The National Evaluation of the
All Wales School Liaison Core Programme

The Impact of the All Wales
School Liaison Core Programme
on Children and Young People

Executive Summary Report

December 2007
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1. The Evaluation and its Context

The All Wales School Liaison Core Programme (AWSLCP) became fully operational in September 2004 and is taught in 97% of schools across Wales. The aims of the programme are to

- work towards achieving a reduction in crime and disorder in the young of our communities, through the medium of education
- promote the principles of positive citizenship in schools and their wider communities

The partnership between schools and the Police provides opportunities for pupils to enhance their knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and behaviours. The All Wales School Liaison Core Programme has three strands

- Drug and substance misuse education
- Social Behaviour and Community
- Safety

The programme consists of fifteen core lessons; five per strand. For primary pupils aged 5 to 11 years old, nine core lessons, three per strand, have been developed. Similarly for secondary pupils aged 11 to 16 years old, a further six core lessons, two per strand, are available. In addition, eighteen supplementary lessons have been developed. It must be stressed that individual schools have complete discretion to select lessons from the three strands of the core programme and supplementary menu to provide a balanced programme which best meets the needs of their pupils. All core programme lessons are delivered by police school liaison officers (SLOs).

The evaluation process was designed to measure the impact of the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme on children and young people and to specifically identify their experiences and views in relation to the following eight key criteria:

- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Behaviour
- Continuity and Progression
- Coherence
- Enjoyment

The first five criteria conform to the KUSAB model adopted as a training template by all Police Forces in Wales. The remaining three educational criteria were agreed with the National Coordinator. The national evaluation 2007 will act as a benchmark for any future such evaluations.
2. Data Collection

The national evaluation took place between March and June 2007. The following quantitative and qualitative evaluation methodologies were used to assess the impact of the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme as measured against the eight key criteria;

- Individual questionnaires for pupils in Years 2, 6 and 8
- Question banks suitable for mixed ability pupil focus groups from the targeted year groups
- Question banks for phase specific interviews with class teachers, head teachers, PSE coordinators and School Liaison Officers.

2.1 Quantitative

Individual pupil questionnaires for pupils in Years 2, 6 and 8 were completed in 143 schools; 118 primaries, representing approximately 9% of the 1297 primary schools, and 25 secondary, representing approximately 11% of the 224 secondary schools in Wales\(^1\). In each school the SLO facilitated the quantitative stage of the evaluation with Year 2, Year 6 and Year 8 pupils in the presence of the class teacher.

2.1.a Year 2 (pupils aged 6-7 years old)

Individual pupil questionnaires were completed by 2267 Year 2 pupils. This represents approximately 7% of the total population of 6-7 year olds in mainstream primary education in Wales (32,121)\(^2\). However, as the evaluation process involved both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, data was only collected from primary schools. Infant schools were not included in the evaluation. Pupils were asked verbally a series of questions and they answered by completing a simple, limited-response questionnaire with visual prompts.

2.1.b Year 6 (pupils aged 10-11 years)

In total 2539 Year 6 pupils completed individual pupil questionnaires, 1282 boys and 1257 girls. This represents a sample of approximately 7% of the total population of 10-11 year olds in mainstream primary education in Wales (34,888)\(^3\).

2.1.c Year 8 (pupils aged 12-13 years)

In total 583 Year 8 pupils from 25 secondary schools completed individual pupil questionnaires, 280 boys and 303 girls. This represents a sample of

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\(^1\) (source ‘Schools in Wales': NGfL Cymru).
\(^2\) (source “Schools in Wales: General Statistics 2006”; WAG)
\(^3\) (source “Schools in Wales: General Statistics 2006”; WAG)
approximately 1.6% of the total population of 12-13 year olds in mainstream secondary education in Wales (36,171).  

2.2 Qualitative

Using the agreed question bank, focus group sessions were held with mixed ability, representative groups of pupils in ten primary schools. Qualitative information was collected from pupils in Years 2 and 6. In total,

- 96 Year 2 pupils aged 6-7 years old participated; 49 boys and 47 girls.
- 96 Year 6 pupils aged 10 -11 years were consulted; 47 boys and 49 girls.

Further qualitative information was obtained in each of the ten primary settings visited by face to face interviews with

- Year 2 teachers
- Year 6 teachers
- Head teacher or member of the senior leadership team

The project team also undertook pupil focus groups in six secondary schools. Qualitative information was collected from 57 Year 8 pupils; 29 boys and 28 girls. Face to face interviews were also completed in six secondary settings with the

- PSE coordinator
- Head teacher or member of the senior leadership team

Finally, telephone interviews were conducted with the SLO of each school visited.

The conclusions and recommendations that follow are based on the evidence generated during the data collection phase of the evaluation.

\(^{4}\) (source "Schools in Wales: General Statistics 2006", WAG)
3. Conclusions

Most significantly, the evaluation findings indicate that the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme is very popular with the target audience. Children and young people were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences. From the findings of the individual pupil questionnaires it is apparent that overall levels of pupil satisfaction with the programme are high. Pupil focus group feedback corroborates this conclusion (see below).

Major strengths of the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme were identified during the evaluation process. Pupils across all age ranges (6-7 years, 10-11 years and 12-13 year olds) consistently described the core programme as important, interesting and useful. In the broadest terms girls were slightly more positive about the programme than boys. Pupils found it educationally beneficial to have police officers contributing to their learning. Their view was that the School Liaison Officers had more detailed knowledge of substance misuse, community behaviour and safety than their teachers. The pupils particularly valued the relationships they had developed with their SLO.

Head teachers, senior leaders, secondary PSE coordinators and class teachers were also similarly affirmative about the educational value of the programme. They felt that the impact of the programme on children and young people depends to a significant extent on the quality of the individual SLO, particularly in terms of the relationship established with the school.
3.1 Knowledge

In terms of the impact of the programme on pupils’ knowledge, the evaluation findings are very encouraging.

Pupils reported that core programme lessons had a beneficial impact on their knowledge of the topics covered. Focus group findings indicated that, in the short term they had an excellent recall of the themes covered, the key messages and the content of individual lessons. Specifically pupils confirmed that their knowledge of the personal and social consequences of taking drugs had improved. They had a greater knowledge of anti-social behaviour and they were more aware of the potential consequences of their behaviour for themselves and others. An increased awareness of community safety issues is another positive outcome. Pupils were more aware of potential risks and were better prepared to face the reality of everyday situations as AWSLCP lessons had helped them know what they should do and how to react.

In general terms, teachers and senior leaders provided constructive feedback, perceiving the core programme as having a positive effect on pupils’ knowledge. They felt that the programme provides relevant, accurate, factual information, building on, reinforcing and adding value to school PSE programmes. Pupils are more informed about the topics covered and the AWSLCP helps to clarify pupil perceptions of the law and the role of the police.
However, teachers found it very difficult to quantify the impact of the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme on pupil knowledge. There was no evidence that schools, primary or secondary, systematically assess the impact of the AWSLCP on pupil knowledge of the strands addressed by the programme.

### 3.2 Understanding

The evaluation findings indicate that the programme has a positive impact of the on pupils’ understanding.

The clear majority of pupils felt that they had a better understanding after experiencing core programme lessons. They perceived AWSLCP topics as useful to them in their everyday lives currently and felt that the topics will also be relevant in the future. Developing a clearer understanding about the work of the police, the law and the ages of criminal responsibility were important outcomes for pupils. Also most pupils felt that AWSLCP lessons helped them to think about the topics studied and to understand other people’s opinions.

The majority of teachers provided positive feedback about the impact of the core programme on pupils’ understanding. It is seen as relevant, successfully building upon pupils’ prior knowledge and reinforcing messages delivered by the school. In providing up-to-date information the programme supplements the role of the teacher and complements work undertaken in other curriculum areas and with other external agencies.

### 3.3 Skills

The core programme has a beneficial impact on the development of pupils’ personal and social skills. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves. They are made more aware of the consequences of their behaviour and pupils reported that they were more able to make decisions about their well-being and personal safety following core programme lessons. AWSLCP activities help them to apply interpersonal skills in terms of their ability to work cooperatively with peers and also provide opportunities for pupils to develop their key skills through structured group activities. However, relatively few pupils were able to clearly identify how AWSLCP sessions helped them to apply their communication skills specifically in term of asking questions.

Teachers acknowledged that the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme has a positive effect on pupils’ skill development. They identified the programme as contributing to the ongoing development and application of

- Decision making skills
- Personal and social skills
- Thinking skills; including problem solving
3.4 Attitudes

Pupils were very positive about opportunities to clarify their personal attitudes during AWSLCP lessons. Exposure to the programme had allowed them to consider their personal attitudes towards substance misuse, to make decisions about right and wrong and to treat other people with respect. They felt that the programme has helped them to recognise anti-social behaviour and encourages them to see things from other people’s perspective. They are more aware of the need to take personal responsibility for their own safety particularly when using the internet.

Teachers were unable and unwilling to attribute positive changes in pupils’ attitudes to any single intervention including the core programme. Head teachers and senior managers were generally positive but they also found it impossible to quantify the impact of the programme. They were optimistic that the AWSLCP, with reinforcement of key messages by teaching staff and a supportive school ethos, will have a long term positive impact on pupil attitudes in respect to substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and safety.

3.5 Behaviour

It is not possible to identify a direct causal relationship between the core programme and a positive change in pupil behaviour. Many complex variables interact to influence personal decision making and subsequent behaviour. However, the trends in the findings are encouraging.

The majority of pupils reported that they would be less likely to experiment with legal or illegal substances following core programme lessons. Most pupils also reported that AWSLCP sessions helped them to behave responsibly and they were in general agreement that such interventions would make them less likely to become involved in anti-social behaviour in the community. Finally, older pupils indicated that the programme helped them to become more independent and felt that lessons with the SLO made them less likely to take risks in their personal life.

Given the limited number of core programme lessons which pupils experience, and the relatively long time periods between each lesson, teachers were unable to make quantitative judgments about the impact of the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme on pupil behaviour. Most teachers offered generally constructive, subjective comments. They felt that the AWSLCP makes pupils more aware of the issues covered and helps them realise that personal actions have consequences. They were optimistic that the programme, in the longer term, will encourage pupils to take greater responsibility for their own actions, their well-being and personal safety.
3.6 Continuity and progression

The majority of pupils were unable to clearly identify continuity and progression in their learning with the SLO. Pupils could see that the programme has some common themes and they found it helpful when the SLO relates new information to work they have covered previously. They were generally unsure about how core programme lessons and learning link together progressively across key stages.

Teachers, in the main, felt that the core programme offers clear continuity and progression and that it complements school PSE provision successfully. They indicated that AWSLCP lessons play an important role in the delivery of aspects of PSE covering relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers reported that the AWSLCP is incorporated into PSE schemes of work and curriculum planning. However, this was not evidenced or independently confirmed during school visits.

3.7 Coherence

Although Year 6 pupils perceived the programme as balanced they were generally unable, when answering individual pupil questionnaires, to identify how AWSLCP lessons linked with and complemented teacher-delivered sessions. However during focus group discussions pupils in most schools were able to identify some links between the AWSLCP and the curriculum such as PSE, circle time, RE lessons, and whole school activities such as assemblies.

The AWSLCP is viewed as coherent, balanced and age-appropriate. Core content has evolved over the life of the national programme. The number and range of lessons available has increased considerably; there are fifteen core lessons and a further eighteen supplementary menu lessons have been developed to provide additional flexibility. Individual schools have discretion to select up to a maximum of fifteen lessons from the three strands of the core programme and supplementary menu to provide a balanced programme. Increasingly the programme delivered in individual schools is tailored to fit local needs. Consequently, comparisons, both national and regional, for evaluation purposes become more difficult to make. Although planned and coordinated nationally, teachers perceive the core programme as sufficiently adaptable to address the needs of individual schools and to meet the emerging needs of young people and local policing priorities.
3.8 Enjoyment

Overwhelmingly, the evidence is that pupils, across all age groups surveyed, enjoy the AWSLCP and most report that they would like more AWSLCP lessons. Most teachers were in agreement that pupils are engaged by the programme and reported positive feedback from pupils about the AWSLCP.

3.9 Operational findings

As programmes of PSE are the responsibility of the school there is a clear requirement for schools to plan an appropriate broad and balanced PSE programme to avoid unnecessary repetition of related topics across year groups. Inputs by the police should complement the planned PSE provision.

Teachers are benefiting in terms of their personal awareness of crime prevention and community safety issues from their involvement in the core programme. There is also some evidence that pupils are sharing their learning with parents and carers. However, to date, there is little evidence to indicate that the AWSLCP is contributing to a greater awareness of crime reduction messages with parents or the wider community.

The majority of School Liaison Officers were very satisfied with the level of training they had received and felt fully equipped to deliver the programme successfully. Those officers who had successfully completed the graduate diploma course fully endorsed the experience and described the outcomes in terms of their classroom practice as hugely beneficial. Relationships with schools are generally well established and effective partnership working is becoming the norm. Although the model of PSE adopted has a significant impact on the delivery of the core programme, the view of the SLOs interviewed was that the AWSLCP is gradually being integrated into school PSE programmes. There was evidence that increasingly officers are working closely with schools to select appropriate content. However, several SLOs interviewed were not familiar with the full range of supplementary lessons. Officers are optimistic that educating pupils about different aspects of crime and disorder, and the effects upon the wider community, should help in the longer term with crime and disorder reduction and prevention.

Nationally it is reported that senior police officers publicly support the AWSLCP. Nevertheless, in one force area during the period of the evaluation approximately 25% of the School Liaison team (7/30) was taken off SLO duties to meet other priorities. This decision in turn had a serious impact on the delivery of the programme in the short term. Such operational considerations have the potential to undermine relationships with schools.
4. **Recommendations**

Given the findings of the national evaluation, the following recommendations are put forward for further consideration:

4.1 As a national programme there needs to be greater consistency in terms of the delivery of the programme and the quality of the learning experiences of children and young people across force areas.

4.2 There should be nationally agreed targets against the KUSAB model for all force areas as minimum performance criteria. The average pupil response rates from this evaluation should act as a baseline for future improvement.

4.3 The programme needs a degree of rationalisation with supplementary menu lessons replacing existing core programme lessons as appropriate to meet the emerging needs of schools.

4.4 Existing core programme and supplementary menu lesson plans will need to be reviewed, updated and adapted as necessary to complement the introduction of the revised Curriculum in Wales in 2008.

4.5 Specifically, there is a need to review current Key Stage 1 programme content, lesson plans and methods of delivery in order to complement the Personal and Social Development and Well-Being area of learning in the *Foundation Phase Framework for Children’s Learning for 3-7 year-olds in Wales*.

4.6 There is a need to consider if appropriate activities for children in the 3 to 5 year old age range should be included in the core programme.

4.7 The existing core programme and supplementary menu lesson plans for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 will need to be reviewed, updated and adapted as necessary to complement the revised *PSE Framework for 7 to 19 year olds in Wales*.

4.8 As the revised *PSE Framework for 7 to 19 year olds in Wales* has been extended for 16 to 19 year olds, a view needs to be taken about the possibility of extending the core programme so that it is made available to post 16 learners.

4.9 The methodologies used to deliver the programme will need to be reviewed to address the emphasis on skill development in the revised *PSE Framework for 7 to 19 year olds in Wales*. 
4.10 Continue to promote with SLOs, through regular training opportunities, a more participative approach to learning. Specifically, more time for question and answer sessions to develop pupils’ communication skills need to be further incorporated into the programme.

4.11 The retention of experienced SLOs and the mandatory participation by newly recruited SLOs on the Foundation Degree course should be a priority.

4.12 It would be beneficial for probationary police officers, as part of their training, to undertake schools visits with School Liaison Officers to raise awareness of the aims and potential benefits of the AWSLCP.

4.13 There is an ongoing need to consult with and respond to the views of children and young people, and teachers as part of the monitoring, evaluation and subsequent fine tuning of the programme.

4.14 There is a need for all SLOs to have ready access to high quality, bilingual, nationally available resources which are systematically updated and refined.

4.15 Involvement of SLOs is essential when core programme materials are adapted. A rational approach is to adopt the model in which revised lesson plans are piloted and evaluated by officers following the foundation degree prior to a national roll-out.

4.16 To ensure the core programme is inclusive and meets the need of all learners, there is a need to further develop differentiated pupil materials and activities.

4.17 Systems need to be refined to allow major operational decisions and day to day issues such as staff absence which impact on the delivery of the core programme to be communicated effectively to school leaders.

4.18 Schools should determine which elements of the core programme are delivered to young people within their setting. School liaison officers should be invited to make contributions that are within their specific knowledge and expertise to complement the knowledge and skills of the teacher. Ideally school staff and school liaison officers should jointly plan sessions which should be delivered under the direction of the class teacher.

4.19 To further improve the dissemination of information to schools, an annually updated bilingual overview of the aims, rationale, structure and content of the AWSLCP should be distributed nationally. Equally, schools need to address how best to share information about the AWSLCP internally.
This executive summary report has been produced by Markit Training and Consultancy Ltd. on behalf of the National Coordinator, All Wales School Liaison Core Programme. The authors and members of the research team would like to thank all of the children and young people, teachers and school liaison officers who contributed to the evaluation process.

A copy of the full report of The National Evaluation of the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme is available from:

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## Appendix 1;

### THE ALL WALES POLICE SCHOOL LIAISON CORE PROGRAMME and SUPPLEMENTARY MENU

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