</p>

Clear feedback on feeling happier and this resulting in wanting to do it more. There was also discussion about being able to look back at what the pupils had written earlier in the week.

5. Is there anyway you think the booklet could be done differently ?

So far we have had drawings and having photos and doing the booklet a bit longer and looking at it in the future, like at the end of the school day erm anything else at all. It is really your choice, and what you would like.

View and Perceptions	Responses
1.	<p>Child 1: I think it would be cool if we could do it again.</p> <p>DL: Do it again in the future ?</p> <p>Child 1: Yeah.</p>
2.	<p>Child 5: If we did it on Monday we could write what you did in the lesson and then after break time write what you did then and then all through the day.</p> <p>DL: okay</p>
3.	<p>Child 5: and write it down and try to think what you did.</p> <p>DL: okay so write down things like you liked, that makes sense. Is one week enough or a bit longer.</p> <p>All children: longer !</p>

4.	<p>Child 5: half a year.</p> <p>DL: Half a year !</p> <p>Child 3: yeah have it half a year and then a break. Its great for handwriting.</p> <p>DL: Did you want to do the booklet just for the writing or to see how you have done over the year ?</p> <p>Child 1: How we have done over the year.</p> <p>Child 2: Yeah !</p>
5.	<p>DL: Would you like a Saturday and Sunday ?</p> <p>Child 6 Yeah !</p>

A request was made about doing the booklet again from all the children but also to increase the number of days to include Saturday and Sunday. There was also a comment from one child about how it was good to complete the booklet as it helped with their handwriting. Pupil handwriting can be a source of pride or concern for children. This was one comment that was not expected.

Experiences	Responses
1.	<p>Child 1: (can't hear what he is saying on the recording or in person)</p> <p>DL: Pardon. Can you say that again ?</p> <p>Child 1: Its really good as it makes you think about what you could do. I want to do more of it</p>
2.	<p>DL Okay. So you think we should do more of this ?</p> <p>Child 2: It was good. (all the children nod)</p> <p>DL: I had a chat with your teachers before and they mentioned how they noticed that you were helping each other out.</p> <p>Child 5: Yeah !</p> <p>DL: Has anyone had this experience ?</p> <p>Child 1: I was looking at what I was doing (during the day) and the teacher noticed that I was helping others.</p>
3.	<p>Child 2: Yes !</p> <p>DL: Did you want more of that in the booklet ?</p>

	<p>All the child apart from child 4 say: yes.</p> <p>Child 4: (Smiles) I want it on the back.</p>
4.	<p>Child 5: or in it so you can look at it.</p> <p>DL: In ?</p> <p>Child 3: So we could look at it and say 'ooh' and then when we are angry at some people we could, like not feel good and then we could look in the booklet and see what was good.</p>
5.	<p>DL: So you can see what you are good at ?</p> <p>Child 3: yeah</p> <p>DL: Has anyone else had that experience ?</p> <p>Child 1: yes.</p> <p>Child 2: yes</p> <p>Child 5: yes.</p>
6.	<p>DL: So in the booklet we could say to someone else what they</p>

	<p>have done well ?</p> <p>Child 1, 2, and 5, Yeah ! We could all put down what someone else has done that is good and tell them.</p>
7.	<p>DL: That makes sense so we could tell other people what they have done well.</p> <p>Child 4 we could do it all through the week and then I would also like extra days with Saturday and Sunday.</p>

A lot of information in this section from pupils. Pupils reported how the technique helped you to think about the positive, but also how they were saying the positive messages to other children. There is therefore an argument that future research could look to observe for these changes in lessons on the positive use of language and how this may enhance a class by positively influencing the language they use and also how this may impact on their emotional wellbeing and/or self worth.

## Interview Questions for Teachers

Red = reflections

Purple = positives

Green = changes

Orange = negatives

1. Now that the intervention has come to an end, what are your thoughts and feelings about using the three good things booklet ?

Positives	Responses
1.	<p>Teacher 1: We found it good. The children (in my class) could think of things quite easily. We needed the day to be longer because they would be writing things down and saying oh I've got music and I will be good in that so they felt that they had missed a lot of achievements and some are better out of school than in</p>
2.	<p>DL: So did you find the children could write about the good things ?</p> <p>Teacher 2: Some could and some couldn't. Erm the children that did struggle, with the table that they are sitting on the other child would give them some feedback on what they seen and what</p>

	<p>they did was good which would lift their spirits.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>DL: oh so the other children...</p> <p>Teacher 2: Gave the feedback thing is good to do they enjoyed giving each other feedback on what they were doing.</p> <p>Teacher 1: Yeah that was certainly true.</p> <p>DL: interesting</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Teacher 1: Year 5 could find things to say but you know when you ask them how it made them feel or try to give you some more information about things they find it really hard.</p> <p>DL: hmmm</p> <p>Teacher 1: They can find this hard in general, yeah in RE we've talked about this. They say if something is good.</p> <p>DI: So some reflection time.</p> <p>Teacher 1: Yeah.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Teacher 1: Yeah and also I think that if they had more time it would be interesting to see if they could reflect more into it. "I helped someone up when they fell over" and that was a good</p>

	<p>thing but that's very basic so you need to try and get more out of them. "I felt good because I was his friend and I was there from him" I would want more from them but they struggle.</p> <p>DL: So it would be having a foundation stone and then from this draw more from them. That's helpful.</p>
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Negatives	Responses
1.	So that was their moment lost so it might have been better to do it in the morning because they have good memories when they have done something good don't they.
2.	Teacher 2: Yeah in our classroom they initially struggled to figure out a good thing in terms of their work or what ever so I gave an example that it could be something outside the classroom.

2. What are your reflections on what the booklet has achieved or influenced if any ?

Positives	Responses
1.	<p>Teacher 2: I don't know, when they were writing about, on the next day they were looking at their strengths and what they were good at.</p> <p>DL:hmmm</p> <p>Teacher 1: when we were looking at what they did over the week they became more aware of their strengths and they became quicker as the week went on.</p> <p>Teacher 2: yeah</p>
2.	<p>Teacher 1: They became more aware of their behaviour and their attitude on what they were doing at school.</p> <p>DL: well that's interesting so they wrote down more quickly. So you noticed that they became more quick at it.</p> <p>Teacher 1: Yeah they were quicker they had an idea of what they were going to put in. I don't know if its because it was more</p>

	repetitive or the fact they became more aware of it.
3.	<p>Teacher 1: Yeah children are not normally happy to write about their feelings.</p> <p>Teacher 2: yeah.</p> <p>Teacher 1: I noticed that they didn't mind writing it down.</p>

3. What have you noticed any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude within the classroom since the start of the programme?

Positives	Responses
1.	<p>Teacher 1: I said that they could write about things about home but here that's what you get. But they looked to become more aware but I wouldn't want to say but as we have an expectation. Do you know what I mean ?</p>
2.	<p>Teacher 1: Because we are really good at saying that's wonderful. But we are hearing a lot about how they are helping mum in the</p>

	morning or sister.
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Negatives	Responses
1.	Teacher 1: with the booklet. I don't think I saw changes in behaviour.  Teacher 2: yeah.

4. Any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude outside the classroom?

Positives	Responses
1.	Teacher 1: we see them holding open the doors and less bullying so there behaviour has been good.  Teacher 2: Yes an improvement has been seen

DL: What aspects of the intervention appear to have been the most successful if any ?

Reflections	Responses
1.	Teacher 2: Its been a good reminder for us to share times with

	<p>the children and not just the children. Its like years ago a push towards circle time about 10-15 years ago. So its like going back to principles so its like that really.</p>
2.	<p>Teacher 2: Yeah its really nice as it seems to have been squeezed out of the curriculum.</p> <p>DL: that's a good point.</p> <p>Teacher 2: so doing the good things was interesting and sometimes they would smile at you and think I wonder what I did do today at school. So that's good and for some of them its some attention. I thought it was interesting what they did at home or claimed to do !</p> <p>(everyone laughs)</p>

Positives	Responses
1.	<p>Teacher 2: its like you said some of the children would say 'you've been good in choir' and they have been spotting each others abilities. (author note: they spotted each others abilities is an excellent quote)</p>

2.	<p>DL: yes that's quite nice. So they have to think about the compliment ?</p> <p>Teacher 1 and 2: yes.</p>

6. Has any part of the intervention been less successful?

Negatives	Responses
1.	<p>Teacher 2: Finding the time could be difficult. You may spend too long and get carried away like on a Friday afternoon choir so then when they come in they have to do it fast. The time could be quite rigid and at Xmas its quite a busy time.</p> <p>DL: yes so at the end of the academic year would be busy and easter too. Would there be a way you would prefer to us it.</p>
2.	<p>Teacher 2: it is something for them to keep with them somehow I don't know. Somewhere they can write it down at a good time when the lesson is short.</p> <p>DL: yes that's fine for this piece of research we kept it at the same time to keep it consistent and have the same variables each day but</p>

	the time that could become more flexible. Brilliant.
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7. What would be your professional recommendations for future developments of the three good things booklet ?

Negatives	Responses
1.	<p>DL Its interesting what you mentioned about circle time. Could you imagine it in a circle time format ?</p> <p>Teacher 2: this is similar to what we do in PSHE so we do touch upon this quite often. Having this kind of discussion and sharing so it is good for that. They can give you a statement and you have to delve into it why it is important you. I would find that interesting but erm we do this kind of thing but that is more practical.</p>
2.	<p>DL: more practical.</p> <p>Teacher 2: yes in the SEAL its more scenarios isn't it and different goals.</p>

	<p>Teacher 1:we try to get them to reflect but I don't know you do it and its another curriculum lesson so it feels different to other lessons.</p> <p>Circle time does feel different.</p> <p>DL: So following that thought if we had a smaller number to run a little group so some target children a smaller number. We could run that alongside the PSSE lesson to target particular children. Would that be more realistic ?</p>
3.	<p>Teacher 2: we do that as well. We do small groups and after school groups. Its always the same children though. It's the ones who are failing or are struggling and sometime those who are successful those are the ones that you miss. And I would want them in a focus group.</p> <p>DL: hmmm. So perhaps some children who are emotionally literate and are doing quite well, so good role models naturally in class.</p>
4.	<p>Teacher 1: or the shy children because when you are doing the</p>

	<p>register and you are ticking off you have to look up.</p> <p>Teacher 2: yes.</p> <p>Teacher 1: you have to see who is not speaking and there can be two or three.</p>
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Positives	Responses
1.	<p>Teacher 1: Can I see the booklet again. It reminds me how some of the children like the variety. Some of the children.</p>

## Parent Interviews

Red = reflections

Blue = positives

Green = changes

Orange = life situations

1. What is your understanding of the three good things booklet ?

Positives	Responses
1.	Parent 1: It started Monday to Friday and she filled it in.  DL: Filled it in ?  Parent 1: yes.
2.	Parent 2: Its that booklet she's been doing.

2. What are your thoughts and feelings about the three good things booklet ?

Positives	Responses
1.	Parent 1: It seems really nice I like it being positive.
2.	Parent 2: Seeing it again I think it's a good idea.

	<p>DL: A good idea.</p> <p>Parent 2: Yes definitely. Schools need to be positive places.</p>
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3. Since implementing the intervention have you noticed any changes to your child's behaviour at home or going to school ?

Negatives	Responses
1.	Parent 1: No I haven't noticed anything
2.	<p>Parent 2: No she has been the same.</p> <p>DL: No changes at all ?</p>

4. Has anything gone particularly well?

Positives	Responses
1.	Parent 2: He has mentioned that he liked the booklet.

Negatives	Responses
1.	Parent 1: She has been her usual self during this time.

5. Is there anything else you think I should know ?

Positives	Responses
1.	<p>Parent 1: No she has been really normal. Her father passed away two weeks ago and we have all been devastated. She has been surprisingly tough about this. He had been ill for a while.</p> <p>DL: Im sorry to hear that.</p> <p>Parent 1: Its okay. I wasn't sure when A needed to go back to school so this was her first week when she was doing the booklets. She has been really positive about things. Behavior wise there have never been any problems. She did say how much she enjoyed the booklet though.</p>
2.	Parent 2: Yeah he really enjoyed the booklet and he said how much he would want to do it again.

## Appendices 9: Phase 3 – Searching for Themes

Red = reflections

Blue = positives

Green = changes

### Interview Questions for Pupils

#### **1. How did you feel or think about doing the three good things booklet ?**

##### *Reflections on the booklet*

1.	You can forget all the time what you have done so you don't forget it all.
2.	You put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did. If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.

##### *Positives about the booklet*

1.	It was fun !
2.	Did anyone else find it fun. All children say: Yes !

##### Overall Codes

Positive Codes	4
Negative Codes	0

**2. Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful ?**

*Reflection Codes*

1.	I think it helped me to write down interesting words !
2.	It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy !
3.	It was good to remember a good lessons even if it was hard
4.	We could put all the lessons down and then we think about a lesson we did well and write it down.
5.	You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said.
6.	You can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).

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Changes for the booklet

1.	So like sayings ? Things like that. Yeah something enthusiastic ! Yeah something about emotions !
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*Overall Codes*

Positive Codes	7
Negative Codes	0

3. Is there anything in the booklet that you liked or didn't like ?

Changes for the booklet

1.	So like sayings ? Things like that. Yeah something enthusiastic ! Yeah something about emotions !
2.	It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself ?
3.	Would you like to draw every day ? (Some days)

4.	I would like to draw pictures.
5.	On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture !
6.	Yeah so I could on Monday take a picture and on Tuesday take a picture of me
7.	Monday to do a picture or Thursday do something else.
8.	in the next booklet you would like the option of doing a drawing or taking some pictures. What would you like to draw about ? Something you did on the day ?
9.	I would like to draw about something like a movie or some work on other days. (authors note: would drawing about something helpful have just as much impact as writing it down ? Would this work better with children ?)
10.	For the booklet to be bigger.
11.	The amount of weeks you use the booklet ?
12.	Doing the lessons every day etc ?
13.	If it was bigger you could add things to it.
14.	You could add things like your picture on the front.
15.	You could have a picture in your head and like put it in.
16.	At the end of the day to see how the day had gone.

*Positives about the booklet*

1.	Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier (in the day).
2.	I liked doing it last thing in the day.  You liked doing it in the afternoon ?  You can do it at the end and it was a lot better.

**Overall Codes**

Positive Codes	18
Negative Codes	1

**4. So was there anything that helped you to see other people different or yourself differently or see yourself ?**

*Positive about the booklet*

1.	I felt happier doing it (laughs).
2.	I wish we could do it more often (laughs).

3.	I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year ! I think its good as it also helps your hand writing !
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*Reflections of the Booklet*

1.	It was good to look back at what we had done.
----	---

*Overall Codes*

Positive Codes	4
Negative Codes	0

**5. Is there anyway you think the booklet could be done differently ?**

*Changes for the booklet*

1.	So far we have had drawings and having photos and doing the booklet a bit longer and looking at it in the future, like at the end of the school day
2.	If we did it on Monday we could write what you did in the lesson and then after break time write what you did then and then all through the day.

3.	Would you like to draw every day ? (Some days)
4.	Child: Do it longer !  half a year.  yeah have it half a year and then a break.
5.	How we have done over the year.  Do it over the year but with breaks.

Positives about the booklet

1.	Its great for handwriting.
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*Overall Codes*

Positive Codes	6
Negative Codes	0

**6 What do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important ?**

*Reflections of the Booklet*

1.	Its really good as it makes you think about what you could do.
2.	I was looking at what I was doing (during the day) and the teacher noticed that I was helping others.
3.	So we could look at it (the booklet) and say 'ooh' (enjoy what we had done)

*Positives about the booklet*

1.	It was good
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*Changes for the booklet*

1.	I want it on the back or in it so you can look at it (a space for drawing)
2.	when we are angry at some people we could, like not feel good and then we could look in the booklet and see what was good.
3.	We could all put down what someone else has done that is good and tell them.

4.	We could do it all through the week and then I would also like extra days with Saturday and Sunday.
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Overall Codes

Positive Codes	8
Negative Codes	0

Summary of Codes

Positive Codes	47
Negative Codes	1

## Appendix 10: – Phase 4 Reviewing Themes

### (Positive Self-Reflection for Pupils and Happiness Themes)

orange = views

purple = experiences

brown = perceptions

increase self reflection - red

#### Interview Questions for Pupils

- What are the children's views, experiences or perceptions of using the three good things questions for two weeks ?

1 How did you feel or think about doing the three good things booklet ?

Child 1: **It helps you to think about what you have done.**

DL: remember what you have done ?

Child 1: **You can forget all the time what you have done so you don't forget it all.**

DL: Right. So it helps you to remember what you have done is that right ?

Child 1: Yes.

DL: thank you is there anything else ?

Child 2: **It was fun !**

DL: It was fun ?

Child 2: Yes !

DL: Did anyone else find it fun.

All children say: Yes !

DL: In what way ?

Child: 3: It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.

DL: Oh I see. Can you say more ?

Child 4: If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.

DL: Right ! So you can write it down and get it recorded. There is a bit later about what we can do to make things better so ideas like that would be really good.

Child 4: Okay !

DL: Okay then, anything else on your thoughts and feelings ?

No sound and all the children nod their heads smiling to say no.

DL: Well that's great thank you.

2 Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful ?

-examples

-illustrations

How was it useful ?

Child 5: I think it helped me to write down interesting words !.

DL: That's interesting can you tell me more about that ? (4 minutes 15 seconds).So in the book you would like interesting words ?

Child 5: Yeah !

DL: So like sayings ? Things like that.

Child 6: Yeah something enthusiastic !

DL: Enthusiastic ? So like sayings ?

Child 3: Yeah something about emotions !

Child 6: Yeah:

DL: That's interesting. Anything else ?

Child 1: It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy !

DL: Ahh

Child 1: Some lessons you don't like but it was still a good lesson (laughs).

DL: (Laughs) so it was good to remember a good lessons even if it was hard ?

Child 1: (Laughs) yes !

Child 2: We could, we could put all the lessons down and then we think about a lesson we did well and write it down.

( Child 4 puts up their hand) DL: its okay were not in a lesson so you don't need to put your hand up.

Child 4: You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said. (author note, change of their perception of work ? It would have been good to go back and ask about this)

Child 3: Sometimes it is a difficult lesson.

DL: So sometimes...

Child3: you can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).

DL (laughs) so you don't give up ?

Child 3: Yes ! (laughs). (author note, is this a change in perception ? Further work needed on this)

3. Is there anything in the booklet that you liked or didn't like ?

-examples

DL: That's really helpful thanks. So is there something you really liked about the booklet or didn't like ? (6:55).

Child 2: It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself ?

DL: Would you like some more ?

All children say: Yes !

Child 1: That would be great.

DL: Would you like to draw every day ?

Child 1: Yes !

Child 5 No !

Child 2 Some days.

Child 3 yeah. (7:47)

Child 2: I would like to draw a pictures.

Child 4: On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture !

DL: Draw or take a picture ?

Child 4: Yeah so I could on Monday take a picture and on Tuesday take a picture of me (laughs).

DL: So take or draw a picture ?

All children: Yes (all looking excited at this point).

Child 1: I would like Monday to do a picture or Thursday do something else. I would also like to do Monday on Friday.

DL: oh

Child 2: and do Tuesday on Monday.

DL: Ahh so do it the day before ?

Child 2: Yeah.

DL: Absolutely. So in the next booklet you would like the option of doing a drawing or taking some pictures. What would you like to draw about ? Something you did on the day ?

Child 4: I would like to draw about something like a movie or some work on other days.

DL: That's great thanks.

(authors note: would drawing about something helpful have just as much impact as writing it down ? Would this work better with children ?)

The amount of weeks you use the booklet ?

Doing the lessons every day etc ?

DL: ahh. So what would you like to add to the booklet ? Add something else. What would it look like if you did something different ? (9:45)

Child 4: For the booklet to be bigger.

DL: The booklet to be bigger ? Would it need to be made out of card ?

Child 4: (laughs) if it was bigger you could add things to it.

DL: Hmm that makes sense.

Child 4: You could add things like your picture on the front. (10:37).

DL: Hmm

Child 4: You could have a picture in your head and like put it in.

DL: Hmm that makes sense a bit more of that.

Child 6: The booklet could be all about you (cough cough).

DL: Hmm.

Child 6: You could make it a bit bigger so if you have glasses it would go in.

DL: Hmm thank you.

DL: So is there anything else that you enjoyed or liked about the booklet ?

(11:35).

Child 2: Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier.

Child 3: I liked doing it last thing in the day.

DL: You liked doing it in the afternoon ?

Child 3: We could do it and then it would be nearly home time.

DL: Right

Child3: So it was better.

DL: So did you all like to do this at the end of the day to see how the day had gone or....

(children start to smile and nod their head to say yes).

DL: Do you like that idea at the end.

Child 4: You can do it at the end and it was a lot better.

DL: Do it at the end right.

4. So was there anything that helped you to see other people different or yourself differently or see yourself ?

DL: Its okay if not, as I'm just wondering. (Children are thinking).

Child 2: I felt happier doing it (laughs).

Child 3: yeah me too I wish we could do it more often (laughs).

Child 2: Definitely. I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year ! I think its good as it also helps your hand writing !

Child 4: It was good to look back at what we had done.

DL: To see what you had done ?

Child 4: Yeah. So we could like do it more often. (author note, this seems to be reference to the child becoming more aware of what they are doing well. The booklet appears to remind them of the positives they are doing and increase their appreciation for it).

DL: Thanks was there anything else ?

Children say no.

5. Is there anyway you think the booklet could be done differently ?

(14:40).

So far we have had drawings and having photos and doing the booklet a bit longer and looking at it in the future, like at the end of the school day erm anything else at all. It is really your choice, and what you would like.

Child 1: I think it would be cool if we could do it again.

DL: Do it again in the future ?

Child 1: Yeah.

Child 5: If we did it on Monday we could write what you did in the lesson and then after break time write what you did then and then all through the day.

DL: okay

Child 5: and write it down and try to think what you did. (self reflection and awareness of the positives again)

DL: okay so write down things like you liked, that makes sense. Is one week enough or a bit longer.

All children: longer ! 16:05

Child 5: half a year.

DL: Half a year !

Child 3: yeah have it half a year and then a break. Its great for handwriting.

DL: Did you want to do the booklet just for the writing or to see how you have done over the year ?

Child 1: How we have done over the year.

Child 2: Yeah !

Child 3, 4 and 5. (Giggles) yeah !

Child 3: that would be great.

Child 5: Do it over the year but with breaks. (author note, repeated references to doing it over time or a longer period of time than one week).

DL: Okay then that's really helpful.

6 What do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important ?

-how ? 17:49.

Child 1: (can't hear what he is saying on the recording or in person)

DL: Pardon. Can you say that again ?

Child 1: **Its really good as it makes you think about what you could do. I want to do more of it.** (author note: makes you reflect on what you could do-thus generating new behaviour).

DL Okay. So you think we should do more of this ?

Child 2: **It was good.**

DL: I had a chat with your teachers before and they mentioned how they noticed that you were helping each other out.

Child 5: Yeah !

DL: Has anyone had this experience ?

**Child 1: I was looking at what I was doing (during the day) and the teacher noticed that I was helping others.**

Child 2: Yes !

DL: Did you want more of that in the booklet ?

**All the child apart from child 4 say: yes.**

**Child 4: (Smiles) I want it on the back.**

DL: On the back or....

Child 5: or in it so you can look at it.

DL: In ?

Child 3: So we could look at it and say 'ooh' and then when we are angry at some people we could, like not feel good and then we could look in the booklet and see what was good.

DL: So you can see what you are good at ?

Child 3: yeah

DL: Has anyone else had that experience ?

Child 1: yes.

Child 2: yes

Child 5: yes.

DL: So in the booklet we could say to someone else what they have done well ?

Child 1, 2, and 5, Yeah ! We could all put down what someone else has done that is good and tell them. (authors note – excellent idea !)

DL: That makes sense so we could tell other people what they have done well.

Child 4 we could do it all through the week and then I would also like extra days with Saturday and Sunday.

DL: Would you like a Saturday and Sunday ?

Child 6 Yeah ! 22:04

A few minutes of the children laughing and saying nice things to each other.

7. Anything else you would like to tell me ?

The children laugh and say no.

Well I think you have done really well. I think just you guys talking about it seems to have made you laugh and be happier which is fantastic and what its all about.

(Children erupt into laughing).

## Summary – New Theme of Positive Self Reflection frequency. 16 for pupils

Child 1: It helps you to think about what you have done.

DL: remember what you have done ?

Child 1: You can forget all the time what you have done so you don't forget it all.

Child: 3: It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.

DL: Oh I see. Can you say more ?

Child 4: If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.

Child 1: It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy !

DL: Ahh

Child 1: Some lessons you don't like but it was still a good lesson (laughs).

DL: (Laughs) so it was good to remember a good lessons even if it was hard ?

Child 4: You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said. (author note, change of their perception of work ? It would have been good to go back and ask about this)

Child3: you can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).

DL (laughs) so you don't give up ?

Child 3: Yes ! (laughs). (author note, is this a change in perception ? Further work needed on this)

Child 2: Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier.

DL: So did you all like to do this at the end of the day to see how the day had gone or....  
(children start to smile and nod their head to say yes).

Child 4: It was good to look back at what we had done.

DL: To see what you had done ?

Child 4: Yeah. So we could like do it more often. (author note, this seems to be reference to the child becoming more aware of what they are doing well. The booklet appears to remind them of the positives they are doing and increase their appreciation for it).

Child 1: Its really good as it makes you think about what you could do. I want to do more of it. (author note: makes you reflect on what you could do-thus generating new behaviour).

Child 1: I was looking at what I was doing (during the day) and the teacher noticed that I was helping others.

Child 3: So we could look at it and say 'ooh' and then when we are angry at some people we could, like not feel good and then we could look in the booklet and see what was good.

### Phase 3 Analysis – Happiness

#### Green = Happiness

##### 1 How did you feel or think about doing the three good things booklet ?

Child 1: It helps you to think about what you have done.

DL: remember what you have done ?

Child 1: You can forget all the time what you have done so you don't forget it all.

DL: Right. So it helps you to remember what you have done is that right ?

Child 1: Yes.

DL: thank you is there anything else ?

Child 2: It was fun !

DL: It was fun ?

Child 2: Yes !

DL: Did anyone else find it fun.

All children say: Yes !

DL: In what way ?

Child: 3: It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.

DL: Oh I see. Can you say more ?

Child 4: If you looked at what you did say on Friday you can look and make a plan of other things you can do.

DL: Right ! So you can write it down and get it recorded. There is a bit later about what we can do to make things better so ideas like that would be really good.

Child 4: Okay !

DL: Okay then, anything else on your thoughts and feelings ?

No sound and all the children nod their heads smiling to say no.

DL: Well that's great thank you.

2 Can you tell me about an exercise or moment of using the booklet that was particularly good, memorable or useful ?

-examples

-illustrations

How was it useful ?

Child 5: I think it helped me to write down interesting words !.

DL: That's interesting can you tell me more about that ? (4 minutes 15 seconds).So in the book you would like interesting words ?

Child 5: Yeah !

DL: So like sayings ? Things like that.

Child 6: Yeah something enthusiastic !

DL: Enthusiastic ? So like sayings ?

Child 3: Yeah something about emotions !

Child 6: Yeah:

DL: That's interesting. Anything else ?

Child 1: It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy !

DL: Ahh

Child 1: Some lessons you don't like but it was still a good lesson (laughs).

DL: (Laughs) so it was good to remember a good lessons even if it was hard ?

Child 1: (Laughs) yes !

Child 2: We could, we could put all the lessons down and then we think about a lesson we did well and write it down.

( Child 4 puts p there hand) DL: its okay were not in a lesson so you don't need to put your hand up.

Child 4: You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said.

Child 3: Sometimes it is a difficult lesson.

DL: So sometimes...

Child3: you can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).

DL (laughs) so you don't give up ?

Child 3: Yes ! (laughs).

3. Is there anything in the booklet that you liked or didn't like ?

-examples

DL: That's really helpful that's thanks. So is there something you really liked about the booklet or didn't like ? (6:55).

Child 2: It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself ?

DL: Would you like some more ?

All children say: Yes !

Child 1: That would be great.

DL: Would you like to draw every day ?

Child 1: Yes !

Child 5 No !

Child 2 Some days.

Child 3 yeah. (7:47)

Child 2: I would like to draw a pictures.

Child 4: On Monday I would like to draw a picture or take a picture !

DL: Draw or take a picture ?

Child 4: Yeah so I could on Monday take a picture and on Tuesday take a picture of me  
(laughs).

DL: So take or draw a picture ?

All children: Yes (all looking excited at this point).

Child 1: I would like Monday to do a picture or Thursday do something else. I would also like to do Monday on Friday.

DL: oh

Child 2: and do Tuesday on Monday.

DL: Ahh so do it the day before ?

Child 2: Yeah.

DL: Absolutely. So in the next booklet you would like the option of doing a drawing or taking some pictures. What would you like to draw about ? Something you did on the day ?

Child 4: I would like to draw about something like a movie or some work on other days.

DL: That's great thanks.

(authors note: would drawing about something helpful have just as much impact as writing it down ? Would this work better with children ?)

The amount of weeks you use the booklet ?

Doing the lessons every day etc ?

DL: ahh. So what would you like to add to the booklet ? Add something else. What would it look like if you did something different ? (9:45)

Child 4: For the booklet to be bigger.

DL: The booklet to be bigger ? Would it need to be made out of card ?

Child 4: (laughs) if it was bigger you could add things to it.

DL: Hmm that makes sense.

Child 4: You could add things like your picture on the front. (10:37).

DL: Hmm

Child 4: You could have a picture in your head and like put it in.

DL: Hmm that makes sense a bit more of that.

Child 6: The booklet could be all about you (cough cough).

DL: Hmm.

Child 6: You could make it a bit bigger so if you have glasses it would go in.

DL: Hmm thank you.

DL: So is there anything that you enjoyed or liked about the booklet ?

(11:35).

Child 2: Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier.

Child 3: I liked doing it last thing in the day.

DL: You liked doing it in the afternoon ?

Child 3: We could do it and then it would be nearly home time.

DL: Right

Child3: So it was better.

DL: So did you all like to do this at the end of the day to see how the day had gone or....

(children start to smile and nod their head to say yes).

DL: Do you like that idea at the end.

Child 4: You can do it at the end and it was a lot better.

DL: Do it at the end right.

4. So was there anything that helped you to see other people different or yourself differently or see yourself or where there no difference ?

DL: Its okay if not, as I'm just wondering. (Children are thinking).

Child 2: I felt happier doing it (laughs).

Child 3: I wish we could do it more often (laughs).

Child 2: I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year ! I think its good as it also helps your hand writing !

Child 4: It was good to look back at what we had done.

DL: To see what you had done ?

Child 4: Yeah. So we could like do it more often.

DL: Thanks was there anything else ?

Children say no.

5. Is there anyway you think the booklet could be done differently ?

(14:40).

So far we have had drawings and having photos and doing the booklet a bit longer and looking at it in the future, like at the end of the school day erm anything else at all. It is really your choice, and what you would like.

Child 1: I think it would be cool if we could do it again.

DL: Do it again in the future ?

Child 1: Yeah.

Child 5: If we did it on Monday we could write what you did in the lesson and then after break time write what you did then and then all through the day.

DL: okay

Child 5: and write it down and try to think what you did.

DL: okay so write down things like you liked, that makes sense. Is one week enough or a bit longer.

All children: longer ! 16:05

Child 5: half a year.

DL: Half a year !

Child 3: yeah have it half a year and then a break. Its great for handwriting.

DL: Did you want to do the booklet just for the writing or to see how you have done over the year ?

Child 1: How we have done over the year.

Child 2: Yeah !

Child 3, 4 and 5. (Giggles) yeah !

Child 3: that would be great.

Child 5: Do it over the year but with breaks.

DL: Okay then that's really helpful.

6 What do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important ?

-how ? 17:49.

Child 1: (can't hear what he is saying on the recording or in person)

DL: Pardon. Can you say that again ?

Child 1: Its really good as it makes you think about what you could do. I want to do more of it

DL Okay. So you think we should do more of this ?

Child 2: It was good.

DL: I had a chat with your teachers before and they mentioned how they noticed that you were helping each other out.

Child 5: Yeah !

DL: Has anyone had this experience ?

Child 1: I was looking at what I was doing (during the day) and the teacher noticed that I was helping others.

Child 2: Yes !

DL: Did you want more of that in the booklet ?

All the child apart from child 4 say: yes.

Child 4: (Smiles) I want it on the back.

DL: On the back or....

Child 5: or in it so you can look at it.

DL: In ?

Child 3: So we could look at it and say 'ooh' and then when we are angry at some people we could, like not feel good and then we could look in the booklet and see what was good.

DL: So you can see what you are good at ?

Child 3: yeah

DL: Has anyone else had that experience ?

Child 1: yes.

Child 2: yes

Child 5: yes.

DL: So in the booklet we could say to someone else what they have done well ?

Child 1, 2, and 5, Yeah ! We could all put down what someone else has done that is good and tell them.

DL: That makes sense so we could tell other people what they have done well.

Child 4 we could do it all through the week and then I would also like extra days with Saturday and Sunday.

DL: Would you like a Saturday and Sunday ?

Child 6 Yeah ! 22:04

A few minutes of the children laughing and saying nice things to each other.

7. Anything else you would like to tell me ?

The children laugh and say no.

Well I think you have done really well. I think just you guys talking about it seems to have made you laugh and be happier which is fantastic and what its all about.

(Children erupt into laughing).

## Summary

### 1 How did you feel or think about doing the three good things booklet ?

DL: Right. So it helps you to remember what you have done is that right ?

Child 1: Yes.

DL: thank you is there anything else ?

Child 2: It was fun !

DL: It was fun ?

Child 2: Yes !

DL: Did anyone else find it fun.

All children say: Yes !

DL: In what way ?

Child: 3: It was like, you put down what you have done and it reminded you about the good stuff you did.

DL: That's interesting. Anything else ?

Child 1: It was really good to remember the lessons you enjoy !

DL: Ahh

It was fun is a reoccurring theme in the pupil interviews. They clearly enjoyed the booklet and its positive purpose. The pupils were very excited and animated about it throughout the discussion.

Child 4: You may not enjoy a lesson but you may have tried hard. You may think to yourself that you cant do it. But you could write, if you couldn't do the activity....you could write in the book....you can put what you have said.

Child 3: Sometimes it is a difficult lesson.

DL: So sometimes...

Child3: you can put something funny down to make you smile (laughs).

DL (laughs) so you don't give up ?

Child 3: Yes ! (laughs).

The positive impact of writing is of interest as the process of completing the three good things during the day may be heightened in the participants memory as they have to think of three separate positive things and then think about them long enough to write them down thus extending the positive impact it has on them. In some ways it is appears to work via mindfulness but in a written form. Other mindfulness strategies must therefore be looked upon.

DL: That's really helpful that's thanks. So is there something you really liked about the booklet or didn't like ? (6:55).

Child 2: It was really good. I liked the bit at the beginning where you can draw about yourself ?

DL: So take or draw a picture ?

All children: Yes (all looking excited at this point).

Child 1: I would like Monday to do a picture or Thursday do something else. I would also like to do Monday on Friday.

Child 2: Im happy because when we were doing the booklet we went back to the lesson so we liked it in the afternoon. I enjoyed doing the booklet but not earlier.

DL: Its okay if not, as I'm just wondering. (Children are thinking).

Child 2: I felt happier doing it (laughs).

Child 3: I wish we could do it more often (laughs).

Child 2: I wish I could do it every day. Carry it on the rest of the year ! I think its good as it also helps your hand writing !

Child 1: Its really good as it makes you think about what you could do. I want to do more of it

DL Okay. So you think we should do more of this ?

Child 2: It was good.

DL: I had a chat with your teachers before and they mentioned how they noticed that you were helping each other out.

Happiness nodes - Eight separate references to participants enjoying the process or feelings better with doing the booklet other than an increase in positive self reflection.

|

## **Appendix 11. Phase 5 Pro-Social Theme**

Increase pro social behaviour - gold

### Interview Questions for Pupils

- What are the children's views, experiences or perceptions of using the three good things questions for two weeks ?

6 What do you think what you have learned from the booklet has been useful or important ?

-how ?

Child 1: (can't hear what he is saying on the recording or in person)

DL: Pardon. Can you say that again ?

Child 1: Its really good as it makes you think about what you could do. I want to do more of it. (author note: makes you reflect on what you could do-thus generating new behaviour).

DL Okay. So you think we should do more of this ?

Child 2: It was good.

DL: I had a chat with your teachers before and they mentioned how they noticed that you were helping each other out.

Child 5: Yeah !

DL: Has anyone had this experience ?

DL: So in the booklet we could say to someone else what they have done well ?

Child 1, 2, and 5, Yeah ! We could all put down what someone else has done that is good and tell them. (authors note – excellent idea !)

1.	<p>Child 1: I was looking at what I was doing (during the day) and the teacher noticed that I was helping others.</p> <p>Child 2: Yes !</p> <p>DL: Did you want more of that in the booklet ?</p> <p>All the child apart from child 4 say: yes.</p> <p>Child 4: (Smiles) I want it on the back.</p> <p>DL: On the back or....</p> <p>Child 5: or in it so you can look at it.</p>
2.	<p>Child 3: So we could look at it and say 'ooh' and then when we are angry at some people we could, like not feel good and then we could look in the booklet and see what was good.</p>

DL: So you can see what you are good at ?

Child 3: yeah

DL: Has anyone else had that experience ?

Child 1: yes.

Child 2: yes

Child 5: yes.

## Interview Questions for Teachers

Red = reflections

Gold = increase in prosocial behaviours

1. Now that the intervention has come to an end, what are your thoughts and feelings about using the three good things booklet ?

Teacher 1: We found it good. The children (in my class) could think of things quite easily. We needed the day to be longer because they would be writing things down and saying oh I've got music and I will be good in that so they felt that they had missed a lot of achievements and some are better out of school than in. So that was their moment lost so it might have been better to do it in the morning because they have good memories when they have done something good don't they.

DL: hmmm some children do. Out of school activities. That's helpful thank you. Any other views ?

Teacher 2: Yeah in our classroom they initially struggled to figure out a good thing in terms of their work or what ever so I gave an example that it could be something outside the classroom. So some clarity on that.

DL: So did you find the children could write about the good things ?

Teacher 2: Some could and some couldn't. Erm the children that did struggle, with the table that they are sitting on the other child would give them some feedback on what they seen and what they did was good which would lift their spirits.

DL: oh so the other children...

Teacher 2: Gave the feedback thing is good to do they enjoyed giving each other feedback on what they were doing.

Teacher 1: Yeah that was certainly true.

DL: interesting

(three minutes in)

Teacher 1: Year 5 could find things to say but you know when you ask them how it made them feel or try to give you some more information about things they find it really hard.

DL: hmmm

Teacher 1: They can find this hard in general, yeah in RE we've talked about this. They say if something is good.

DL: So some reflection time.

Teacher 1: Yeah.

DL: and what it means for them.

Teacher 1: Yeah and also I think that if they had more time it would be interesting to see if they could reflect more into it. "I helped someone up when they fell over" and that was a good thing but that's very basic so you need to try and get more out of them. "I felt good because I was his friend and I was there for him" I would want more from them but they struggle.

DL: So it would be having a foundation stone and then from this draw more from them.

That's helpful.

Teacher 2: Gave the feedback thing is good to do they enjoyed giving each other feedback on what they were doing.

Teacher 1: Yeah that was certainly true.

Teacher 1: Yeah and also I think that if they had more time it would be interesting to see if they could reflect more into it. "I helped someone up when they fell over" and that was a good thing but that's very basic so you need to try and get more out of them

2. What are your reflections on what the booklet has achieved or influenced if any ?

Teacher 2: I don't know, when they were writing about, on the next day they were looking at their strengths and what they were good at.

DL:hmmm

Teacher 1: when we were looking at what they did over the week they became more aware of their strengths and they became quicker as the week went on.

Teacher 2: yeah

Teacher 1: They became more aware of their behaviour and their attitude on what they were doing at school.

DL: well that's interesting so they wrote down more quickly. So you noticed that they became more quick at it.

Teacher 1: Yeah they were quicker they had an idea of what they were going to put in. I don't know if its because it was more repetitive or the fact they became more aware of it.

Teacher 2: yeah

DL: so the children lifted each others spirits and they became quicker as the week went on. Anything else you noticed or is that it.

Teacher 1: No that's it

Teacher 2: yeah

Teacher 1: Yeah children are not normally happy to write about their feelings.

Teacher 2: yeah.

Teacher 1: I noticed that they didn't mind writing it down.

Teacher 1: They became more aware of their behaviour and their attitude on what they were doing at school.

DL: well that's interesting so they wrote down more quickly. So you noticed that they became more quick at it.

Teacher 1: Yeah they were quicker they had an idea of what they were going to put in. I don't know if its because it was more repetitive or the fact they became more aware of it.

Teacher 2: yeah

DL: so the children lifted each others spirits and they became quicker as the week went on. Anything else you noticed or is that it.

Teacher 1: No that's it

Teacher 2: yeah

Teacher 1: Yeah children are not normally happy to write about their feelings.

Teacher 2: yeah.

Teacher 1: I noticed that they didn't mind writing it down.

3. What have you noticed any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude within the classroom since the start of the programme?

7 minutes 9 seconds

Teacher 2: Hard to say. Could you see anything ? (to Teacher 1)

Teacher 1: with the booklet. I don't think I saw changes in behaviour.

Teacher 1: I said that they could write about things at home but here that's what you get.

But they looked to become more aware but I wouldn't want to say but as we have an expectation. Do you know what I mean ?

Teacher 2: yeah.

Teacher 1: Because we are really good at saying that's wonderful. But we are hearing a lot about how they are helping mum in the morning or sister.

DL: anything else apart from the positive things they were saying to each other ?

Teacher 1: I think that's about it.

Teacher 2: Yeah

4. Any changes in the pupils' behaviour or attitude outside the classroom?

Teacher 1: we see them holding open the doors and less bullying so there behaviour has been good.

DL: What aspects of the intervention appear to have been the most successful if any ?

Teacher 2: Its been a good reminder for us to share times with the children and not just the children. Its like years ago a push towards circle time about 10-15 years ago. So its like going back to principles so its like that really.

DL:I hadn't really thought about it.

Teacher 2: Yeah its really nice as it seems to have been squeezed out of the curriculum.

DL: that's a good point.

Teacher 2: so doing the good things was interesting and sometimes they would smile at you and think I wonder what I did do today at school. So that's good and for some of them its some attention. I thought it was interesting what they did at home or claimed to do !

(everyone laughs)

Teacher 2: its like you said some of the children would say 'you've been good in choir' and they have been spotting each others abilities.

Teacher 1: yeah

DL: yes that's quite nice. So they have to think about the compliment ?

Teacher 1 and 2: yes.

6. Has any part of the intervention been less successful?

Teacher 2: Finding the time could be difficult. You may spend too long and get carried away like on a Friday afternoon choir so then when they come in they have to do it fast. The time could be quite rigid and at Xmas its quite a busy time.

DL: yes so at the end of the academic year would be busy and easter too. Would there be a way you would prefer to us it.

Teacher 2: it is something for them to keep with them somehow I don't know. Somewhere they can write it down at a good time when the lesson is short.

DL: yes that's fine for this piece of research we kept it at the same time to keep it consistent and have the same variables each day but the time that could become more flexible. Brilliant.

7. What would be your professional recommendations for future developments of the three good things booklet ?

Teacher 1: Can I see the booklet again. It reminds me how some of the children like the variety. Some of the children.

DL Its interesting what you mentioned about circle time. Could you imagine it in a circle time format ?

Teacher 2: this is similar to what we do in PSHE so we do touch upon this quite often. Having this kind of discussion and sharing so it is good for that. They can give you a statement and you have to delve into it why it is important you. I would find that interesting but erm we do this kind of thing but that is more practical.

DL: more practical.

Teacher 2: yes in the SEAL its more scenarios isn't it and different goals.

Teacher 1:we try to get them to reflect but I don't know you do it and its another curriculum lesson so it feels different to other lessons. Circle time does feel different.

DL: So following that thought if we had a smaller number to run a little group so some target children a smaller number. We could run that alongside the PSSE lesson to target particular children. Would that be more realistic ?

Teacher 2: we do that as well. We do small groups and after school groups. Its always the same children though. It's the ones who are failing or are struggling and sometime those who are successful those are the ones that you miss. And I would want them in a focus group.

DL: hmmm. So perhaps some children who are emotionally literate and are doing quite well, so good role models naturally in class.

Teacher 1: or the shy children because when you are doing the register and you are ticking off you have to look up.

Teacher 2: yes.

Teacher 1: you have to see who is not speaking and there can be two or three.

DL: that's a good point. Right anything else ?

Teacher 2: I think that's everything.

Teacher 1: yes.

DL: well that was really good you have come up with ideas that are really interesting and I hadn't thought about. So thank you very much.

Teacher 1 Your welcome.

Teacher 2: Thanks

|

## **Appendix 12 – Pupil Teacher and Parent Permission Forms**

My name is David Lee and I am an Educational Psychologist working at the Leicestershire Psychology Service. I am doing a study to try and increase happiness with children. The research is a small case study to explore your experiences, perspectives and the impact of the three good things intervention. The research is in conjunction with the University of East London.

### **Project Description**

The intervention to be used is the three good things in life technique. This technique was found in research to significantly reduce unhappiness and increase emotional wellbeing in adults. The technique has been used in Leicestershire for five years supporting pupils.

The research also looks to record your experiences but also to see if teachers or learning support assistants see any other positive changes. To explore this idea the research aims to interview eight you, members of staff and their parents after the intervention has been used (which will last for one week) to see if there is any impact in or out of school. There will be four children from each group (a total of eight children) who will be selected randomly but permission will be requested from parents first. Interviews shall take place with these children on their views of using the intervention but also interviews with the members of staff and parents to see if there were any changes in behaviour in or out of the classroom. The study is designed to have a positive effect on children and there will be no hazard or ill effects from the research. At any point during the research any child or adult can withdraw from the study with no questions asked. All interviews will be conducted in a friendly way in small groups of four you with myself. I shall speak to the members of staff after school. The school teacher shall organize the three good things booklets.

I would also like to say that:

- Taking part is voluntary (you wish to do so).
- You are free to say no to answer my questions at any time.
- You are free to stop and leave at any time and you don't have to give a reason if you don't want to.

All interviews will be kept confidential and only be made available to the researcher. Parts from the interview will be made part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name, or any identifying characteristics be features of the report.

### Permission Slip

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what it being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

Please sign this form to show that I have read the contents to you.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the experimental programme has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)  
.....

Participant's Signature  
.....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)  
.....

Investigator's Signature  
.....

Date: .....

Do you give permission for this interview to be tape recorded?

YES

NO

(circle one)

## **Parents and Teacher Information and Permission Forms**

### **University of East London**

Stratford Campus

### **University Research Ethics Committee**

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the programme in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

**Merlin Harries, Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE)**

**External and Strategic Development Service (ESDS)**

**University of East London, Docklands Campus, London E16 2RD**

**(Telephone: 020 8223 2009, Email: [m.harries@uel.ac.uk](mailto:m.harries@uel.ac.uk)).**

### **The Principal Investigator(s)**

David Lee

Leicestershire County Council,

Leicestershire Psychology Service,

Room 600,

Glenfield,

Leicestershire

0116 3055100

### **Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

### **Project Title**

An constructivist, case study to explore children's experiences, perspectives and the impact of a Positive Psychology intervention called the three good things in life technique.

### **Project Description**

The intervention to be used is the three good things in life technique. This intervention was found to significantly reduce depression in adults. Applying this intervention to children may boost a positive

self perception, experiences and/or behaviour. To explore this idea the research aims to interview the children, members of staff and parents after the intervention has been used (which will last for two weeks) to see if there is any impact in or out of school. Participants will be asked to write down three things that went well each day and their causes at the end of the school day for two weeks. If any child has a literacy difficulty then the support of a Learning Support Assistant or the class teacher will support them.

All the children in the three year groups will complete the three good things in life intervention. In addition to this three children from each year (a total of nine children) will be selected. Interviews shall take place with these children on their views or experiences of using the intervention but also interviews with the members of staff and parents to see if there were any changes in behaviour in or out of the classroom. The study is designed to have a positive effect on children and there will be no hazard or ill effects from the research.

### **Confidentiality of the Data**

No children's names will be used instead their initials will protect the confidentiality of the child but also allow for the information to be collected appropriately. Also if any information is given that requires the involvement of the school safeguarding officer although this is highly unlikely the school would need to be able to identify the child. Once the study has been completed the school will retain the information for five years. All documentation is stored securely at the school and information is shared on a need to know basis which will be decided by the Headteacher.

### **Location**

The research shall take place at the school and all data collection shall take place there too.

### **Remuneration**

This research does not remunerate the participants.

### **Disclaimer**

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during tests. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

**UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**Consent to Participate in an Experimental Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants**

A constructivist, case study to explore children’s experiences, perspectives and the impact of a Positive Psychology intervention called the three good things in life technique.

I have the read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what it being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the experimental programme has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Participant’s Signature .....

Investigator’s Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

Investigator’s Signature .....

Date: .....