Centre for Public Health Research

Implementing a Webster-Stratton parent and child programme in a school setting: an evaluation of a pilot project

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Background and rationale

Behavioural problems in children are a growing concern to communities and policy makers. Such problems are characterised by antisocial behaviour that includes defiance, aggression, and the violation of adult authority in the home as well as in school. A number of initiatives have been developed to tackle behaviour problems in children. The Incredible Years Series, developed and researched by Webster-Stratton, consists of three linked programmes for teachers, parents and children and is an example of one such development. This evaluation examined the process of implementation of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme in one primary school in Halton. It was delivered as a pilot project by the Branches Project, a voluntary sector organisation based in Halton.

Research objectives

The study sought to explore the implementation process. In particular, it sought to understand:

- the way in which the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme was implemented in a community setting;
- the processes that lead to acceptance or refusal to participate in the programme from individual parents;
- perceptions of teaching staff about the value of the programme;
- perceptions of parents about the value of the programme;
- the power relations between key stakeholders: parents, teaching professionals and family support workers.

In addition, the study sought to explore the outcomes from the intervention in respect of the impact of the programme on:

- children's behaviour;
- parenting skills among parents;
- teachers' behaviour management practices;
- the school's behaviour management protocols and arrangements;
- the relationships between the school and parents.

Study design and methods

A case study approach was used to explore the implementation of the programme in depth. Specific data collection methods used were:

- semi-structured interviews with parents, teachers and the pilot project facilitators;
- observations of the Dina Dinosaur sessions with the children;
- secondary analysis of relevant documents;
- analysis of routine assessment data on outcomes derived from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Parenting Daily Hassles Questionnaire, used before and after the intervention.

Key findings

- The Dina Dinosaur curriculum was delivered with fidelity to the original specification, thus maximising the chance of it leading to tangible benefits for the children targeted for the intervention. This demonstrates that, with appropriate training, it is possible for a voluntary sector organisation (the Branches Project) to deliver the curriculum within a community setting successfully.
- The parallel delivery of the Webster-Stratton parenting programme in the school setting by the professionals from the same voluntary sector organisation had a number of benefits:
  - it reinforced the messages in the Dina Dinosaur programme, so that there was more likelihood of the targeted children being given consistent messages at school and at home;
  - it extended the opportunities for parents to benefit from the parenting programme beyond those of the children directly benefiting from the Dina Dinosaur programme;
  - it led to improved links between home and school for those parents who participated;
  - it led to increased levels of parental involvement in their children's lives.
- There was qualitative and quantitative evidence to suggest that the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme introduced and delivered by the Branches Project made a positive difference to children's social and emotional literacy and to their observable behaviours, in respect of:
  - reductions in aggressive behaviour;
  - improved social behaviour;
  - increased relationships with peers;
  - improved readiness for school.

- There was qualitative evidence to suggest that parental attitudes and parenting behaviours towards children changed positively.

- The outcomes measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Parenting Daily Hassles Scale indicated that there were statistically significant changes in terms of the total difficulties parents experienced and the children's emotional, behavioural and hyperactivity symptoms after the intervention.

- The school management aspects of the Webster-Stratton programme were not implemented and the involvement of school staff was limited to one person who acted as the link between the pilot project and the school. Given the importance of close collaboration between the school and the Branches Project and the potential synergy generated by such collaboration, the following steps might facilitate the implementation of the school management aspects of the programme:
    - relying on a Webster-Stratton 'champion' within the school who had some power to influence the process;
    - drawing up a partnership agreement between the school and the Branches Project that defined roles and responsibilities;
    - providing appropriate and timely training to teachers to generate commitment and ownership of the programme by the school;
    - introducing a steering group, which meets regularly to oversee implementation and troubleshoot issues;
    - designing a careful evaluation plan to examine the process of implementation.

Conclusion

The Dina Dinosaur curriculum could make a positive contribution to the teaching of social and emotional aspects of learning with targeted children as part of a whole school approach. The Branches Project has the expertise to deliver the programme successfully with positive outcomes. As such, the Dina Dinosaur curriculum would fit in well with the complementary Webster-Stratton classroom management programme and with the social and emotional aspects of the curriculum developed by the Department for Education and Skills as part of the National Primary Strategy that has been adopted in Halton. The issue of implementation is the key if the introduction of the programme at a wider scale is to fit with national initiatives and

with whole school approaches to teaching social and emotional literacy in primary schools.

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1   Background and rationale

Behavioural problems in children are a growing concern to communities and policy makers. Such problems are characterised by antisocial behaviour that includes defiance, aggression, and the violation of adult authority in the home as well as in school (Webster-Stratton & Herbert, 1994; Webster-Stratton, 2003). The mid- and long-term consequences of behavioural problems in children can be serious. For example, poor self-esteem, low levels of social competence, including difficulties making friends, and depression, have all been shown to be closely linked to aggressive behaviour in young children (Scott, 1998; Webster-Stratton & Lindsay, 1999; Coie, 1990; Kazdin, 1995; Loeber, 1991).

The ecological understanding of risk factors in child development would tend to suggest that the existence of conduct problems in children can be exacerbated by, and spill over to, the realms of the family, school and eventually the community (Vondra, 1990). Challenging child behaviour is a common element to most families showing early signs of stress. Furthermore, these patterns of behaviour in children tend to be linked to their disaffection, poor academic achievement, and, mainly in the case of boys, antisocial and criminal behaviour in adolescence (Farrington, 1995; Broidy et al., 2003).

A number of initiatives have been developed to tackle behaviour problems in children through parenting programmes. The Incredible Years Teacher, Parent and Child Programmes, developed and researched by Webster-Stratton for a number of decades, consists of three linked programmes for teachers, parents, and children. The theoretical underpinning for the Incredible Years Series is based on the importance of the family and the school as key settings for the socialisation of children. Negative and aggressive behaviours in children, it is argued, are reinforced by inconsistent and coercive forms of parenting both at home and in school. The Incredible Years Series is based on the principles of emotional literacy and seeks to change behaviours and improve outcomes in children through the consistent application of behaviour management techniques in the home and at school, reinforced by an 18 week long direct intervention with the children themselves. Evidence suggests that the Incredible Years Series is effective in increasing the

social competence of children, improving the parenting skills of significant adults and improving relationships between parents and schools (Webster-Stratton, 2001; Moran, Ghate & Van der Merwe, 2004).

1.2   Scope of the evaluation

This study examined the process of implementation of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme in one primary school in Halton. The service provider was the Branches Project, a voluntary sector organisation with a track record of providing successful parenting support services and projects in Halton over the last two years (Artaraz & Thurston, 2005). The setting for the study, Halton, is the eighteenth most deprived local authority in England and Wales and the school selected for the pilot project was broadly representative of community provision in a poor neighbourhood.

1.2.1   Programme implementation

The question of implementation was central to the evaluation of this pilot project. In the case of the Incredible Years Series, poor programme fidelity is believed to affect the extent to which outcomes for children and parents can be positively influenced (Tracy Bywater, personal communication). Thus, the study sought to explore the implementation process over time. In particular, the study sought to understand:

- the way in which the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme was implemented in a community setting;
- the processes that lead to acceptance or refusal to participate in the programme from individual parents;
- perceptions of teaching staff about the value of the programme;
- perceptions of parents about the value of the programme;
- the power relations between key stakeholders: parents, teaching professionals and family support workers.

1.2.2   Programme outcomes

The Incredible Years Series has been shown to produce improved outcomes in children by reducing aggressive behaviour and increasing social and emotional competence (The Incredible Years, n.d.). However, because these outcomes in children are linked to parental and teacher behaviour management practices, the evaluation also set out to explore the impact of the programme on:

- children's behaviour;
- parenting skills among parents;

- teachers' behaviour management practices;
- the school's behaviour management protocols and arrangements;
- the relationships between the school and parents.

Thus, the study sought to describe the changes that took place through the process of implementation of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme in a community setting at a number of different levels.

1.3   Structure of the report

The report extends over 6 chapters. After a presentation of the background and aims of the study, Chapter 2 presents a literature review on the emergence of the concept of social and emotional literacy and the range of interventions currently in use. This literature review provides the theoretical basis on which to build an understanding of the potential contribution of the voluntary and community sector to the delivery, in schools, of interventions based on the principles of emotional literacy.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological principles and the data gathering techniques employed in relation to the specific research objectives. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study as they relate to the delivery of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme in the school setting. Chapter 5 presents findings in terms of the impact of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme. This chapter contains qualitative and quantitative analysis of the impact of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme including changes in the children observed and discussed by parents throughout the research process. The final chapter, Chapter 6, discusses the findings of the research and considers the lessons that can be learnt from this particular experience.

Chapter 2
Literature review

2.1   Introduction

This Chapter starts by exploring the concept of family support in terms of the needs families might express and the possible service response to those needs. It also considers the ways in which family support services that are based on developing the social and emotional literacy of children, parents and teachers can help meet some of those needs.

2.2   What are family support needs?

Research suggests that parenting can be affected by a multitude of factors, which can be understood at the level of the individual, at the level of family relationships and dynamics, and at the level of the environment. However, how needs are generated within families is, to some extent, dependent on the resources that individuals and families have to draw on.

Family support needs can have their origin at the level of the individual. For example, a child born with complex physical or behavioural needs might trigger a crisis in certain families. A similar crisis and need might develop in a family with a mother whose postnatal depression has gone largely unnoticed. Alternatively, family crises might develop from distorted relationships in the family, either between parents and children (Crockenberg & Leerkes, 2000) or between parents, which might lead to separation, divorce or domestic violence. Research also suggests that the wider social and economic environment – for example, the process of growing up in poverty – is highly relevant to the quality of family life, parenting practices and their effects on children (Palmer, Carr & Kenway, 2004). This indicates the inter-related nature of the factors that can generate family support needs.

Evidence suggests that living in poverty can generate stresses that affect the physical environment, the health of individuals, their behaviours and relationships. For example, in a review of the living conditions and parenting practices of poor families, Ghate and Hazel (2002) found serious housing deficiencies to be a problem for almost half of the sample surveyed, a matter which limited families' ability to provide a physical environment fit for child rearing. The health of individuals was also adversely affected by chronic forms of stress and anxiety.

The effect of poverty on behaviour and on relationships is also well documented. Poor environments tend to have an over-representation of single parent-headed households, which can also add to the stress associated with family life and parenting. For example, single parenting, parental mental health and child behaviour are closely linked (Ghate & Hazel, 2002). The evidence also suggests that there is a link between poverty and the quality of the parenting provided for children, including increased levels of inconsistent parenting (Crokenberg & Leerkes, 2000) and punitive parenting (Hashima & Amato, 1995). This is consistent with evidence to suggest that challenging child behaviour is more prevalent in poor households (Halpern, 2000).

Overall, research suggests that the quality of family life and the factors that affect it are inextricably linked to the wider socio-economic patterns of society. The stress generated by bringing up a family in poverty can affect individuals' physical and mental health, their behaviours and their relationships both inside the family and with the community.

2.3   What are family support services?

There seems to be no universally agreed definition of what constitute family support services. This is in spite of the fact that the Government has put considerable emphasis on the importance of family support in the development of services for children, young people and families. The state's response to the needs of families has changed dramatically over the last eight years. The arrival of the Labour Government into office in 1997 has been followed by an unprecedented reform in welfare services and renewed interest in families, children and young people. Informed by the concept of social exclusion, services have sought to intervene in the lives of families living in poor socioeconomic circumstances with the aim of breaking the cycle of disadvantage that reproduces poor outcomes in new generations.

The Government has emphasised that services should be oriented towards the concepts of prevention and early intervention (Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2003a), notions that were and are still clearly linked to the aim of reducing the need for the state's intervention in cases of child protection. This approach developed in the mid-1990s as a critique of family support approaches that emphasised, or were based on, the child 'rescue' paradigm (Tilbury, 2005). However, whilst there is considerable emphasis in policy terms on family support, there continues to be a lack of clarity about what constitutes family support in practice, particularly in its preventative form.

Family support services could be defined as any service designed to provide support that impinges on any of the multiple factors that could potentially affect family dynamics and parenting described in the previous section. Yet, the preventative family support model has sometimes been accused of engaging only with a narrow set of concerns, limiting the help provided to information, advice and referral and often dominated by one-off encounters or telephone conversations rather than engaging with potential service users (Tilbury, 2005). Bloomfield et al. argue (2004) that family support services should be underpinned by a commitment to help parents become independent problem solvers who recognise the effects of their behaviour on their children. At this point in time, the only family support services that fulfil this principle are those based on complex community-based programmes which aim to address the multiple and interconnected nature of problems, often mediated by poverty, that can test resilience and the ability of families to cope. The Branches Project is part of this web of complex, community-based family support services that operates in Halton from within the context of prevention.

The Branches Project provides preventative forms of support that include carefully designed interventions for families or individual members within families. The working model of the service rests on a service process described elsewhere (Artaraz & Thurston, 2005). Some of these forms of provision are currently expanding into models of partnership working with other agencies, including statutory services, to better meet the needs of children and families and reach positive outcomes as identified in the *Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework* (DfES, 2004). The sections that follow explore the research evidence in respect of the role of social and emotional literacy development in primary schools as well as more traditional forms of family support in the home, and through parenting groups.

2.4   Social and emotional literacy

The concept of social and emotional literacy has a precursor in the idea, developed by Gardner (1983), that humans have multiple intelligences. He argued that human intelligence consisted of a number of different types of intelligence, including musical, logical and spatial forms. The area of the emotions was represented in two forms of intelligence. The first, interpersonal intelligence, was described as the ability to understand the desires, motivations and intentions of others. The second, intrapersonal intelligence, was seen as the ability to understand one's own feelings and motivations (Gardner, 1983). The theory of multiple intelligences was the first to underline the importance of the emotions for functioning adequately in the world.

In the early 1990s Mayer, Caruso and Salovey drew together research in areas such as clinical psychology, neurology and artificial intelligence in order to develop the first formal theory of emotional intelligence (Mayer, 2001). They defined the term as

> … the ability to recognise the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem solve on the basis of them. Emotional intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999, p. 267).

In other cases, emotional intelligence has been heralded as a non-cognitive ability that is crucial to the ability of some people to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). In a similar vein, Pasi, (2001, p. 51) has described five different components of emotional intelligence as:

- self awareness: understanding one's strengths and limits;
- self-management: handling one's emotions well;
- motivation: moving towards one's goals;
- empathy: the capacity to take another's perspective;
- social skills: the ability to communicate, listen and interact effectively.

Many of these ideas have been adopted in the world of education. Here, the emphasis has been in harnessing new knowledge on emotions to find ways of managing human relationships and improving educational achievement. Goleman's book (1996) brought the concept into the popular domain and is responsible, in part, for the transfer of the term 'social and emotional intelligence' to education. In his book, Goleman argued that emotional intelligence was directly related to the level of success in life and that it was something that could be learned.

2.5   Social and emotional literacy in education

In the world of education, Cohen (1999, 2001) is one of the authors who expanded the work of Goleman (1996). Cohen coined the new term, social and emotional literacy which has now been added to the vocabulary of emotional intelligence in schools and is often talked about in the same terms. Cohen defined social and emotional literacy as "the ability to 'read' or decode one's own emotions and those of others; to use decoded information to solve social-emotional problems; and to be creative, helpful learners" (Cohen in Kassem, 2002, p. 368). His work has focused mainly on describing successful school programmes in the United States that are designed to improve social and emotional literacy.

There are two fundamental applications of this area of study in the world of education. The first is the relationship between emotions and the ability to learn. Research into the functioning of the brain has contributed to an understanding of the role of emotions in learning. In the case of education, it is known that cognitive abilities function optimally when the underlying stress levels in the learning environment are low. Reducing the emotional responses to stress, increasing self-understanding and rationalising behaviours are all examples of the techniques used by social and emotional literacy interventions to improve children's ability to learn (Kassem, 2002).

The second application of the social and emotional literacy model lies in the potential it has for managing socially competent behaviour. A key element developed in the process of improving an individual's emotional literacy is the ability to 'decode' or read the emotional state of oneself and of others. Emotional self-awareness can be important in developing an understanding of 'self', itself an element in the process of growing up. On the other hand, improved emotional literacy also helps individuals understand the non-stated emotions of others through behavioural and non-verbal signals, and therefore increases their ability to empathise with others. A heightened understanding of emotions can help in understanding the reactions that lead to 'impulsive' behaviour, for example, by increasing the ability to control emotions and express them appropriately. Anger management training, for example, is widely acknowledged to work along these lines (Faupel, Herrick, & Sharpe, 1998).

Social and emotional literacy interventions in schools also tend to embrace activities to improve the ability to work cooperatively in small groups. This includes improved skills in building relationships, such as the ability to build and maintain trust in others and the ability to establish meaningful personal connections with peers. Social and emotional literacy is seen to lie at the heart of all these skills and forms of social behaviour, both of which require complex and constant communication and conflict resolution skills. Social and emotional literacy can increase children's understanding of their and others' behaviour and can lead to more harmonious collective learning environments (Antidote, 2003).

2.6   The place of social and emotional literacy in education in the UK
In the UK, social and emotional literacy has become an integral part of the educational policy framework. For example, the *National Primary Strategy for the Development of Children's Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills* (DfES, 2003b,

2005) provides a resource for early years settings and schools that comprises a curriculum framework for the teaching of social, emotional and behavioural skills to children. It integrates the teaching of social and emotional literacy within a national strategy for the development of children's social, emotional and behavioural skills. This is based on the view that these skills have an important role to play in improving school behaviour, increasing learning, and improving general happiness and well-being among children, all of which are outcomes in *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003a). The rationale for the inclusion of a social, emotional and behavioural skills strategy reflects much of the research evidence presented earlier that links behaviour to the emotions. Five broad domains encompass the range of skills that are relevant to social, emotional and behavioural skills: self-awareness; managing feelings; motivation; empathy; and, social skills (DfES, 2003b, p. 6).

Weare and Gray (2003) have described how some local education authorities have incorporated social and emotional literacy activities into their behaviour management strategic plans. Others have integrated it into their health schools work and sought to develop a whole school approach to the development of social and emotional literacy (Weare, 2005), a strategy that is more aligned to the approach of the Webster-Stratton teacher, parent and child programmes.

The social, emotional and behavioural skills national strategy is conceptualised within a framework that integrates the various levels of social and emotional literacy provision. Thus, it contributes to personal, social and health education (PSHE) in primary schools, as well as targeted provision for specific groups of children or individuals who might require it. The various levels of provision are shown in Figure 2.6.1.

Figure 2.6.1   Levels of provision envisaged in the National Strategy for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills

Whole school policies for promoting
emotional health and well-being.
Teaching social, emotional and behavioural
skills to all children.

Small group social, emotional
and behavioural
skills interventions for children

Individual
intervention
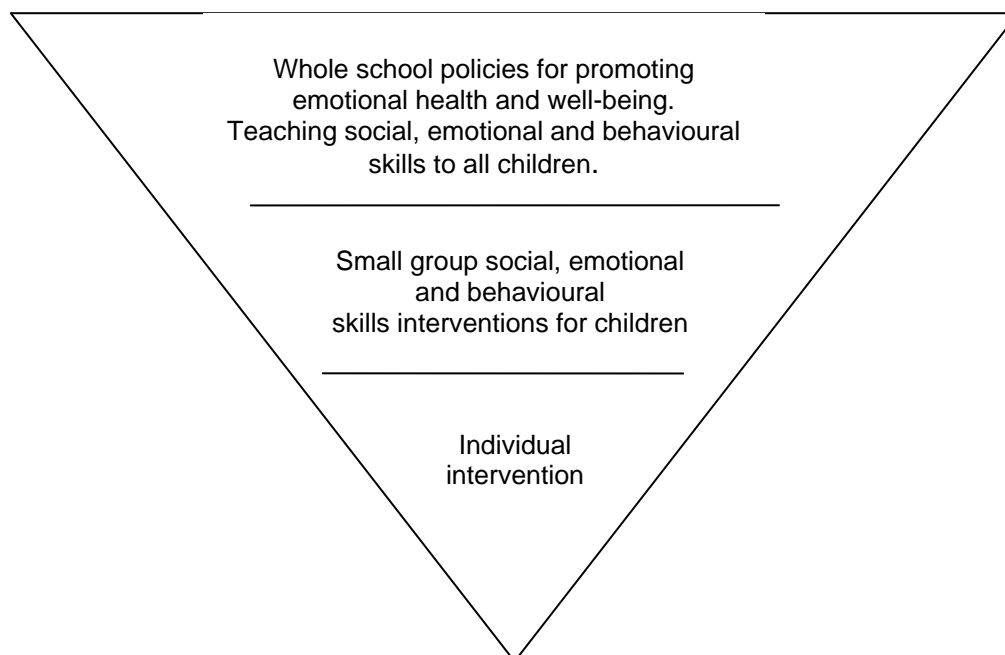
(DfES, 2003b, p. 9).

Of the various levels of intervention represented in Figure 2.6.1, the intervention provided by the Branches Project in one school in Halton fits into the second tier of provision (targeted provision for small groups). This social and emotional literacy intervention is called Dina Dinosaur and is part of the Incredible Years Series developed by Webster-Stratton (1999). The Dina Dinosaur programme is for young children who present conduct problems early in life. It has been developed into a universal classroom programmes for young children to promote their social competence and prevent them from developing conduct problems in later years. In particular, Dina Dinosaur is based on the promotion of children's social skills, increasing their conflict management and problem solving skills and making them ready for school. The programme is effective for children between the ages of four and eight. The Webster-Stratton parenting programme has been widely adopted in Head Start projects in the United States and has also been incorporated into many parenting programmes in Sure Start (www.incredibleyears.com).

2.7   Conclusion

This chapter has explored how individually tailored family support interventions might be able to help families adapt successfully to their social environment and manage the potentially deleterious effects of poverty on family life. The Webster-Stratton

parent, child and school programme is a form of intervention that can help parents and educators to cope with a diversity of behaviours in children, as well as develop the social, emotional and behavioural skills of targeted individual children who are most in need.

Chapter 3
Study design and methodology

3.1   Research objectives

This study focused on the work conducted in Halton by the Branches Project with specific reference to the implementation of a Webster-Stratton parent and child programme in a primary school. The study set out to explore the process of implementation as well as the impact that the programme of activities delivered by the Branches Project had on the participating families. Thus, the study sought to describe the changes that took place through the process of implementation at the level of the individual, the family and the school.

3.2   Research design

This study was based on a case study of the Branches Project's pilot project in Brookvale School. Thus, it is the case itself that was of interest (Bryman, 2004; Keen & Packwood, 1995) and which provided an appropriate context within which specific research objectives were explored. Case studies involve intensive, detailed exploration of the dynamics of the setting and the ways in which the initiative develops over time, particularly in relation to key social processes. In keeping with the traditions of case study research, the intensive investigation of the specific case enables theoretical analysis, the outcomes from which may be applicable to understanding other similar settings and phenomena. The case study sought to provide new understandings of two key questions: firstly, in respect of the implementation process, in particular, the experience of bringing a therapeutic intervention into a community setting (the school) and to the process of partnership working between the statutory and the voluntary and community sectors, and, secondly, in respect of the outcomes of the targeted intervention on parents and children. A number of data collection strategies were used.

3.2.1   Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative work was carried out using semi-structured interviews with members from each stakeholder group. The number of interviews carried out is shown in Table 3.2.1.1. They included parents, teaching staff and practitioners from the Branches Project who delivered the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme. In keeping with an essentially inductive approach to the research as a whole, theoretical sampling was employed in such a way that interviewing continued until no new themes emerged

from the process (Bowling, 2004), or, as in the case of this study, until all main actors involved in the pilot project who agreed to participate did so.

Table 3.2.1.1 Total number of interviews conducted

	Number
Family support workers	3
Parents	11
School professionals	4
Other	1
Total	**19**

3.2.2 Observation

Observation of the Webster-Stratton parent training programme and of videotaped sessions of the delivery of the Dina Dinosaur programme in school with children was carried out. The researcher also observed a number of family support workers from the Branches Project conducting a range of daily professional activities.

3.2.3 Secondary sources

The following secondary data sources were accessed:

- the Branches Project management information and documentation, including project design and delivery plans;
- service activity data, including data about client-related activity (for example, case notes including referrals, assessment of need forms, action plans, follow-up documentation and so on).

3.2.4 Programme outcomes

Evidence suggests that promoting social and emotional literacy has positive outcomes for children in terms of behaviour and social and emotional competence as well as increasing the potential for educational achievement. The evaluation analysed quantitative outcome data that had been routinely collected by the Branches Project to assess the impact of the intervention using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1999) and the Parenting Daily Hassles Scale (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990; Crnic & Booth, 1991) both of which were filled in by parents.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was designed as a behavioural measure to assess the occurrence of behaviours associated with conduct problems,

hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, peer problems, and pro-social behaviour in children aged 4-16 (Goodman, Ford, Simmonds, Gatward & Meltzer, 2000). It has been used to evaluate specific interventions, such as parenting groups (YouthinMind, n.d.). It contains 25 items or statements and is completed by parents about their children. It has been developed and standardised using a British sample and has been used as a measure of treatment outcome (Hutchings, Eade, Jones & Bywater, 2004). The questionnaire produces a total score (0-40) plus five other scores that relate to emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and pro-social behaviours.

The Parenting Daily Hassles Scale assesses the frequency and intensity of 20 potential parenting 'daily hassles' experienced by adults caring for children. It has been widely used in research studies about children and families. It is based on a self-completion questionnaire and is described as easy to complete (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990; Crnic & Booth 1991). Four separate scores can be generated: the frequency of total hassles; the intensity of total hassles; a score for challenging behaviour; and, a score for parenting tasks that present a burden to parents. In the case of the total scores, cut-off points of 50 for the frequency score and 70 for the intensity score indicate high levels of pressure derived from parenting (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990; Crnic & Booth 1991).

Data collection took place at two separate points in time: immediately before the interventions and again after they had taken place. Comparisons were made of scores at these two different points in time to assess change. This is similar to approaches used in other evaluations (Scott, O'Connor & Futh, 2006).

The numbers of parents and children in the pilot project were small at the time of the fieldwork, limiting the value of the statistical analysis of the quantitative data collected. However, the incorporation of a systematic data gathering protocol that used valid and reliable measurement tools into the pilot project's processes will, over time, result in the collection of a critical mass of data for future analysis of the outcomes.

In total, data from 46 parents who had undergone the parenting aspect of the Webster-Stratton intervention were collected. Of them, six parents had children who had participated in the Dina Dinosaur programme delivered in the school. However, the very small numbers of children who participated in the Dina Dinosaur intervention and whose parents participated in the parenting programmes makes comparisons meaningless.

3.3   Data analysis

In-depth interview material was analysed thematically using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In-depth interviews were used to generate detailed accounts of participants' perceptions and experiences of parenting needs, the ways in which they could be met by parents and the school after the intervention, and to gauge the range and changes in views about parenting in disadvantaged environments. The analysis sought to provide an understanding of the perceptions of a diverse group of parents about parenting and the extent to which that experience informed their personal parenting style. Interviews were also used to provide an understanding of professionals' perceptions about their behaviour management practices in the classroom. Qualitative perceptions of professionals and parents were also used to explain their perceived understandings of the outcomes of parenting on the children.

The analysis also involved a documentary analysis of relevant reports and non-participant observation of parenting support activities carried out by the Branches Project and the school. These sources of data were used to develop an understanding of the changes, if any, that took place at the level of classroom management as well as at the level of the school as an organisation. Researcher observation, documentary analysis and fieldwork notes were part of the information used to understand the school's 'parenting' role and its development over the period of the study, including the degree to which new classroom management techniques were introduced or whether a wider cultural change took place among professionals and parents.

3.4   Research ethics

The Research Ethics Committee of the School of Applied and Health Sciences at the University of Chester gave approval for the research in March 2006.

Chapter 4
# Findings: implementation processes

4.1   Introduction
This chapter describes the Incredible Years Parenting Programme as it was implemented in the case study school. It begins with a theoretical description of the Incredible Years Parenting Programme and a justification for its design, supported by research evidence. It then goes on to consider how the programme was implemented in the case study school by presenting evidence from the interviews, observations and documentary analysis.

4.2   The Webster-Stratton Incredible Years Series Parent, Child and School Programme
The Webster-Stratton Incredible Years Series is a training programme based on a comprehensive curriculum designed to promote the social competence of children between the ages of two and eight. This includes preventing and/or reducing conduct and emotional problems in children. The Incredible Years Series comprises three different but interlocking programmes for parents, children and teachers. All of them have a common philosophy and course delivery strategy in that they work through a series of video clips used to increase recognition of common parenting problems and encourage the discussion and sharing of ideas among participants. Trained course leaders use these prompts in order to introduce a clearly defined curriculum that deals with aspects of the promotion of social competence in children through, for example, teaching parents how to play with their children, teaching children emotional literacy and anger management skills or teaching teachers effective classroom behaviour management skills. One basic premise of the programme is that the home and school constitute the key settings for the socialisation process of young children. Children's social and emotional development can take place more successfully if children are exposed to the same behaviours in both spheres of their lives and expected to maintain the same standards at home and in school. The second premise is that the behaviour of significant adults – typically family members and teachers – towards children effectively influences their responses towards them. In other words, in order to change the children's behaviours, adult behaviours may also have to change. The parenting aspects of this programme have been widely adopted in Head Start projects in the US and have also been incorporated into many parenting programmes throughout the UK as part of Sure Start's provision and by the Branches Project since its inception in

Halton (Artaraz & Thurston, 2005). Figure 4.2.1 illustrates the relationship between the different elements of the Programme.

Figure 4.2.1   Interlocking aspects of the Webster-Stratton Incredible Years Series
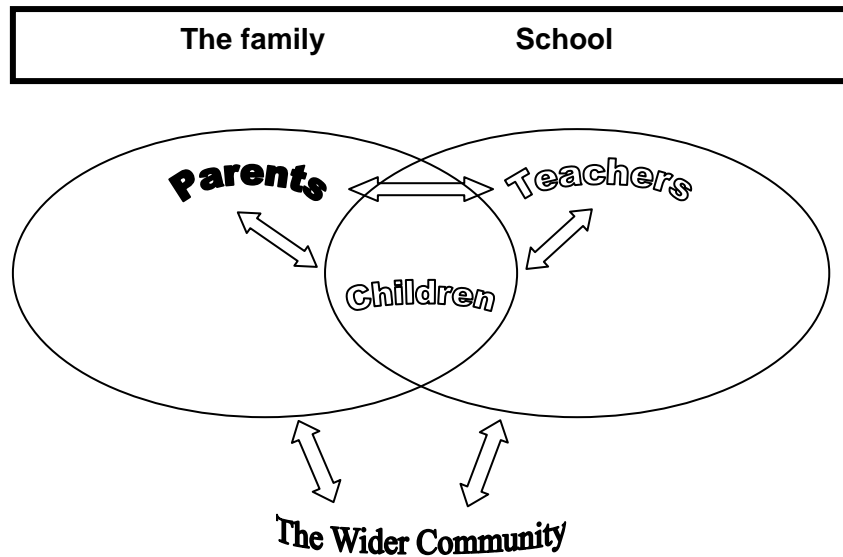
4.2.1   The Incredible Years Parenting Programme

The Incredible Years Parenting Programme consists of three differentiated programmes for parents of children at risk of, or presenting, conduct problems. The most commonly delivered programme in the UK is the BASIC programme for the promotion of social competence and reduction of behaviour problems (www.incredibleyears.com). It is described as the basic stepping stone into the programmes for teachers and children and introduces the core skills and competencies on which the entire Incredible Years Series is based. The curriculum is delivered through weekly two-hour sessions that include the following areas:

- how to play with children;
- ways to help children learn;
- effective praise of good behaviours and the use of incentives;
- setting limits and imposing consequences for bad behaviour;
- effective strategies for tackling bad behaviour.

4.2.2 The Incredible Years Training for Teachers

Some of the research on the impact of the parenting programme described above has suggested that even though the BASIC parent training programme is highly effective in tackling oppositional behaviour in children, it is possible that children's behaviour can improve in the home but not in the class or with their friends and peers (Taylor & Biglan, 1998). This is the main reason why Webster-Stratton devised specific curricula for teachers and children. The curriculum for teachers follows many of the precepts of the parenting course but is specifically designed to help teachers improve their classroom management skills whilst maintaining the same standard messages of behaviour for children that they are receiving in their homes. The second is a specific curriculum for children to teach them the skills necessary to change their behaviour, that is to say, social skills, problem solving, anger management and so on.

4.2.3 The Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur Curriculum for Young Children

Part of the Incredible Years Series developed by Webster-Stratton (1999), the Dina Dinosaur programme, is described as a comprehensive treatment for young children who present conduct problems early in life. The programme can be offered as a targeted intervention for children within the school setting or as an after school programme (Webster-Stratton, 2001). It aims to promote social competence and to prevent children from developing problems of behaviour in later years. In particular, the programme is based on the promotion of children's social skills, increasing their conflict management skills and making them ready for school. It is also appropriate for addressing issues such as attention problems, social isolation and peer rejection. According to its creator, Dina Dinosaur is ideal for a wide range of conditions in children such as those who can be characterised as oppositional, isolated, inattentive, impulsive, hyperactive or withdrawn, and who are often without a formal diagnostic label. The programme is effective for children between the ages of four and eight (Incredible Years n.d).

Research has shown that behavioural problems in children are often closely linked to poor social skills (Coie & Dodge, 1998). The process of forming and maintaining friendships in early childhood requires a complex mix of feelings, thoughts and behaviours (Coie, 1990). Sometimes, children encounter problems in learning all the skills necessary to become socially competent. This might be for a number of reasons that can have their root in the child (if, for example, a child suffers from hyperactivity or has learning difficulties) or in the social environment surrounding the child, such as a conflict within the family. Research has also demonstrated that growing and socialising

in the midst of poverty is likely to increase family and social stressors (Ghate & Hazel, 2002). This can lead to conflict which can in turn increase the chances of children showing social skills deficits.

Social skills deficits in children may prevent them from learning the necessary skills to manage their anger, regulate their emotions and even to make and maintain positive friendships. It is important that these social skills are developed early in life, since, according to researchers, long term social and emotional problems are closely related to poor relationships with peers in childhood (Loeber & Dishion, 1983). Webster-Stratton's treatment strategy for parents, children and teachers works on the premise that these early years difficulties in relationships with adults and peers need to be treated early in life in order to prevent them from becoming established and entrenched in a pattern from which it is difficult to escape. The Dina Dinosaur programme is one component of the additional help that can support children develop these skills. The Dina Dinosaur curriculum consists of a number of elements as illustrated below.

- Social skills
    - o Friendship.
    - o Teamwork.
    - o Cooperating and helping each other.
    - o Communication skills.
    - o Understanding feelings and the language of feelings.
    - o Rules.
- Problem solving
    - o Anger management.
    - o Steps of problem solving.
- Classroom behaviour.
    - o Quiet hand up.
    - o Compliance.
    - o Listening.
    - o Stop – look – think – check.
    - o Concentrating.

4.3 Evidence to support the efficacy of the Webster-Stratton programmes

The Incredible Years Training Series has been developed over more than 30 years and become highly respected for the quality and the quantity of its evidence base. The Webster-Stratton programmes have become widely used in the United States, especially in Head Start programmes (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1998). In the UK,

the parenting BASIC part of the programme has been integrated into family support services provided by many community based initiatives such as Sure Start. Bangor University has become the UK's leading centre for the promotion of the Incredible Years programmes and for conducting research on their impact.

All of Webster-Stratton's programmes have been thoroughly evaluated through randomized controlled trials. Measurement tools include observations of children in natural and laboratory settings, parent and teacher reports on children's behaviour and testing of children's problem-solving skills. The studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Webster-Stratton's programmes in the long as well as the short term (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2001; 2003; 2004).

The existing body of research has shown that the three components of Webster-Stratton's programmes for parents, children and teachers can make a noticeable and long-term difference to the behaviours of all the relevant actors. For example, after implementation of the various programmes, parents showed improved parenting skills and improved relationships with their children. Teachers showed less critical, more nurturing and more consistent behaviours with children, and children showed more pro-social behaviours, less aggression and better developed social skills. The second important finding from the research is that the positive impacts of the Webster-Stratton programmes on children increase significantly when the Dina Dinosaur child training programme is used in combination with, and as an integral part of, interventions that include both parents and teaching staff rather than children alone (Webster-Stratton, 1990). Finally, these behavioural changes have been observed over time (a year after completion of training) and across settings (social skills learned in the school were transferred to the home and vice versa). This provides the empirical evidence to demonstrate the efficacy of the Webster-Stratton programmes.

4.4 Implementation within the school setting

The Incredible Years small group children's training series comes with a strong evidence-base and clear delivery manuals with a detailed curriculum, clearly set objectives, methods of presentation and delivery of the curriculum, activities, group management and content for each class. In addition, staff directly involved in the delivery of the programme have all received training from certified trainers and are directly engaged in a continuous programme of improvement and monitoring that involves contact with certified trainers at Bangor University through attendance at training sessions and conferences.

How the Webster-Stratton programmes are implemented is important because in order to maintain the efficacy demonstrated in the United States, it is necessary that the programme maintains its ethos, methods of delivery and curriculum content. In the case of the Incredible Years, poor programme fidelity in its delivery is believed to affect potential outcomes in children and parents (Tracy Bywater, personal communication). However, the question of implementation of the programme is also crucial to the evaluation and one that existing accounts of the delivery of Webster-Stratton programmes assume is unproblematic. The reasons for this may be varied. The Webster-Stratton programmes have developed 'organically' over a number of years and the extension of the original parenting programmes to child training and school programmes has occurred in response to developments and advancements in the research evidence and requests from parents and teachers. On the other hand, the Webster-Stratton interventions have always been delivered in controlled environments, that is to say, in mental health centres and settings removed from both the home and the school. As a result, the issue of implementation has normally tended to be subsumed into the technical issue of curriculum delivery as the only element that requires monitoring.

Webster-Stratton has hypothesised that the delivery of Dina Dinosaur in a school setting instead of in a mental health centre external to the school might make the interventions even more effective due to the possibilities this offers in terms of training teachers using naturally occurring incidents and behaviours (Webster-Stratton, 1990). The transfer of the programme from controlled environments to a community setting, however, brings into sharp relief the importance of implementation and of the process by which it can be ensured that the programme is successfully embedded into the new setting. It also requires that aims and objectives, working relationships as well as rights and responsibilities of all the main actors (parents, teachers, and programme facilitators) are established and respected for the benefit of the programme's ultimate aims. The following section describes the process of implementation in this pilot project.

4.4.1 Description of the implementation process

The original idea for the implementation of a Webster-Stratton parent and child programme in a school setting emerged from the Branches Project, a voluntary and community sector organisation linked to NCH that began operating in the Halton area in 2003. The Branches Project was set up in response to the new Family Support Strategy for the Borough that, in turn, responded to an existing service needs analysis

conducted by Perry and Thurston (2002). The pilot project took place between September 2005 and April 2006, with the parenting course and the child training components starting one week apart in September. The parenting group included 12 parents, of whom 10 completed the course twelve weeks later. The Dina Dinosaur group began with eight children, six of whom completed the course 22 weeks later. Figure 4.4.1.1 summarises the implementation timetable.

Figure 4.4.1.1 Summary of the implementation timetable

Implementation timetable
• May 2005: NCH approaches the school.
• June/July 2005: Staff trained in the delivery of the Dina Dinosaur curriculum. This included two members of staff from NCH Branches Project plus one member of staff from the school with responsibilities for liaising with the children's centre.
• August/September 2005: targeted families and children selected and contacted.
• September 2005: Webster-Stratton parenting group commenced.
• September 2005: Dina Dinosaur group commenced.
• January 2006: Webster-Stratton parenting group ended.
• April 2006: Dina Dinosaur group ended.

4.4.2   Findings from the interviews: parenting programme

The Branches Project has accumulated considerable experience over the last three years of delivering the Webster-Stratton BASIC parenting programme in community settings in Halton. This has enabled a strengthening of the delivery and implementation of this aspect of the Webster-Stratton programmes. Following recommendations from previous evaluation work (Artaraz & Thurston, 2005), the Branches Project now routinely collects a large amount of data from these parenting groups, including video recordings, satisfaction questionnaires and parenting questionnaires before and after the completion of the course.

Evidence suggests that the experience gained from delivering the course has permitted the Branches Project to target the course appropriately to parents willing to make the commitment necessary to complete the entire programme, minimising attrition rates even though the commitment required to follow and contribute to the entire programme is considerable. The main advantage that the Branches Project has in delivering the parenting aspects of the Webster-Stratton programme is the Project's high level of contact with families on a one-to-one-basis. This allows the Project to conduct the

diagnostic assessments necessary to establish the suitability of individual families for this particular type of intervention. Conversely, the Project is also able to provide the one-to-one support necessary for parents who struggle to maintain their commitment or whose lives beyond the Project are the source of stresses that can negatively impact on their attendance.

Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the parenting programme and the ways in which it helped them overcome specific difficulties with their children that could spiral out of control and increase family tensions. However, the beneficial effects of the parenting aspect of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme are likely to be cumulative and difficult to separate from the one-to-one interventions and forms of support delivered by the Branches Project.

4.4.3 Findings from the interviews: Dina Dinosaur programme

The child training aspect of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme was delivered successfully to completion. Of eight children who commenced the programme, six completed it successfully. The programme sessions were observed on a number of occasions as well as a number of the video recordings of each session to ensure programme fidelity and that the delivery observed the rules and the content specified in the Dina Dinosaur curriculum.

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed a number of factors that had enhanced the success of the programme's delivery as well as a number of factors that had constrained implementation, which are considered further below.

4.4.3.1 Enabling and constraining factors

The close physical proximity between the case study school and the Children's Centre, as well as effective liaison between them, permitted the Dina Dinosaur programme to be implemented at short notice. This is a feature that not all community settings are likely to enjoy. Furthermore, the effective liaison between the Children's Centre, the relevant school and the Branches Project was achieved by the existence of a specific role to provide such liaison in the form of a member of staff who was fully trained in the delivery of the Webster-Stratton programme in all its aspects (parents, children and classroom management) and who acted as the link between the school and the Branches Project. It was evident that these two factors were important in enabling the effective delivery of the Dina Dinosaur programme.

However, there were a number of factors that constrained effective implementation. The lack of a suitable venue for delivery emerged half way through the programme and almost led to the termination of the programme. This moment of crisis was very quickly dealt with and solved by the member of staff whose liaison role and insider knowledge of the school and its availability of rooms allowed the school nursery to be made available to the Dina Dinosaur group. On the other hand, the sudden change of venue affected the children's understanding of the programme as this was influenced by the reading they made of the setting in which the course took place. The complaint that the school nursery was 'for little children' was made by a number among the parents but this issue soon receded.

A number of parents wondered about the timetabling and the interlocking features of the parenting group they attended and the Dina Dinosaur group for their children. This was because some of the features of the Dina Dinosaur group that children were taught or asked to explore at home with their parents as part of their homework had not always been explored in the parenting class. Facilitators of both the parenting and the Dina Dinosaur groups have now made a note of this feature of both programmes and are aware of the need to give the parenting group a number of weeks head start in future replications of this programme.

Chapter 5

Findings: impact

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores some of the outcomes that interventions, in particular the Webster-Stratton parent and child intervention, have on children. This chapter compares some of the outcomes that have been described in the literature with evidence that has been gathered through interviews with parents and staff, as well as direct observation, about the changes in behaviour in those children who had participated in the pilot project. The chapter also presents the findings from the analysis of questionnaires completed by parents taking part in the various aspects of the pilot project.

5.2 Reported direct benefits for children

The interviews with parents and staff (including school staff and members of the facilitating team at the Branches Project) provided evidence of the ways in which the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme led to particular outcomes for parents and their children. On the whole, the adults interviewed spoke about the wide range of benefits they observed among the children who completed the Dina Dinosaur school programme.

Evidence from parents and facilitators, as well as children themselves, illustrated the many ways in which the Dina Dinosaur programme, in combination with the parenting groups attended by parents, resulted in direct benefits for children. For example, when asked about the programme's outcomes and the difference it made to their children, parents were often able to relate stories of individual children and the ways in which their observed behaviours had been transformed by the intervention delivered by the Branches Project. Improvements in social and emotional literacy were related to the children's general happiness but also in respect of aggressive behaviour, peer problems and so on, as explored in more detail below.

5.2.1 Aggressive behaviour

A reduction in aggressive behaviour was the change that was reported to have had the most dramatic effect on parents' daily lives. Reductions in the levels of aggression displayed by some children participating in the Dina Dinosaur programme were often seen as part of the general improvement in behaviour reported by their parents.

According to respondents, improved general behaviour, and particularly aggression, could be linked to the social and emotional benefits that participating in the Dina Dinosaur programme brought to the children. For example, one parent said:

> *'He is not a bad child but he used to get really frustrated, I don't know why, so sometimes he'd just kick off and hit me and bite me … I used to be covered in bruises all the time. In the last few months he's really changed ... I don't know, because he is older too so maybe he's just grown out of it but I have to say, he didn't use to talk … it is like talking to a little adult now so … I think talking things out helps him so I enjoy spending time with him, he talks a lot more to me and the tantrums have almost gone. He has a bad day now and again but he's so much better than he used to be.'* (BPP04).

This parent's comment on the child's ability to express frustrations through language instead of through aggressive behaviour go to the root of the basis on which social and emotional literacy interventions are thought to function. In short, awareness of an individual's own emotional state and the ways in which the emotions affect behaviour constitute the first step towards self-knowledge, which can, in turn, lead to more controlled forms of behaviour. This mechanism lies at the heart of most changes in behaviour that are due to improved social and emotional literacy. However, very often, the only evidence adults can gain of the cognitive and emotional processes that take place when children are controlling frustrating events is their ability to externalise them, not through aggression but through verbal acknowledgement and discussion of them.

It seems reasonable to infer that reductions in aggressive behaviours would lead to other positive outcomes. Research by Webster-Stratton (2001) has suggested that untreated behavioural problems in early childhood might be linked to problems later in life – particularly during teenage years – such as delinquency, violent behaviour and substance misuse. It is impossible to conclude that the positive aspects of behavioural change recorded among some of the children who took part in this pilot project would definitely lead to reductions in delinquent behaviour in later life. However, it is possible to conclude that the pilot project led to reductions in aggressive behaviour, a matter which is explored further below.

5.2.2   Improved social behaviour

There was also evidence in the interviews to suggest that children had developed the capacity to produce better controlled forms of behaviour in respect of their own relationships with other children, including their ability to create relationships and demonstrate positive social behaviours.

Interviews with parents, as well as direct observations of the delivery of the Dina Dinosaur programme and video footage of participating children, revealed many instances of pro-social behaviour and discussions in which the subject of acceptable forms of social behaviour were taking place in the class. Parents noticed the newly acquired skills and knowledge because, according to one interviewee, the same messages about socially accepted forms of behaviour were being taught both at home and in the Dina Dinosaur programme (BPP02).

Discussing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour is a key component of the Dina Dinosaur curriculum, such as knowing how to talk to adults, learning how to contribute to discussions in the class by raising a quiet hand before speaking, taking turns with peers, and learning about acceptable behaviours with other, younger children (Webster-Stratton, 1990). However, many of the behaviours observed and arguments posed through the delivery of the programme by the participating children demonstrated an ability to take forward learned lessons and apply them in a self-reflective manner. Asked about the aspects of the Dina Dinosaur programme that they liked best, one of the children responded without reservation:

> *'It is snack time because we all sit around the table and we talk*
> *… it is like having a family.'* (BPC06).

Thus, the improved aspects of social behaviours and standards were not just about modelling socially accepted behaviours learned in the classroom but also about the curriculum providing social situations and socialisation opportunities that were missing in some of the children's family lives. However, the opportunities for the modelling of pro-social behaviours offered, for example, by the introduction of snack time as part of the weekly activities of the class, could be seen in the progress made by participants' abilities to volunteer to help by pouring drinks for each other or offering to help tidy up the table at the end of the class.

5.2.3   Peer and emotional problems

Some of the children who participated in the Dina Dinosaur project demonstrated limited abilities to make and maintain friends. This was a common perception that emerged from the interviews with parents and staff. Parents spoke of children who worried them because they lacked friends, were happy in their own company or had no close family members of their age to play with. According to one parent,

> *'The school's report often said that he lacked self-confidence*
> *and social skills, that he didn't want to participate much with*

> *others in group activities and that … he was always in his own little world.'* (BPP01).

In some cases, these changes had been observed by parents during the first year in school and had led to suspicions of bullying. In other cases, parents appeared to be concerned by the lack of close family of their children's age to play with and the way in which being constantly surrounded by adults in the home might affect their development and their ability to make friends. For example, one parent commented:

> *'He's [child] really grown up with me and the family. I used to worry about him because he has an adult family, he doesn't have brothers and sisters you see, he has uncles and that but they are all leaving senior school so he's too young for them and doesn't have anyone to play with.'* (BPP05).

In another case, a mother described her son's lack of friends in the following way:

> *'Our [child's name] is ... he likes his own company you know? He's an xbox boy. He used to keep himself to himself. He would never mix with others or play with other kids you know? He'd just sit in his room all day playing games.'* (BPP04).

The worries expressed by parents went beyond their children's lack of friends or ability to maintain them. In many cases the responsibility for the situation was squarely placed on the bullying being suffered by their children, which in turn was believed to be beginning to have emotional consequences for the child and being displayed in the form of unhappiness, a general lack of interest in school and social withdrawal. In the case of a mother who spoke about the benefits of the intervention on her child, the following quotation reveals how she saw the effect of bullying on the boy's behaviour:

> *'I used to see bruises in his back every now and then and then it'd all come out. And he'd tell you who'd been picking on him. But he never ever said a thing unless you asked; he only would say if you noticed something.'* (BPP03).

Not surprisingly, these problems encountered early on in the child's school life were making some of these children fearful of going to school, generally withdrawn and unhappy. The interconnected nature of some of the problems with peers (whether making friends and keeping them or being bullied by other children) and the emotional symptoms that these problems led to (being generally unhappy, fearful of attending school and so on) is tackled head on by the Dina Dinosaur programme where making friends and keeping them is one of the key elements of the curriculum. The results were expressed as such by parents, for example, one said:

> *'I'm just so glad I've got my little child back, like the child he used to be before he went to school. Now he just comes and*

> *speaks about his feelings and if he gets picked on he knows*
> *that he's not meant to hold back and that he has to speak to an*
> *adult about it or a teacher in the playground and tell me too.'*
> (BPP06).

Another mother expressed the difference made by the Dino Dinosaur programme to her solitary child in almost exactly the same terms, as a child who had been helped by the Webster-Stratton programme to *'come out of his shell'*. She said:

> *'Until Dino came along, he just … it has helped him so much.*
> *He always used to get picked on. And with Dino it's helped him*
> *to come out of his shell. He also knows when to walk away*
> *when he does [get picked on]. He never used to do that.'*
> (BPP07).

The difference made by the intervention on this particular child was described in terms of enthusiasm and excitement about going to the Dino Dinosaur programme as well as an ability to talk about feelings, increased emotional self-knowledge (such as recognising one's temper) and tackling the emotional symptoms (fear of school) that bullying had instigated. However, this parent also queried whether or not the 'treatment' for these problems can ever concentrate on the targeting of children or whether the answer has to be found in taking a whole school approach to introducing forms of teaching and management of relations (among children and between parents, children and staff) that conform to the social and emotional standards that are expected of children. This parent said:

> *'He's more happy when he goes in Dino than at any time in that*
> *school. I've noticed such a difference in that child … when he*
> *comes out of Dino, he tells me everything they've been doing in*
> *Dino whereas normally he gets out of school and he just wants*
> *to go home.'* (BPP04).

5.2.4   Poor concentration and school readiness

The relationship between emotions and the ability to learn has been extensively researched, and it is known that strong emotional responses to daily stresses have a negative effect on the ability of individuals to concentrate, on the attention span, and on motivation for learning (Kassem, 2002). All of these abilities are crucial to the ability to learn. Webster-Stratton has found positive outcomes in children's academic engagement and progress after receiving interventions similar to the ones investigated in this study (Webster-Stratton, 2001). However, the ability to learn has to be seen in the context of all the direct benefits previously described. In the context of children who are able to focus their attention on single tasks, who can relate to the adults in the class, who can prevent feelings of frustration due to daily stresses and so on, it is to be

expected that their general inclination to learn can improve. This is certainly the way in which one parent saw the holistic approach of the Dina Dinosaur programme and the difference it made to children, as the following quotation illustrates:

> *'He [child] says, "it's brilliant Dina is, it stops you from losing your temper". I have to say, I've just never seen children so hyper as these days, like kicking chairs, breaking stuff, and I don't know what's going on these days in school. They put it down to ADA thingy you know what I mean? I'm not surprised they don't learn anything if they are so hyper all the time. No, with Dino, they learn to calm down and take things in … my [child's name] is not like that but I know some of the other children in his Dina class are and they've changed too, I've seen them all playing and talking together.'* (BPP08).

In sum, parental observations of benefits related to the following areas of the children's observed behaviour and social and emotional literacy: a lack aggression; improved social behaviour; reduced peer and emotional problems; improved concentration and willingness to learn. This compares rather closely with the aims, objectives and range of impacts and benefits that have been reported for the parenting and child programmes. Webster Stratton's research materials show that the various aspects of the programme lead to benefits for children in the following areas:

- the promotion of social, emotional and academic competence;
- the promotion of positive peer relationships;
- reductions in behavioural problems;
- increased levels of self-esteem and self-management skills in children;
- the prevention of long term negative consequences of social skills deficits and behavioural problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, violence and depression.

5.3 Reported indirect benefits

In addition to what has been described above as the direct benefits to children and the related outcomes from participation in the Dina Dinosaur programme there were a number of indirect benefits for children. These primarily related to the consequences of their participation for the quality of interaction between parents and the school. These are explored in more detail below.

5.3.1 Improved levels of communication between parents and school

It was the intention of the pilot project that the school would introduce the same Webster-Stratton classroom management techniques delivered through the targeted Dina Dinosaur programme. However, this was not achieved and, furthermore,

generated a negative reaction from some members of teaching staff to the participation of the school in the pilot project. In spite of this, a number of the parents interviewed expressed highly positive views, not only about the ways in which the entire project impacted on their children, but on the ways in which the link between the Branches Project and the school had improved their own relationship with the school. In particular, one parent expressed her views as follows:

> *'You know, ever since … I let fly off the handle ... because they [school] weren't doing anything you know what I mean? My little boy had been bullied for a long time and every time I wanted to speak to [member of staff at the school] I was just getting ignored until one day I just snapped. It was awful and I had to apologise for it … but on the other hand I get treated with a lot more respect now ... like they take me to one side and tell me 'this has happened in class today and what not' and I think that's why [name of child] got picked to be in this course [Dina Dinosaur] you know, it was like their way [the school] to show they were doing something about it and I'm really glad they did because he's come on in leaps and bounds since he started.'* (BPP03).

The relationship between the Branches Project and the school was also seen by parents in terms of giving a voluntary and community sector organisation legitimacy, which it might not otherwise have had as few parents knew about the Branches Project prior to engagement with the programme. This is in spite of the problems that the pilot project encountered in its implementation in a school setting and which were discussed briefly in Chapter Four.

5.3.2   Increased awareness of social and emotional literacy among staff

The general opposition of members of the teaching staff at the school in which the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme was implemented has been alluded to. However, in the case of those members of the teaching staff who were exposed to the Webster-Stratton programme and who received the programme's approved training for facilitators, very high levels of knowledge, reflection of their practice and commitment to the success of the programme, were in evidence. One teacher articulated the issue in this way:

> *'The course [Webster-Stratton training] is about changing the whole approach of how you teach. It's about things that you know but you end up not using for some reason or other. So they say things like you give praise to children – and I'm aware that I do this all the time – like 'oh well done, so why don't you do that all the time?' which basically means that effectively you've taken away the praise as soon as you've given it. So you start thinking about what you do all the time. It was very exciting … after the course I wanted to go straight into the classroom so*

> *that I could start putting into practice all the things I'd learnt.*
> *And it works, you know.'* (BPS04).

Some members of the school teaching staff were not trained and therefore did not have the opportunity to consider the potential benefits of the programme. Furthermore, these members of staff were not involved in the selection of suitable candidates for the Dina Dinosaur programme from the very beginning. This might have been misinterpreted and undermined cooperation from the teaching staff due, perhaps, to a sense of feeling marginalised on their part or perceiving this as a threat to their professional independence.

Among the facilitating staff from the Branches Project, improvements were made in respect of their understanding of social and emotional literacy as a result of their training and facilitating roles, as well as a greater understanding of the learning process that took place with the children. For example, one facilitator said:

> *'So you try to ignore the bad behaviour but in the end we just*
> *couldn't and someone said "turn off the video now". You are*
> *meant to only reward good behaviour so we had lost them all*
> *that day. And my confidence* was *really low at that stage too …*
> *so it was like "you will do this and you will do that" … I was*
> *fuming ... and at that point one of them said "are you in the red*
> *now [facilitator's name]?" You see, we teach them to associate*
> *colours with states of mind so red is when you are really angry*
> *and you need time out. The impressive thing is that they knew*
> *this, they had learnt this and they were very aware of my own*
> *emotional state even better than me. So that really got me*
> *thinking.'* (BPS02).

5.3.3   Increased levels of parental involvement in their children's lives

A positive outcome reported by parents and the Branches Project staff alike was the extent to which the pilot project had been able to involve parents in the Dina Dinosaur programme that had been designed for their children. For example, one of the facilitators commented:

> *'One of the biggest positives … was that all the parents came to*
> *the mid-way evaluation and parents who hadn't been to school,*
> *you know who normally wouldn't go anywhere near the school*
> *came, even a dad who lives half way on the other side of the*
> *country came and that was so positive.'* (BPS03).

The increased levels of interest of parents in their children's progress that was described by the Branches Project staff might mask a generally limited relationship that exists between parents and staff at this particular school. Although it was reported that this relationship had improved, the implementation of the Webster-Stratton programme

appears to have increased parental confidence in programmes designed to improve their relationship with their children. For example, one of the facilitators said:

> *'The graduation went well … at the end of it they had an opportunity to evaluate and to say what they thought. We were emotional, the children were emotional and when we were taking the children home, one of the mums broke down and said "we couldn't thank you enough; this is the first time anyone has listened to [child's name] and to us as parents". This is what this is all about … the feedback from parents has been really positive.'* (BPS02).

5.4   The Webster-Stratton parent and child programme: a measure of impact

In line with previous work, the impact of the Webster-Stratton parent and child programme was explored through analysis of the quantitative data from the two questionnaires: the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Parenting Daily Hassles Scale. Comparisons of scores derived before and after the programme was delivered were made in order to analyse changes as measured by these two instruments. Table 5.4.1 shows the mean values for the scores for the Parenting Daily Hassles Scale for those parents who completed the Webster-Stratton parenting programme (46). In all four categories of scores, the 'after' value is less than the 'before' value, although the decrease in two of the categories is very small. A reduction in score indicates an improvement in the particular aspect being measured. The differences that were statistically significant ($p< 0.05$) are shown with an asterisk. Thus, the decreases in scores for total intensity of parenting hassles and parenting tasks were found to be statistically significant. However, given the small sample size, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Table 5.4.1   Parenting Daily Hassles Scale: mean (SD) scores for each of the readings

Parenting Daily Hassles	Before the intervention	After the intervention	Mean score difference
Frequency (total)	50.20 (9.15)	48.20 (9.73)	2.00 (7.24)
Intensity (total)	59.44 (15.06)	54.33 (11.8)	5.11 (9.64)*
Challenging behaviour	21.78 (5.77)	21.33 (5.86)	0.44 (3.63)
Parenting tasks	23.11 (6.93)	20.22 (5.30)	2.89 (4.07)*

* $p<0.05$

Table 5.4.2 shows the mean values for the scores for the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire for those parents who completed the Webster-Stratton parenting

programme (46). For five of the six strengths and difficulties categories the 'after' score is less than the 'before' score and in four of these categories these differences were statistically significant, and in one case, highly statistically significant. As with the parenting daily hassles scores, a reduction in score indicates an improvement in the particular aspect being measured. In the case of pro-social behaviour however, the mean score increased, although this change was not statistically significant. Again however, given the small sample size, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Table 5.4.2   Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: mean (SD) scores for each of the readings

Strengths and difficulties	Before the intervention	After the intervention	Mean score difference
Total difficulties	25.37 (5.62)	22.89 (5.42)	2.48 (4.21)*
Emotional symptoms	3.68 (2.86)	2.89 (2.25)	0.79 (1.84)*
Conduct problems	4.79 (1.87)	3.37 (1.77)	1.42 (1.58)**
Hyperactivity scale	7.05 (2.31)	6.26 (2.04)	0.79 (2.29)*
Peer problems scale	4.37 (2.28)	4.21 (2.53)	0.16 (2.30)
Prosocial scale	5.47 (2.21)	6.16 (3.12)	-0.69 (2.18)

(*p<0.05; **p<0.001).

Thus, it is possible to conclude that, everything else being equal, the intervention between the first and the second assessment might account for the improvement in behaviour, as measured by the questionnaires completed by parents, and based on the observable behaviour of their children. Further measurements of impact at one year after the intervention might produce evidence of the extent to which positive outcomes are maintained through time.

Chapter 6
Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The Webster-Stratton parent and child programme delivered in a school setting in Halton constitutes a new addition to the educational services provided by the Branches Project. The main purpose of this intervention was to increase the social and emotional literacy of children by working with both parents and children. This pilot project involved the implementation of the intervention in a community setting and the evaluation sought to understand this process, with a view to informing the implementation of the third element of the Webster-Stratton programme, namely, the classroom management programme for teachers. Secondly, it explored the direct impact of this intervention on children as well as some indirect impacts on parents and organisational relations. This Chapter discusses the findings of the evaluation and explores some of the implications for policy and practice in the future.

6.2 Delivery and impact

Programme fidelity – that is, the extent to which the programme is implemented according to its design specification – has been identified as an essential condition for guaranteeing the success of the Webster-Stratton programme. This study found that the Webster-Stratton programme was delivered in the community setting according to the original specification. The study of the video recordings of sessions evidenced the fact that the format of delivery and the curriculum content remained close to the original. Central to ensuring programme fidelity was the formal training of professionals who delivered both the parenting programme and the child training programme.

In terms of impact, it can be concluded that the identified impacts and outcomes of the programme can be attributed to the parenting and child training aspects of the programme. The outcomes worthy of note were:

- the qualitative and quantitative evidence that related to the difference the programme made to the children's social and emotional literacy and to their observable behaviours;
- qualitative evidence to suggest that parental attitudes and parenting behaviours towards their children changed positively throughout the period of study.

The extent of the positive impact on parenting is difficult to assess with accuracy because it relied on parents reporting changes in their parenting styles and the consequences of this for their children. However, the quantitative data indicated that children's observable behavioural changes were positively rated by parents in many areas closely linked to social and emotional literacy. The differences in scores before and after the Webster-Stratton intervention were statistically significant in terms of the total difficulties of parenting experienced and the emotional, behavioural and hyperactivity symptoms children displayed.

6.3   Implementation

The school classroom management aspects of the Webster-Stratton programme were not implemented for a number of reasons as explained below.

- The involvement of school staff was limited throughout the implementation process and, furthermore, no training of teaching staff took place beyond that of one individual who acted as the link between the School and the Branches Project and their team. This means that no intervention in the form of Webster-Stratton classroom management techniques was introduced by the school teaching staff in the classrooms with children participating in the Dina Dinosaur group.

- The implementation of the programme in the school setting was designed to increase the cross-fertilisation and exchange of ideas between the Branches Project and the school. In the event, the delivery of the Webster-Stratton child training programme (Dina Dinosaur curriculum) by the Branches Project and the wider school activities took place separately with little interconnection between the two. This limited any chance of synergy between the two dimensions occurring.

- The implementation of the programme encountered a somewhat hostile reception from the school teaching staff that inhibited the development of common working practices, the exchange of ideas and a whole school approach to social and emotional literacy and behaviour management.

It is important to consider the reasons why it was not possible to implement the classroom management aspects of the Webster Stratton programme given that there are potential benefits to be accrued from extending the principles of the parenting and

child programme to the school setting. It was evident from the study that there was limited understanding of the programme's aims and objectives among teachers. The Branches Project held an open information day for staff in order to inform them about the Webster-Stratton programme and respond to questions about the intervention. The Branches Project also kept teachers informed about the Dina Dinosaur curriculum through newsletters. However, those members of staff at the school who agreed to be interviewed said they had little knowledge about the purpose of the programme, its theoretical base or how it was being implemented in the school. For example, teachers said that they felt they were not consulted about the process of selection of children who could benefit from participating in the Dina Dinosaur programme and suggested that the criteria for selection of children were controlled by Branches. Their argument was that individual teachers were best placed to determine which children would benefit the most from the Dina Dinosaur programme. Teachers' limited decision-making power in the original selection of children might explain their relative antipathy towards the programme even though the selection of children was made by the school through its head teacher.

It is also possible that there are very different conceptualisations of the purpose and type of social and emotional literacy education reflected in the theoretical base of the Webster-Stratton programme and the teachers in this particular school. For example, teachers who were interviewed were critical about the rewards system that is a key element of the Webster-Stratton programme. In their view, rewarding children for what was described as 'attention seeking behaviour' is the wrong way to teach children. The Webster-Stratton programme is largely based on rewarding children who exhibit positive behaviours. It is not clear whether the difference of opinion is based on teachers' misunderstanding of the intervention's rationale or in clear pedagogical differences.

In sum, it is very possible that pedagogical differences in attitudes to teaching, coupled with a lack of participation in the decision-making process by the teaching staff might have undermined their collaboration in the implementation of this project in the school early on. Given the potential synergy from extending the programme to include classroom management the next section explores possible ways of increasing the success of fully implementing the Webster-Stratton programme in the future.

6.4   Implications for policy and practice

Although benefits for children who took part in the programme have been observed, fully implementing the Webster-Stratton programme is unlikely to be deliverable in this school if the aim is to change the school's ethos of behaviour management and to encourage the introduction of a comprehensive social and emotional literacy curriculum. Debriefing on this experience would be useful so that all parties discuss their views openly and evaluate their role in the implementation process before taking a decision as to whether or not to introduce this intervention again in the same school next year. Some general implications for policy and practice that could help facilitate the potential implementation of this intervention in other schools in the future are discussed below.

6.4.1   Relying on a Webster-Stratton 'champion'

The legitimacy of a voluntary and community sector organisation working inside a school could be increased if the Branches Project could rely on the cooperation of one member of teaching staff who is enthusiastic about the benefits that the intervention can bring. For this to happen it might be necessary to create the relationship early on with a key member of staff who has some influence in the school so that it is possible to train this person in the delivery of the Webster-Stratton intervention and enlist their cooperation in presenting the implementation plan to the rest of the relevant staff. The 'champion' would not necessarily need to be a head teacher but would require the full support of the school leadership in order for the implementation process to be successful.

6.4.2   Drawing up a partnership agreement

Implementation might have a greater chance of success in new schools if a contract or partnership agreement between the relevant school and the Branches Project was drawn up. This could be used as a working document and would outline:

- the purpose of the programme;
- the programme responsibilities of each partner;
- work practices and resource allocations from each partner;
- the management structure for the implementation process of the intervention;
- partnership working practices and conditions.

The ultimate aim of the pilot project was to facilitate the school's understanding of the potential benefits of introducing the Webster-Stratton range of interventions. It is anticipated that such understanding is likely to result in the integration of these

methods into the school's strategies for meeting their National Primary Strategy requirements.

Ensuring higher levels of collaboration and ownership of the programme in schools might require that enough members of school staff are trained in the Webster-Stratton classroom management techniques. It might also require that the implementation of the intervention is shared between the Branches Project and the school. This might be a better way to ensure ownership of the programme on the part of the school and constant engagement with it throughout. This working model might also deliver on the promise of better relations between the school and parents.

In sum, in the right setting, the Webster-Stratton interventions could become the strategy of choice for a whole school approach to classroom management and social and emotional literacy. However, this would require a large investment in resources in terms of the training of teachers, particularly given the teacher-child ratio that is required to implement the programme. It is also particularly useful as an approach with small, targeted groups of children. For this to work best, all their parents would be recruited to the parenting group that works alongside the Dina Dinosaur programme.

The implementation of the Webster-Stratton interventions for delivering social and emotional literacy at these two levels – whole school approach and small, targeted groups of children – would meet the vision articulated by the DfES in the *National Strategy for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills*. It would also ensure a seamless integration of the principles of the Webster-Stratton programmes into the life of the school. For this to be achieved, it would be beneficial to develop:

- a memorandum of understanding between the school and NCH about the aims and objectives of the programme;
- a partnership agreement indicating all the shared objectives and responsibilities of each partner (including parent groups) in the delivery of the programme;
- a steering group to meet regularly and oversee the implementation process;
- a carefully designed evaluation plan to which all parties give their agreement.

6.5 Conclusions

The Dina Dinosaur curriculum could make a positive contribution to the teaching of social and emotional aspects of learning with targeted children as part of a whole school approach. The Branches Project has the expertise to deliver the programme successfully with positive outcomes. As such, the Dina Dinosaur curriculum would fit in

well with the complementary Webster-Stratton classroom management programme and with the social and emotional aspects of the curriculum developed by the DfES as part of the *National Primary Strategy* that has been adopted in Halton. Furthermore, conducting the parenting programme alongside the Dina Dinosaur child programme, provided opportunities to extend and reinforce the development of social, emotional and behavioural skills through the home environment for those children who were participating in the targeted intervention. It also extended support to a number of parents whose children had not been targeted for the intervention. The extension of the programme to include the classroom management aspects would provide an environment in which all children had the opportunity to develop their social, emotional and behavioural skills and would be consistent with the whole school approach to the teaching of social and emotional literacy in primary schools outlined in national initiatives. However, the issue of implementation is the key to ensuring a coherent and consistent school-level approach, at the heart of which is successful partnership working.

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Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

Webster-Stratton Project Workers

Interview Schedule: Webster-Stratton Project Workers

Warm-up questions (about the interviewee)

Tell me about your professional background; how long have you worked for X?

What is your previous experience/professional background?

Tell me something about the role you perform in X (School/Branches). Is this the same as everyone else or is there a hierarchy of roles in the service?

What activities do you carry out on a day to day basis?

How would you describe your role? [Exploratory: use to build a typology of models such as 'friendly professional', 'adviser', 'mentor', 'teacher']

General questions

Tell me something about the Webster Stratton Project: What are its aims and objectives? [explore terms such as behaviour, e-literacy, e-intelligence, emotional and behavioural problems etc]

Targeting users

Who is the service for? [explore: children? Which ones? Parents and families? Which ones and why?]

How and why are these people targeted?

What is the success rate of targeting? Does the service reach all those who could benefit?

Ethos

What is the ethos of the service?

How does it work with children? [explore: is it based on cooperation/hierarchy, is it 'therapeutic' in style, is it about self-help, what issues do you consider in the group?]

What is the underlying theory that informs your practice?

Process

Referrals

Who are referrals received from? Who decides what children get selected? [explore: School? Who in school and why?]

What are the criteria for referral to the W/S project?

In your experience, what type of issues do these children present? What do they need help for?

How do you know they need help and what record keeping does it take place?

Assessment

Does any assessment of needs take place?

How and when does it take place?

Do you think it is important? Why?

Who carries the assessment?

How often is this repeated throughout the life of the process of involvement with a particular child?

Do you have any tools to carry out the assessment of needs?

Plans and interventions

Tell me about planning the type of interventions and help that the Transitions Project might be able to offer a particular child or group at any given time. Are action plans used?

What is the level of involvement and decision-making by children about what happens in the group?

What specific things do you do in the group?

How do they help achieve your aims?

Has your curriculum been specifically designed for the needs of particular groups of children/individuals, or age groups? What is the content and source of the curriculum you use?

How would you know who might benefit from a particular intervention?

Outcomes

How do you measure a successful intervention/process of involvement with a child or group of children?

Is there any form of follow-up?

Implementation

How do you all work in this service? Are roles and responsibilities divided?

Are there differences between what you do according to the setting/school/age group?

How does what the W/S project does fit into the school's priorities/pastoral care?

What are your thoughts on the model of implementation that includes the VCS and a school?

Final question: anything else you want to add or, what would you want that could make your job better, more effective.

Appendix 2

Interview Schedule

Webster-Stratton Project Participants

Interview Schedule: Webster Stratton Project participants

These interviews will focus mainly on the experiences of service users. It will also serve the purpose of triangulating service processes - explored with Branches and school staff - and the outcomes and impact experienced. It will include the following areas of exploration:

The service process

- **Source of referral to the Project**
o   How did family hear about Branches? (School or other service, word of mouth, self-referral etc).
o   What did family expect Branches to be?
o   Did it turn out to meet expectations? (i.e. better or worse? Why?)
o   Data to offer clues about orientation of the users when coming into contact with the service.

- **Reasons for approaching the service: Definition of the problem**
o   What happened? What did X say?
o   Did you want help or did you think you had to because, say, a teacher asked you to?
o   What was the 'problem' that led you to see one? (Check for issues related to child's development needs, parental capacity or family and environmental factors; Explore. Anyone in particular or a mixture of all three? Which ones?)
o   Linked to the above section, it aims to establish the source of the 'problem' and whether the definition was made by another professional or the parent.

- **Description of process and service-led interventions**
o   Think of the first time you met someone from Branches/school. What happened?
o   And after that, what did offer you?
o   What did you think at the time?
o   Did you take on the offer?
o   What did this consist of? Explore every single intervention such as:
- group work (i.e. Parenting group training) (types and frequency, duration, details of work done etc);
- -individual help (practical or not/for them as parents or for their child or both);
- -referral to other sources of information and help (which ones. Did they help?);
- How long have you had 'help' for?
- Is this the kind of thing you expected?

(This section will focus on a description of the range of activities and interventions that take place between the project and the family. Revisit every step of the process described in the interview schedule for Branches staff (assessment, planning, intervention and review).

- **Impressions and judgements about the usefulness of the service**

These set of questions will seek to establish perceptions about the service before and after completion of the 'process cycle' as well as to determine strategies used by the service staff to improve communication and parental involvement in the relationship.

- **Impact and 'distance travelled' (on the child and on parenting capacity)**

On the child

- Health: growth and development (physical and mental).
- Education: progress and achievement in school, wider range of interests, SEN.
- Emotional and behavioural development: temperament, response to stress, self-control).
- Identity: how does child view him/herself, feelings of belonging and acceptance?
- Family and social relationships: relationship with parents, family and age-appropriate friends.
- Social presentation.
- Self-care kills: competences in skills necessary for independence.

On parenting capacity

- Basic care.
- Ensuring safety.
- Emotional warmth.
- Stimulation: cognitive development through interaction, communication, play, educational opportunities.
- Guidance and boundaries: including problem solving, anger management, consideration for others, effective discipline.
- Stability: including consistency of emotional warmth over time.

Appendix 3

Information for Participants

Teachers and other Professionals

Information for participants (teachers and professionals)

The Branches Project has asked the Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR) at the University of Chester to carry out an evaluation of its activities. You are being invited to take part in an interview with a researcher who will explore your views on the Webster-Stratton parenting programme currently taking place at Brookvale School. Before you decide if you want to take part in the study, please read the following information. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear to you.

What is the purpose of the research?

As you know, the Branches Project offers easy to access support to parents and carers of young children to help them manage problems before they reach crisis point. We want to know what you think of the Webster-Stratton parenting programme.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are one of a number of professionals with valuable knowledge about this programme. We are interested in listening to your views and hearing about your experiences of programme.

Do I have to take part?

No if you don't want to. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to proceed with the interview, you don't have to give me any reason.

What happens if I take part?

You will be asked to sign a consent form to show that you are happy to take part in the study. Then, the researcher and you will have a conversation about your views and experiences of this parenting project. It is important to note that there are no right or wrong answers and that you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. If you agree, the conversation will be taped so that the researcher can report some of the things you say accurately.

What happens to the information collected?

Your interview and many others will be used to write a report about how this project works. It is important to stress that the report will not include anyone's name or details. The research team will wipe all the tapes when the study has been completed.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

You can contact Kepa Artaraz (01244-512082) or Miranda Thurston (01244-512022) during office hours (9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.) at the Centre for Public Health Research at the University of Chester.

Thank you for your help