



**ImpactEd**  
Evaluation

# The Story Project: Bradford

REPORT FOR 23/24 TO 24/25

Commissioned by The Story Project



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## Executive Summary

The Story Project is a social enterprise that uses story-based learning to help children from Reception to Year 6 develop wellbeing skills alongside their literacy abilities. This independent evaluation, conducted by ImpactEd Evaluation, represents the second annual assessment of The Story Project's impact on schools in Bradford. The evaluation gathered data from 997 pupils and 53 teachers to examine the programme's effect on both pupil and staff outcomes.

### Key findings for pupil outcomes

Overall, the data indicates that The Story Project had a positive impact on pupil wellbeing outcomes across multiple measures.

- ▶ **Improved emotional vocabulary** - The Story Project enhanced pupils' emotional vocabulary. Before implementation, only 27.8% of teachers rated their pupils' wellbeing and emotional vocabulary as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. After using the programme, this figure rose to 85.5% - an increase of 57.7 percentage points.
- ▶ **Improved wellbeing discussions** - Teachers reported substantial improvements in the quality of wellbeing conversations. Before The Story Project, 48.2% of teachers rated classroom wellbeing discussions as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. After implementation, this rose to 92.7% - an increase of 44.6 percentage points.
- ▶ **Developed tools to manage wellbeing** - Pupils demonstrated increased confidence in managing their own wellbeing. After engaging with The Story Project, 73.0% of pupils knew who to talk to or how to get help when worried (up from 60.9% - an increase of 12.1 percentage points). There was a small decrease (-3 percentage points) in the proportion of pupils who reported being good at calming or settling themselves when experiencing big feelings.
- ▶ **Pupils are more willing to share their feelings** and experiences because they see themselves and people from their own lives reflected in The Story Project stories.
- ▶ **Increased empathy and understanding of others** - Pupils demonstrated significantly enhanced ability to empathise with others. Before The Story Project, only 21.8% of teachers rated their pupils' ability to empathise as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. After implementation, this rose to 71.6% - an increase of 52.7 percentage points.
- ▶ **Teachers reported perceived improvements in pupils' literacy** and comprehension skills after using The Story Project.

## Key findings for staff outcomes

Teachers benefitted substantially from implementing The Story Project, reporting increased confidence and competence in supporting pupil wellbeing.

- ▶ **Better equipped to support wellbeing** - Before The Story Project, 45.3% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they understood how to reduce gaps in pupils' understanding of wellbeing topics. After implementation, this rose to 86.8% - an increase of 41.5 percentage points.
- ▶ **Confidence in handling sensitive topics** - Teachers demonstrated significantly increased confidence in facilitating discussions on sensitive PSHE and RSHE topics, with **an increase of 50.9 percentage points** reporting they felt equipped to tackle challenging conversations around wellbeing.
- ▶ **Transfer of learning across the curriculum** - Teachers reported that The Story Project resources supported them in context and subject beyond PSHE lessons. They reported applying strategies and approaches learned through The Story Project to other subjects and contexts. This included using Story Project **resources** beyond designated sessions, adapting, lesson **planning structures for other subjects** and **employing restorative conversation** approaches across different classroom subjects.

## Feedback from school leaders

The Story Project provided ImpactEd Evaluation with additional qualitative feedback from school leaders in Bradford regarding the programme's implementation during the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years. Direct quotes are detailed below.

- ▶ Schools that I work with have found that the resources are of a really high quality and that staff enjoy using them. Use of 'The Story Project' has impacted positively by reducing workload and it also facilitates bespoke learning journeys, meeting the needs of all pupils, through the range of activity options. The use of stories to support the delivery of the PSHE curriculum has really had an impact on the children - they have become confident in the use of a wider range of language." – *Education Advisor Team, Bradford Council*
- ▶ "It's not an exaggeration to say that this project has ignited a love of learning and opened doors that some of our pupils never thought possible. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity and would wholeheartedly recommend this initiative to other schools. The ripple effect of storytelling has been profound – not just on academic performance, but on the confidence, resilience, and aspirations of our students." – *Teacher in Bradford*
- ▶ "The carefully selected books, detailed lesson plans and easy to use teaching resources have enabled staff to deliver these brilliant lessons with ease. We have seen a huge impact in terms of emotional literacy and the book themes have provided children with fantastic starting points for class discussions on wider topics. As a result, children's wellbeing has greatly improved as they have the vocabulary, they need to discuss difficult topics that affect them" – *Headteacher in Bradford*
- ▶ "The Story Project has had a transformative impact on our school. It has boosted children's confidence in speaking and listening, enriched their vocabulary, and fostered a love of reading. As PSHE Lead, I've seen real improvements in wellbeing, with children better able to express emotions and show empathy. The scheme is easy to implement, with clear, adaptable resources and shared planning that have reduced teacher workload and built staff confidence in the curriculum area." – *PSHE lead in Bradford*

## Introduction

### Introduction to The Story Project

The Story Project is a social enterprise that aims to use the magic of stories to help children to learn and practise wellbeing skills whilst developing their literacy skills. The project provides teachers with comprehensive training and resources matched to popular and diverse children's books. Through structured activities based on the stories, children are given the opportunity to explore the characters' experiences from different angles, helping them to understand, manage and express big feelings. The Story Project aims to use stories to create a safe space for children and their teachers to talk about a broad range of tricky real-life topics like bereavement, online safety or financial worries. The resources span Reception to Year Six and fully cover all RSHE requirements and recommended PSHE skills as well as being matched to relevant reading outcomes for each year group.

### Introduction to evaluation

In December 2023, The Story Project partnered with ImpactEd Evaluation to conduct an independent evaluation to help them better understand the impact of their story-based PSHE/RSE curriculum and materials. A report was written on progress made in 2023-24 to understand the programme's various components and better understand how the programme was impacting teachers and pupils across five pilot schools across Bradford. Due to larger growth in the number of schools using The Story Project in Bradford, the scope of the evaluation was broadened in 2024-25. This 2024-25 report contain pupils' data from 12 schools. Three of these schools have been doing the programme since 2023-24, and the remaining nine schools started using The Story Project in 2024-25. This evaluation explores both quantitative and qualitative findings gathered from pupils and teaching staff during the 2024-25 academic year.

## Methodology

The evaluation is guided by the following research questions:

1. What impact does The Story Project's curriculum have on pupil outcomes? Does this impact differ by demographic sub-groups?
2. What impact does The Story Project's work have on teaching staff outcomes?
3. How is The Story Project's programme implemented in schools?

## Intended outcomes

An evaluation framework was devised with the aim of measuring impact against intended outcomes for teacher and pupils as outlined in the existing Theory of Change (Appendix – A).

Teachers:

- ▶ Increased confidence in teaching PSHE/RSE and wellbeing related lessons
- ▶ Feel more equipped to support pupils with their wellbeing needs

Pupils:

- ▶ Improved emotional vocabulary
- ▶ Increased skills and tools to manage wellbeing
- ▶ Increased understanding and awareness of the wellbeing needs of others
- ▶ Improved reading comprehension attainment
- ▶ Improved PSHE/RSE understanding and attainment

## Evaluation Design

The evaluation design consisted of the following mixed-methods approach, to develop a more nuanced understanding of impact:

- ▶ **Custom teacher surveys** completed by teaching staff from the participating Bradford schools. Results report on 51 teachers who completed a baseline (either in January/February 2024 or in Autumn Term of 2024) and an endline survey in June/July 2025.
- ▶ **Custom pupil surveys** completed by 997 children from years 2 to 6 in the participating Bradford schools at two timepoints; before they began the programme (or as close to this time as possible) and at the end of the academic year in June/July 2025.
- ▶ **Qualitative research** conducted with groups of pupils and teaching staff from the participating schools, during their time engaging with the programme June 2025.

Rationale and full survey measures can be found in Appendix – B.

Analysis was conducted on the following sample:

Type of Respondent	With 2023-24 baseline	With 2024-25 baseline	Total
Pupil	110	887	997
Teacher	15	38	53

Pupil demographic group	No. included in analysis
PP Pupils	379
Non-PP Pupils	618
EAL Pupils	421
Non-EAL Pupils	576
SEND Pupils	174
Non-SEND Pupils	820

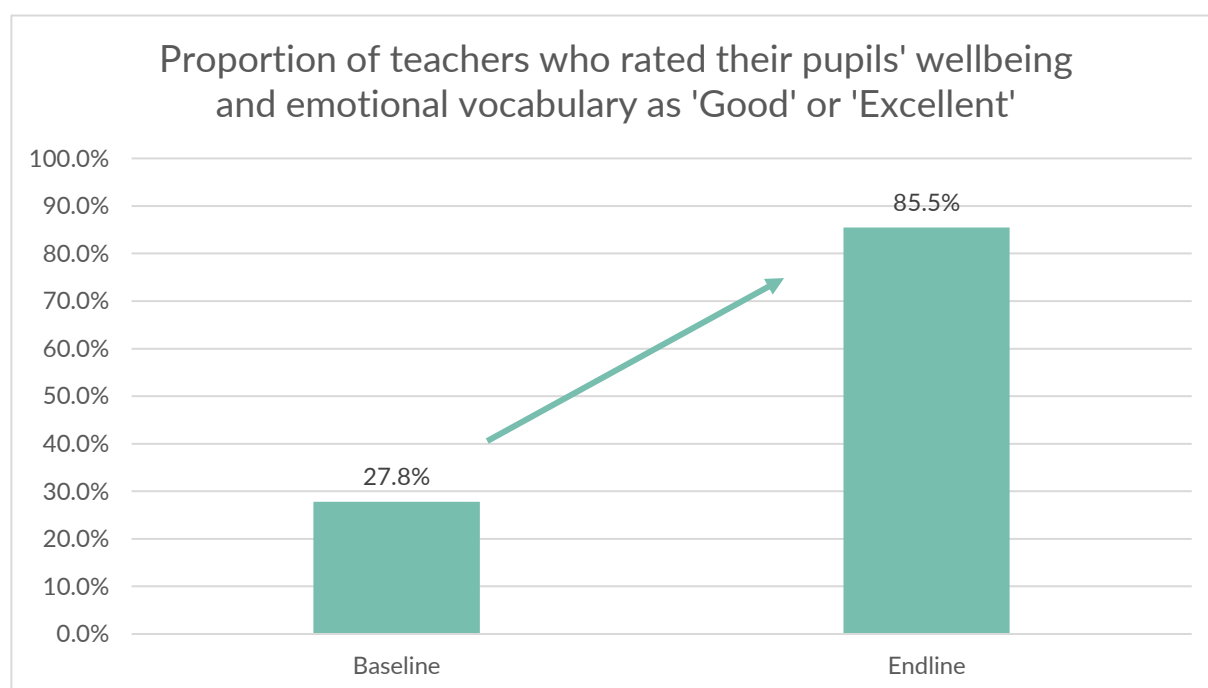
We conducted qualitative research with 15 teachers across three focus groups and with 12 pupils across two focus groups 2024-25. Approach to analysis can be found in Appendix – C.

## Pupil findings

Overall, The Story Project's curriculum had a positive impact on pupil outcomes around emotional vocabulary, improved wellbeing discussions, increased empathy and understanding of others, and has helped children to develop tools to manage their wellbeing.

### Pupils have improved their emotional vocabulary.

Pupils have expanded and **improved emotional vocabulary**. Before using The Story Project, only 27.8% of teachers rated their pupils' vocabulary around wellbeing and emotions as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 85.5% - an increase of 57.7 percentage points.



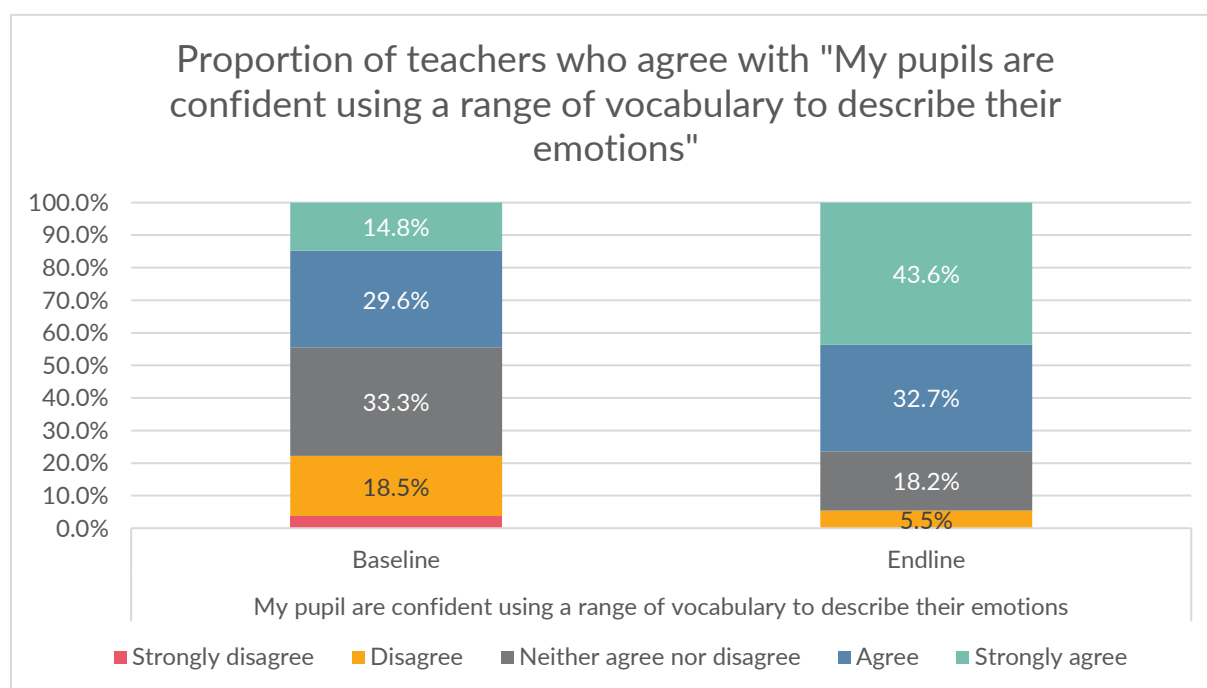
Pupils in both the Year 2 and Year 5 focus groups were keen and excited to share new words they had learnt through The Story Project. When asked during focus groups, Y2 pupils frequently responded they had learnt about the word “anxious”. One Year 2 pupil reflected more broadly on the development of their emotional vocabulary following engaging in The Story Project.

*“I learnt about my emotions in the story and that it's OK to feel sad, nervous, upset.” - Year 2 pupil*

Year 5 pupils discussed a wide range of emotional vocabulary they'd learnt about: being irritated, isolated and the concept of mental health and depression. Pupils demonstrated a willingness to articulate their understanding of depression. While their definitions were incomplete, as might be expected for such a complex topic, their readiness to engage with challenging emotional concepts suggests growing confidence in using emotional vocabulary.

*"Depression [is]...when you're lonely and it's an illness." - Year 5 pupil*

This was further corroborated by teachers. Before using The Story Project, 44.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their pupils were confident in using a range of vocabulary to describe their emotions. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 76.6% - an increase of 31.9 percentage points.



In focus groups, teachers reiterated pupils used more specific vocabulary to express their internal experience.

*"Historically when talking about feelings and emotions, it was happy or sad really. But they've got a much broader knowledge now of all the different feelings and emotions." - DSL and PSHE Lead*

Teachers provided examples of pupils using more precise emotional vocabulary to more accurately articulate their feelings.

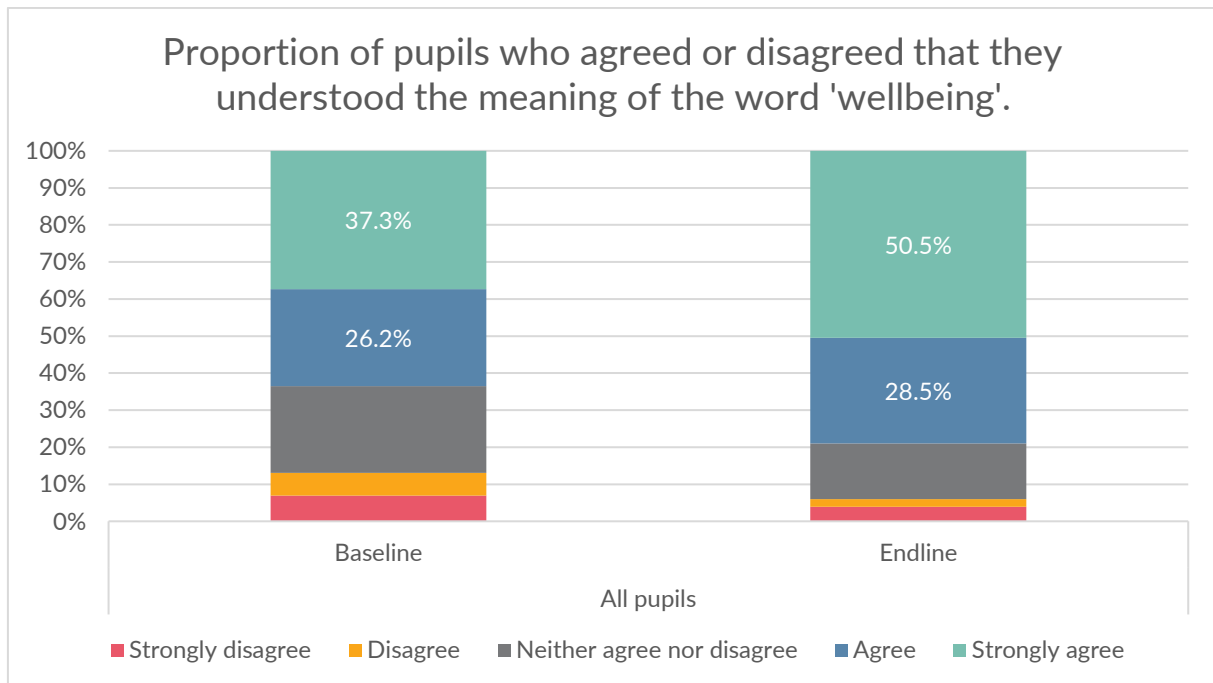
*"We've got a high level of SEND children and when we usually ask the child 'how are you feeling?' It's always sad or happy. It's the in between language that they really struggle with. So now they are using a lot more of the vocabulary and I think having the faces on there, it really has supported as well. So it's not just 'I'm feeling sad', it is, 'I'm worried'." – Teacher*

*"One of my little girls could say how she was feeling really nervous. And I said, oh, why are you feeling nervous at all? Because we're meant to be going to London. But my little sister isn't very well. So I'm not sure if we're going to go. So I'm feeling really nervous. Rather than just saying, I feel sad" – Year 5 Teacher*

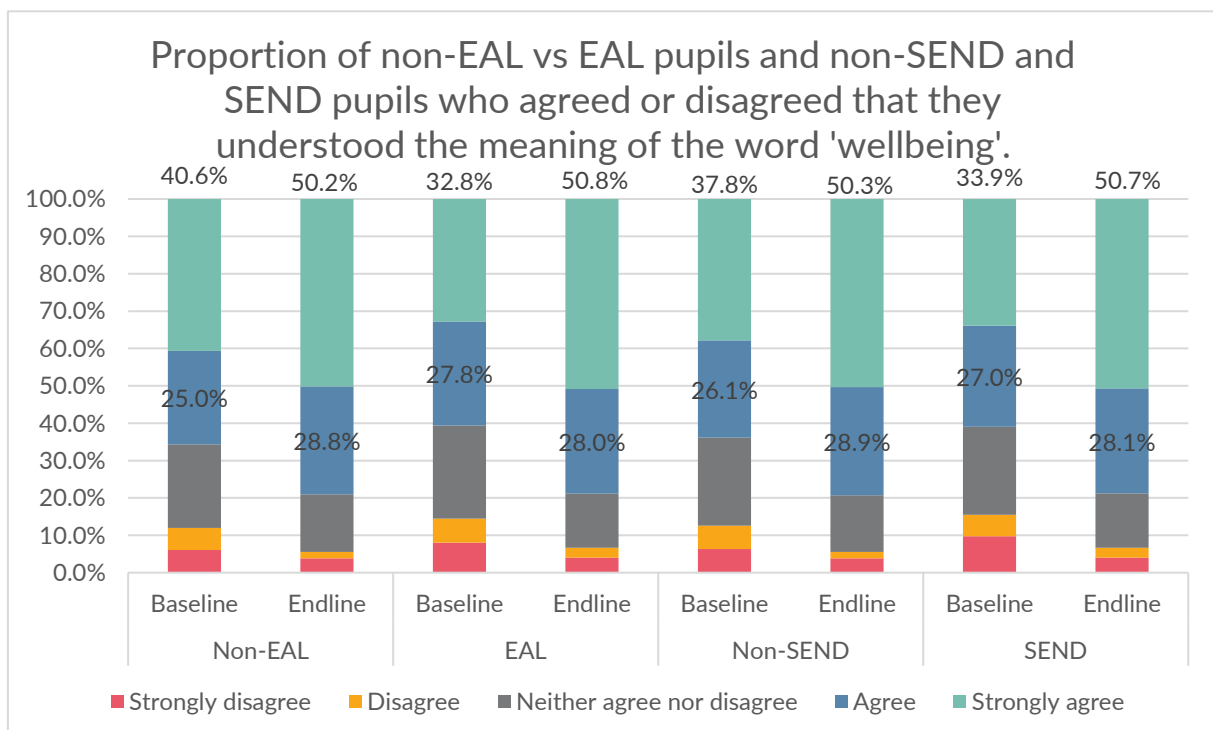
Teachers identified specific Story Project activities and tools that improved pupils' emotional vocabulary.

*"I think the emotional vocabulary with all the character faces on is really powerful." – Assistant Headteacher*

**Pupils also improved their understanding of the word 'wellbeing'.** After engaging with The Story Project, 15.4 percentage points (pp) more pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the meaning of wellbeing'.



This positive trend was true for all-subgroups. Notably, The Story Project appeared to support EAL and SEND pupils to catch up with their peers in their understanding on the word 'wellbeing'.



One teacher in a focus group noted that The Story Project helped EAL pupils find the right words to explain their wellbeing:

*“He didn't speak English a number of years ago. He's gone through a really traumatic event. He might not have shared that, but in this instance, he has [shared] when we've been talking about it through the book.” – Assistant Headteacher*

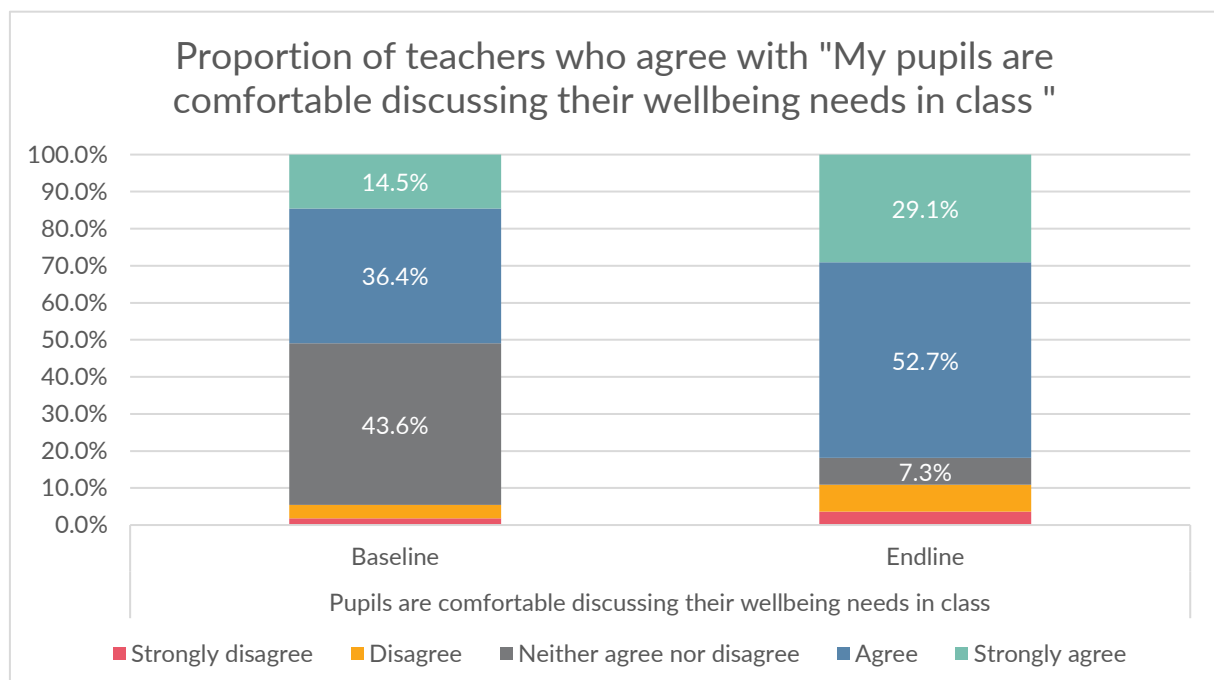
One pupil in a focus group provided an example of their newly discovered interpretation of 'wellbeing':

*“Mental well-being is [...] basically just taking care of your mind, not only your body, but your mind. [The mind] is just as important to [...] make everything else want to work.” – Year 5 pupil*

Pupils' improved understanding of the word 'wellbeing' was further corroborated by teachers. Before using The Story Project, 64.5% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their pupils were exposed to a wide range of wellbeing-related vocabulary. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 92.7% - an increase of 29.3 percentage points.

### Pupils are having better conversations about wellbeing and feeling more comfortable doing so after engaging with The Story Project.

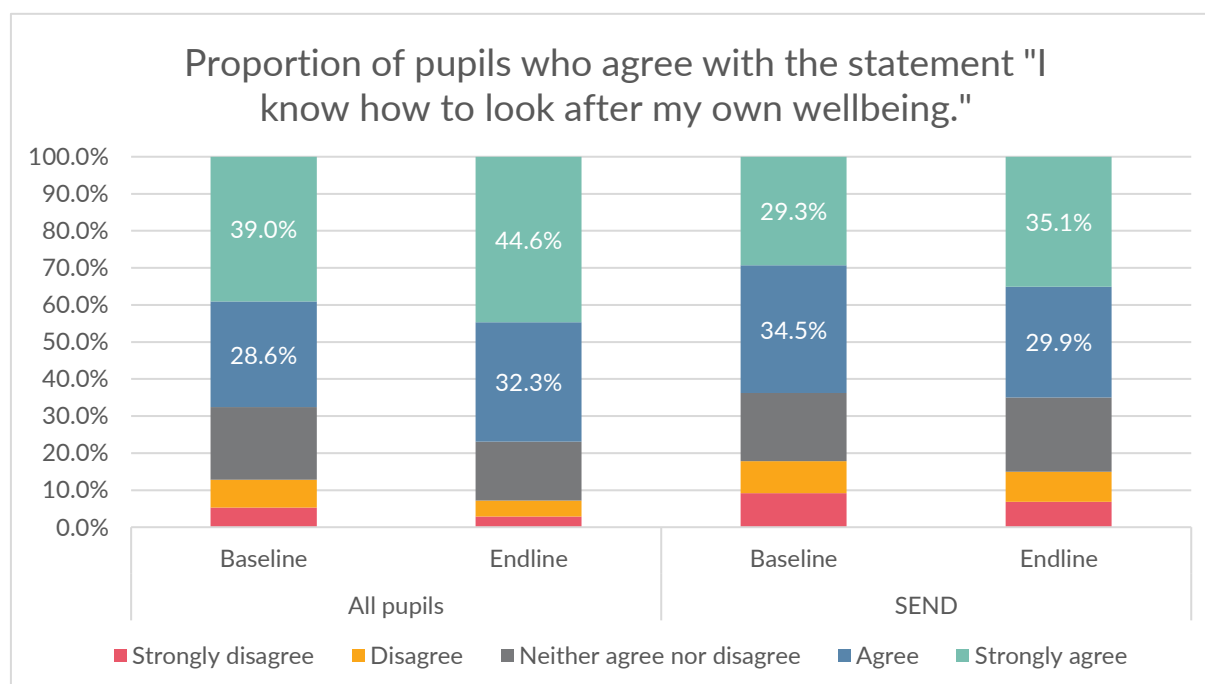
Teachers' ratings of pupils' wellbeing discussion quality improved following The Story Project, jumping from 48.2% to 92.7% for 'Good' or 'Excellent' ratings. Comparable growth appeared in reports of pupil comfort discussing wellbeing, where agreement increased from 50.9% to 81.8%.



## Pupils developed their skills and tools to manage their wellbeing

Overall, evidence points towards pupils developing their ability to manage their wellbeing. Before using The Story Project, 60.9% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they knew who they could talk to or how to get help if they felt worried about something. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 73.0% - an increase of 12.1 percentage points.

9.3pp more pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they knew how to manage their wellbeing after engaging in The Story Project. While all sub-groups showed increased agreement that they knew how to look after their own wellbeing, pupils with SEND demonstrated the smallest gains.



Pupils named a range of different techniques they'd learnt to manage their big emotions and wellbeing, often referencing how talking to others helped with their big feelings:

*"It's OK to make mistakes because sometimes I get so I get angry. I just get a little bit upset with them. Sometimes you just need to talk to someone." - Year 2 pupil*

*"I started to get angry. Then [...] my friends came over, they spoke to me. They saw me a bit angry and upset. It just made me a bit happier [...] made me feel much better and that's why friends can always help." - Year 2 pupil*

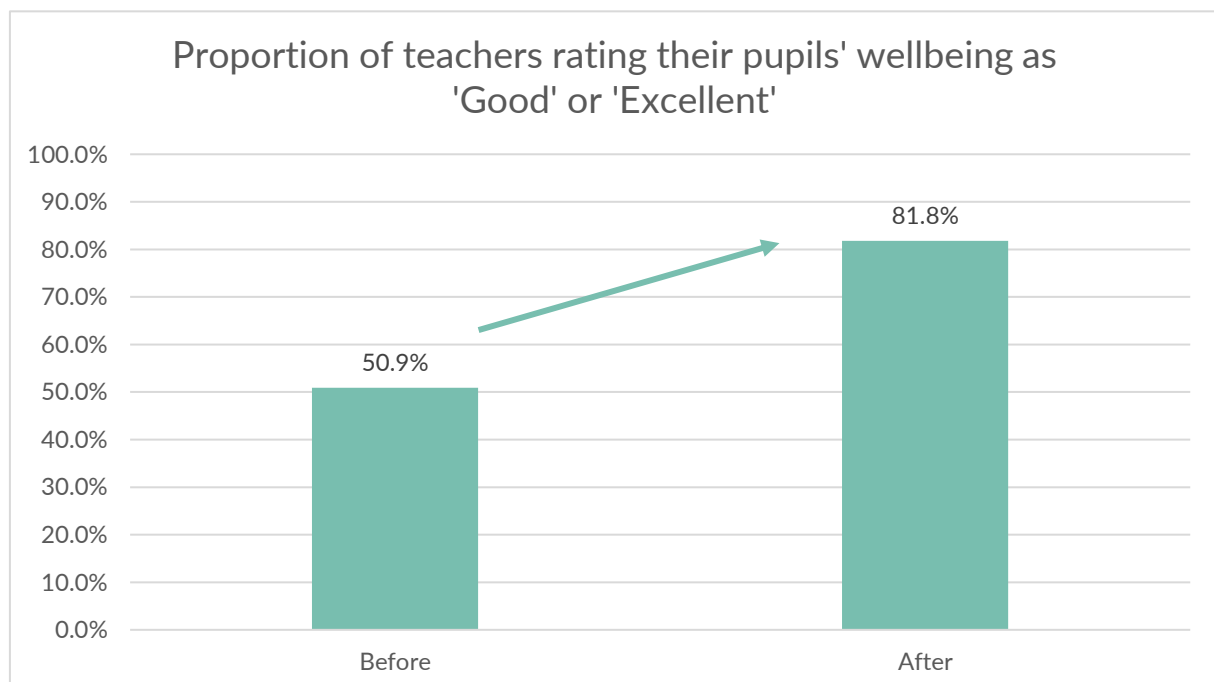
Pupils stated they started turning big emotions into learning opportunities:

*"I was writing Happy Father's Day, I did it upside down and then I got so angry. I was like, this is going to take forever again. So I did it again, but then I realised it actually looks better. So when you make mistakes, sometimes you can make it better because you learn from it." - Year 2 pupil*

Other pupils provided easy to implement and quick approaches to feeling better:

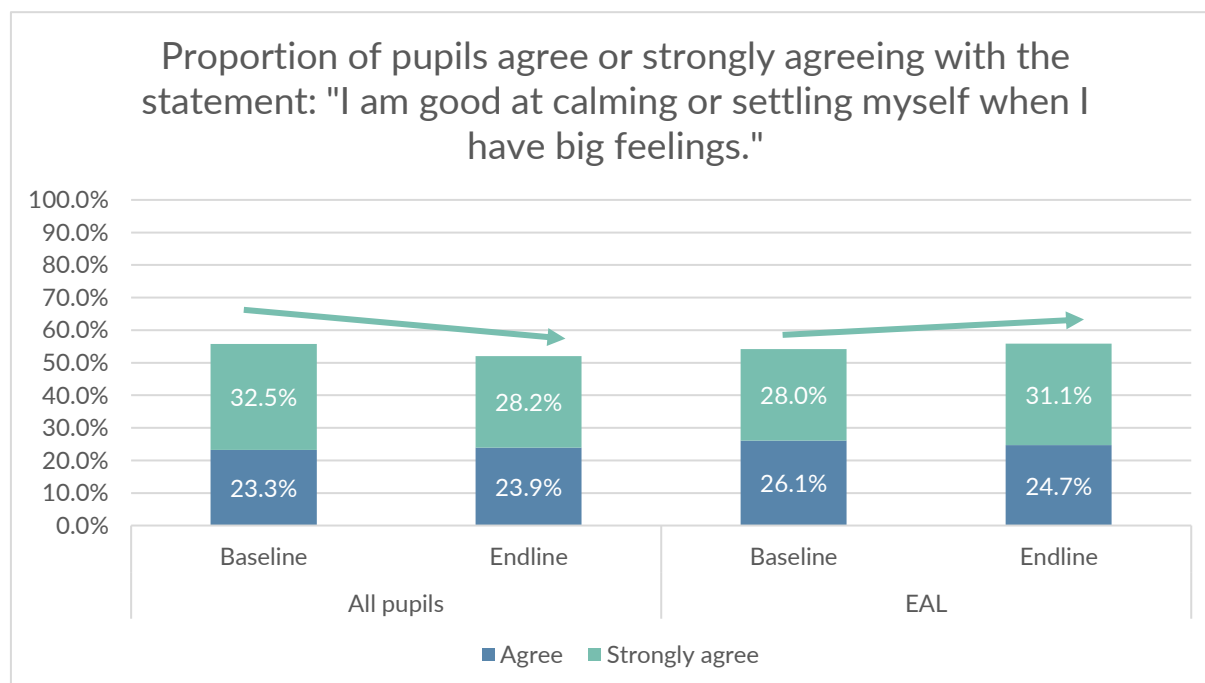
*"Do breathing and you feel calm." - Year 5 pupil*

Teachers also observed improved classroom wellbeing, suggesting that pupils were successfully using newly developed skills to manage their own wellbeing. Before using The Story Project, 50.9% of teachers rated their pupils' wellbeing as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 81.8% - an increase of 30.9 percentage points.



After The Story Project, fewer pupils agreed they were good at calming themselves when experiencing big feelings. This decrease does not align with focus group data. We recommend investigating whether pupils understood the question and, if so, identifying the cause.

Pupils with EAL were the only sub-group to not show a decrease.



Teachers highlighted specific approaches their pupils had learnt as part of The Story Project:

*"When we say Story Project, the one thing I think they really do look forward to is the calming activity." - Teacher*

*"Transitions are really difficult for some of our children. [...] It's been nice [...] for me to come back in and then I'll see [pupils] looking through the cards. Why [they're] feeling that way or an incident has happened. And [...] I think that's really supported us as well this year." - Teacher*

*"The settle element and being ready to learn." - Year 6 Teacher*

*"I've seen the student leadership team working with children, just helping them [...] manage their breathing." - Year 6 Teacher*

*"One of the activities from that was like routines and bedtime routines and a lot of year one children, unfortunately, don't have a bedtime routine. So obviously after [...] doing that activity, they all said. Right, ok, so [...] you could brush your teeth [...]. You could have a story and then wind down and have a bath [...] so then they said, well, we're going to go home and ask our mum now." - Year 1 Teacher & PSHE Lead*

Pupils are more willing to share their feelings and experiences because they see themselves and people from their own lives reflected in The Story Project stories.

An emerging theme from the focus groups was that **pupils benefited from the diverse representation of characters and stories in The Story Project**. Teachers observed that when pupils encountered characters experiencing similar emotions and situations to themselves or people in their lives, they found it easier to share their own feelings and experiences. This created a safe space for conversation: pupils could explore difficult topics through the lens of a character's story, which provided emotional distance and protection, while also feeling empowered to discuss their own experiences more openly. These conversations flourished between pupils, their peers, and their teachers, making it easier for those facing challenges to seek guidance and support. Teachers particularly noted that stories representing a diverse range of people were invaluable for drawing out more reserved children. One teacher mentioned the benefits of the story called 'The Colour Thief', a story about a young boy whose father is experiencing depression. The story compares depression to having colour stolen from the father's life.

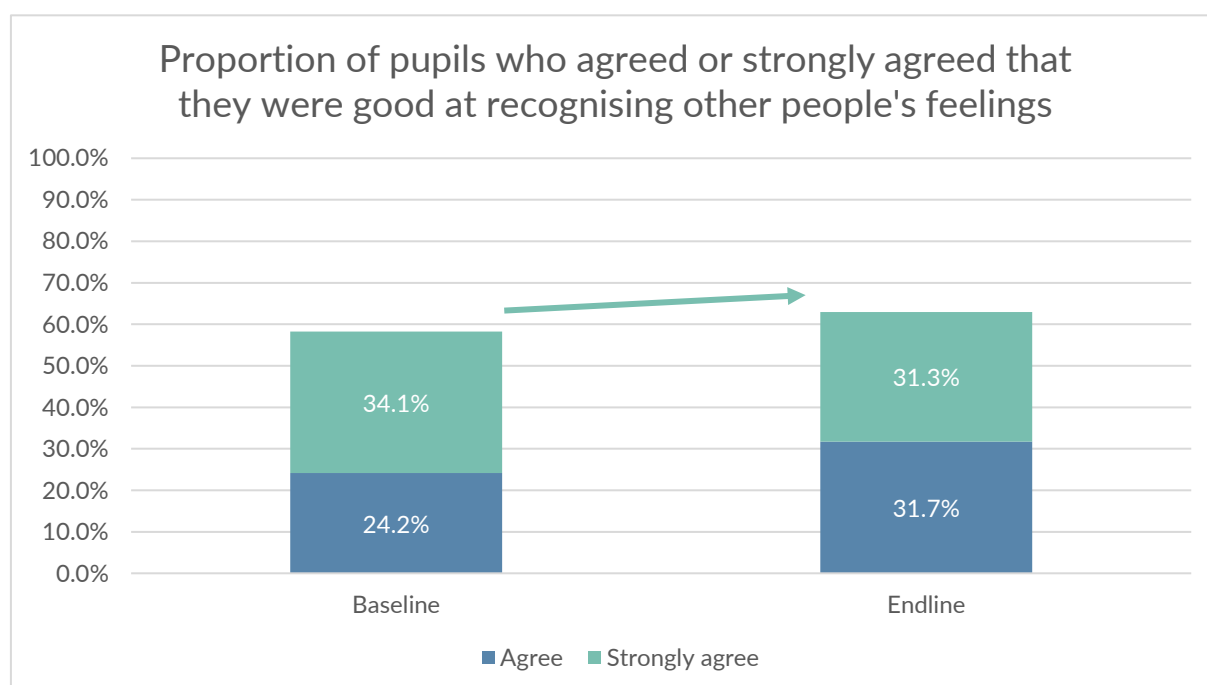
*"We did The Colour Thief, which is about the story on depression. I actually have a little girl in my class who's got a very similar sort of set up with that story [...] like her friends who she has disclosed things with [...] that's kind of helped her just by seeing it in a story. It's helped comfort her a lot and you know, lots of different strategies you could [...] take away with her. So it's been nice in that way to actually see it [being] useful to the real life situation." – Year 5 Teacher*

*"I teach [...] year six and I think it's more [...] reserved children[...] have opened up a little bit more through the character point of view. So even though as a teacher you actually know they're putting some of their own personal experience in, but because they're using the kind of the character to talk, it's allowed them to contribute a little bit more than they perhaps would have done on a normal basis." – Assistant Headteacher*

*"We've just done the book called My Big Fantastic Family. [...] The story focuses on a child whose parents have separated and [...] then the mum has then got another boyfriend and that's then opened up lots of more family members [...]. It actually prompted a little boy who had mentioned the fact that his family had separated, that he never sees his dad, and it prompted all of that discussion [...]. It started getting him talking and opening up all about his life [...] because he then could see himself in the book and identify with the characters, it then sort of almost gave him the confidence to share his scenario and share his sort of family set up, which was really lovely." – Year 1 Teacher and PSHE Lead*

### Pupils demonstrated an increased understanding and awareness of the wellbeing needs of others.

This shift was reflected in pupils' self-reported ability to recognise emotions. Before The Story Project, 58.2% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they were good at recognising other people's feelings. After The Story Project, this rose to 63.0% - an increase of 4.6 percentage points.



Teachers also perceived this shift. Before using The Story Project 54.6% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their pupils could explain why characters are feeling a particular way. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 85.5 % - an increase of 30.9 percentage points. Furthermore, before using The Story Project only 21.8% of teachers rated their pupils' ability to empathise as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 71.6 % - an increase of 52.7 percentage points. Teachers explicitly stated that pupils became more open to understanding other people's perspectives through books, and that this openness extended into their day-to-day interactions.



*"[Year 6s] were looking at The Life of Anne Frank [..] and it was absolutely phenomenal because a lot of them actually took the book, [...] they actually could see [...] today's world through Anne Frank's [eyes] and the sort of empathise with what she was going through" - Year 1 Teacher and PSHE Lead*

*"They can be quite tunnel visioned when they're talking about situations, whereas now, when we're reflecting on things or we're having a restorative discussion, they're much more open to seeing that wider perspective and another child's point of view" - Year 6 Teacher with English responsibilities*

*"[The Story Project has helped with] problem solving with friendships, just like empathising with each other's feeling" - Year 5 Teacher*

### Teachers reported perceived improvements in pupils' literacy and comprehension skills after using The Story Project.

Teachers reported improvements in their pupils' literacy and comprehension skills. Before using The Story Project, 34.6% of teachers rated their pupils' skills as 'Good' or 'Excellent'. After using the programme, this rose to 64.5% - an increase of 30.9 percentage points. Teachers reported positive changes in several factors that support reading comprehension:

- Increased time spent teaching literacy outside of dedicated literacy lessons
- More time spent reading aloud with the class
- Greater embedding of literacy across other curriculum areas
- Improved access to resources for embedding literacy across subjects

However, we lack sufficient evidence to confidently attribute these changes to the programme itself. Further research with larger sample sizes, longer timeframes, and a validated literacy measure would be needed to establish whether The Story Project definitively impacts pupils' reading comprehension and broader literacy skills.

The teachers in the focus groups reflected that The Story Project had influenced pupils' literacy and comprehension skills. They highlighted how the stories helped pupils develop specific comprehension skills.

*"It's [...] another way to model [...] how you might understand something, how you might comprehend and unpick, find answers." – Assistant Headteacher*

*"It helps them with [...] picking up on cues [...] in terms of their literacy and their inference of situation that are happening in a text [...] because they are so visual." – Year 6 Teacher With English Responsibilities*

Teachers thought the programme's overall structure facilitated pupils' reading:

*"I like the way that you've got progression in your reading as well. I think that's really good." – DSL and PSHE Lead*

One teacher highlighted how The Story Project helped cultivate joy in the reading experience:

*"It feeds back into reading for pleasure [...] they don't want to choose books. However, Ravi's Roar has just been such a success in my class, so it's been lovely. The children can go back to them and choose the books when they want." - Teacher*

Teachers identified The Story Project was one of many activities in the school supporting their pupils' literacy and comprehension skills:

*"It's another vehicle for us to practice the tools that we're using in our reading lesson." - Teacher*

One teacher proposed that comprehension outcomes might have been stronger if pupils had individual copies of the book in class:

*"I'm not sure we are getting the reading comprehension through as well as we possibly could just due to lack of resources." - Year 5 Teacher and PSHE Lead*

## Teacher findings

This section explores how The Story Project has impacted teachers' confidence, skills, and practice in delivering wellbeing education and handling sensitive conversations with pupils.

### School staff felt more equipped to support pupils with their wellbeing needs.

Evidence pointed towards school staff feeling more equipped to support the wellbeing of their pupils in a range of ways. Before The Story Project, 50.9% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed to having access to all the resources they required to be successful in teaching wellbeing. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 83.0 % - **an increase of 32.1 percentage points**. Furthermore, only 45.3% of teachers initially agreed or strongly agreed they knew how to reduce gaps in pupils' understanding of wellbeing topics. After using The Story Project, this figure rose to 86.8% - **an increase of 41.5 percentage points**.

### School staff felt more equipped to tackle challenging PSHE and RSHE conversations with pupils

The proportion of teachers reporting they believe they can effectively support their pupils in managing their wellbeing needs increased by 20.8 percentage points. There was also an increase in the percentage of teachers being confident in facilitating discussions on sensitive topics related to wellbeing (+50.9pp).

Teachers remarked they felt more equipped to teach challenging PSHE and RSHE conversations because of The Story Project. The content of the stories supported their teaching of topics that widen pupils' worldview:

*"The stories really help tackle those taboo subjects, which children unfortunately will never get to hear." - Year 1 Teacher and PSHE Lead*

Teachers also reflected that The Story Project format made them feel more equipped to bring nuance into conversations:

*"I think as a teacher that's made it much easier rather than it being kind of very black and white and it's opened the conversations easier than if you were just showing like a traditional PowerPoint or puberty video" - Assistant Headteacher*

One teacher reflected that it was particularly helpful for teachers at the start of their teaching career:

*"[It has] particularly [helped] our younger teachers. It gives them a good way in [to talking about challenging topics]." - Teacher*

Teachers discussed a range of topics in PSHE that they would have found challenging to teach and discuss without the support and guidance of The Story Project materials. These topics range from puberty to world conflict.

*"[The story] Pizza Face that we use in Year 5 [...] that is around the topic of puberty [...] and then obviously it leads into those quite tricky conversations that we might have to have with the children around this age anyway about changes that are happening to bodies and emotions. And using their characters in Pizza Face really helped!" - Year 5 Teacher and PSHE Lead*

*"In year six when they looked at [...] the diary of Anne Frank [...] it obviously opened up the [...] discussions about war in Gaza, how people there are feeling [and] how people in Israel might be [feeling], how people in Ukraine might be [feeling]. So I think what was going on in their heads was [...] we were able to openly discuss. So I think they felt safe enough to actually discuss that with the teachers." - Year 1 Teacher and PSHE Lead*

### Teachers have started to use strategies and approaches they learnt through The Story Project whilst teaching other subjects and across the school day

Teachers reflected that The Story Project had impacted their pedagogy across their wider teaching in school. One teacher highlighted they were using the resources in their classroom beyond time allocated for The Story Project:

*"We have the vocabulary cards, we have them out on the tables all the time, not just in The Story Project sessions. [...] It's such a useful resource to have there as a consistent thread throughout the day." - Year 6 Teacher With English Responsibilities*

Teachers valued the structured approach to lesson planning. Two teachers further reflected that the structuring of sessions in The Story Project had influenced their approach in teaching other subjects in the school day.

*“We've actually taken The Story Project kind of lesson format and have done our RE lessons and our science lessons and our history lessons in the same format.” – Assistant Headteacher*

*“Some of the aspects of [The] Story Project have kind of come into our English.” – Year 5 Teacher and PSHE Lead*

One teacher reflected that they had used approaches learnt through The Story Project to better handle restorative conversations with pupils in different subjects.

*“There was one today who was struggling to be in my maths lesson [...] he'd come in with the wrong attitude [...] I sat him out, and then I went to speak to him and I was like, look, I can see that you're not feeling OK. I can see you're not feeling all right. It was like, are you feeling angry? Are you feeling sad? And he stopped and thought for a minute. **He was like, no, actually, I'm frustrated.**” – Teacher*

## Conclusion and recommendations

Engaging with The Story Project has clearly improved pupils' emotional and wellbeing vocabulary, meaning they are able to navigate through the world more openly and are beginning to solve some of their own emotional and wellbeing needs, such as participating in restorative conversations in the playground, or know when to take a breathing break. The Story Project has supported this by providing pupils with language and routines that pupils can do independently. The use of The Story Project has also increased pupils' capacity to understand and empathise with others. Seeing characters that reflect themselves, and people they know, has made it easier for them to open up about their own experiences.

Teachers have also benefitted from teaching The Story Project. There are clear positive trends indicating that teachers feel far more equipped to handle wellbeing conversations with pupils feeling more confident and able to handle sensitive PSHE topics such as puberty. Teachers have also found the structure and approach used in The Story Project helpful in teaching other subjects such as English and RE.

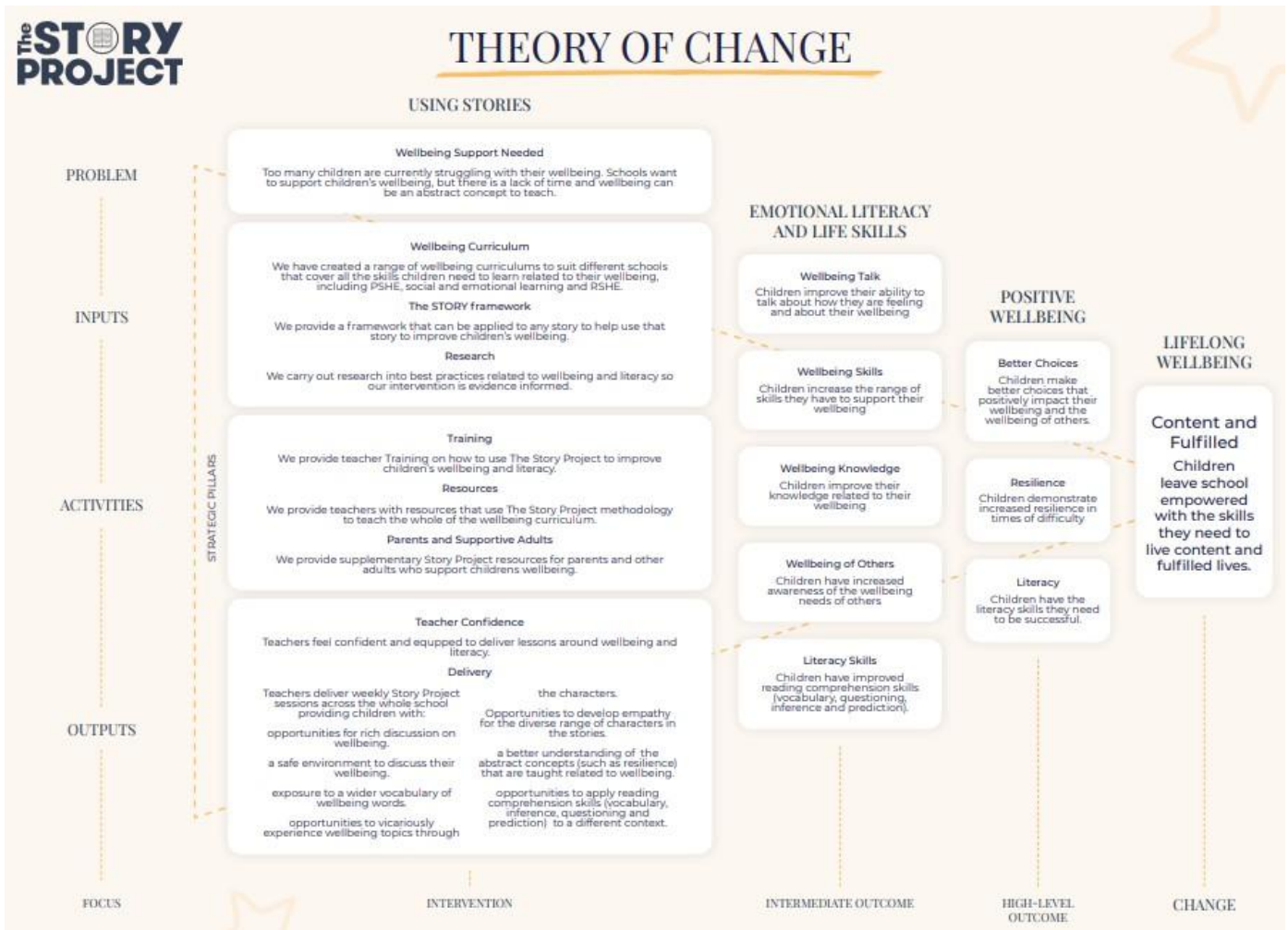
### Evaluation Recommendations

- ▶ **Explore the literacy measurement approach** - Extend the evaluation timeframe, expand the sample size, and use a validated survey instrument to develop greater evidence to more confidently attribute these changes to the programme itself.
- ▶ **Explore the shift in emotional expression through qualitative research** - Conduct targeted focus groups to investigate the change in how pupils report managing big emotions.
- ▶ **Investigate success factors for specific sub-groups** - Since The Story Project appears to have closed the gap in wellbeing understanding and emotional capability between EAL/SEND pupils and their more advantaged peers, conduct focused qualitative research to determine which programme elements drive this success.



## Appendices

### Appendix A – Theory of Change



## Appendix B – Full Survey Measures




Survey measures were chosen and designed in line with the key outcomes above that The Story Project aims to address with participants. Due to the bespoke and specific nature of the outcomes measured, custom surveys were designed to measure areas of individual understanding of emotional vocabulary, awareness of others' emotions, PSHE/RSE progress, and teacher confidence in teaching PSHE/RSE and wellbeing. During the research tool design process, questions from the Grit-S scale, and Basic Empathy scale were drawn upon to inform the custom survey items.

Following feedback from the 2023-24 evaluation of how pupils were completing surveys, some questions' wording changed from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to be clearer. Some questions were removed, and some questions were added. Please see below.




## Pupil Survey 2023-24 and 2024-45

Question No.	2023-24 Question	2024-25 Baseline Question	2024-25 Endline Question	Response
1	I understand what the word 'wellbeing' means.	I understand what the word 'wellbeing' means.	I understand what the word 'wellbeing' means.	(With emojis) 1: Strongly Agree 2: Agree 3: Neutral 4: Disagree 5: Strongly Disagree
2	I know how to look after my own wellbeing.	I know how to look after my own wellbeing.	I know how to look after my own wellbeing.	
3	I can recognise my own feelings.	I am good at recognising my own feelings.	I am good at recognising my own feelings.	
4	I understand why I feel the way I do about things.	I am good at understanding why I feel different ways.	I am good at understanding why I feel different ways.	
5	I know ways to calm myself down if I am upset or angry.	I am good at calming or settling myself when I have big feelings.	I am good at calming or settling myself when I have big feelings.	
6	I can recognise other people's feelings without them telling me.	I am good at recognising other people's feelings.	I am good at recognising other people's feelings.	
7	I can understand why other people feel the way they do.	Removed	Removed	
8	I can get along well with others.	Removed.	Removed.	






9	I know how to get help if I am feeling worried.	I know who I can talk to or how to get help if I feel worried about something.		
10	When I am reading, I understand what most of the text is about.	Removed.	Removed.	
11	I understand the meaning of most of the words I read.	Removed.	Removed.	
12	I know lots of words to describe my feelings.	Removed.	Removed.	
13	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means?</p> 	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means? Choose as many of the options as you like.</p> 	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means? Choose as many of the options as you like.</p> 	<p>Multiple choice: Cheerful, Happy, Worried, Sorry, Playful, Proud, Left out, Disappointed, Grumpy, Sad, Devastated, Happy</p>
14	Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of.	Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.	Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.	Open text



15	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means?</p> 	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means? Choose as many of the options as you like. Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.</p> 	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means? Choose as many of the options as you like. Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.</p> 	<p>Multiple choice: Happy, Overjoyed, Upset, Proud, Furious, Pleased, Delighted, Worried, Brave, Cheerful, Sad, Excited</p>
16	<p>Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of any.</p>	<p>Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.</p>	<p>Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.</p>	<p>Open text</p>
17	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means?</p>	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means? Choose as many of the options as you like.</p>	<p>How do you think the person is feeling? What do you think their facial expression means? Choose as many of the options as you like.</p>	<p>Multiple choice: Frightened, confident, Scared, Interested, Worried, Stressed, Delighted, Anxious,</p>



				Fearful, Overwhelmed, Panicked, Happy
18	Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of.	Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.	Are there any other words that might describe how this person is feeling? Type up to 3 best words you can think of. You can skip this question if you can't think of any.	Open text
19	-	-	Do you enjoy The Story Project?	Single-select: Not at all, A little bit, Somewhat, Quite a lot, Very much
20	-	-	Do enjoy learning through stories?	Single-select: Not at all, A little bit, Somewhat, Quite a lot, Very much
	-	-	I think The Story Project has made a positive difference to me.	Single-select: Not at all, A little bit, Somewhat, Quite a lot, Very much

## Teacher Survey 2023-24 and 2024-25

Number	Statement	Response	2023-24 Baseline	2023-24 Endline	2024-25 Baseline	2024-25 Endline
1	How often do you teach literacy skills outside of literacy lessons (please indicate how many times per week)	Open text/number	Y	Y	Y	Y
2	How often do you read aloud with your class (please indicate how many times per week)		Y	Y	Y	Y
3	I understand how to teach my pupils RSHE and wellbeing topics	Single select: 1: Strongly disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neither agree nor disagree 4: Agree 5: Strongly agree	Y	Y	Y	Y
4	I understand how to reduce gaps in my pupils' understanding of wellbeing topics		Y	Y	Y	Y
5	I feel confident in delivering lessons on RSHE and wellbeing		Y	Y	Y	Y
6	I feel confident in embedding literacy into other areas of the curriculum		Y	Y	Y	Y
7	I feel confident in creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment for RSHE and wellbeing learning to take place		Y	Y	Y	Y
8	Teaching about RSHE and wellbeing allows me to support my pupils with their wellbeing needs		Y	Y	Y	Y
9	I have access to all the resources I require to be successful in teaching about wellbeing		Y	Y	Y	Y
10	I have access to the resources I required to successfully embed literacy in other areas of the curriculum		Y	Y	Y	Y

11	I feel confident in addressing questions and concerns from pupils related to wellbeing		Y	Y	Y	Y
12	I feel confident in facilitating discussions on sensitive topics related to wellbeing		Y	Y	Y	Y
13	I believe I can effectively support my pupils in managing their wellbeing needs (e.g., managing emotions and building resilience)		Y	Y	Y	Y
14	My pupils are comfortable discussing their wellbeing needs in class		Y	Y	Y	Y
15	My pupils are confident in using a range of vocabulary to describe a range of emotions (e.g., they use a variety of words to describe 'happy' such as 'cheerful', 'joyful', 'gleeful', 'jolly', etc)		Y	Y	Y	Y
16	My pupils can explain reasons why people/characters feel a certain why		Y	Y	Y	Y
17	My pupils are exposed to a wide variety of wellbeing related vocabulary		Y	Y	Y	Y
18	Thinking generally about the pupils in your classroom, how would you currently rate the:	Single select: Excellent / good / fair/ poor / very poor	Y	N	Y	N
	Pupil wellbeing		Y	N	Y	N
	Pupil's reading comprehension & literacy skills		Y	N	Y	N
	Pupil's wellbeing/emotional vocabulary		Y	N	Y	N
	Pupil's empathy		Y	N	Y	N
	Pupil's understanding of abstract wellbeing concepts (e.g., resilience)		Y	N	Y	N
	Wellbeing discussion in your classroom		Y	N	Y	N
19	How have you been delivering TSP in your school?	Single select: Weekly, fortnightly, as a block, other	N	Y	N	Y
20	Thinking about TSP overall, how would you rate the:		N	Y	N	Y

	Training you received	Single select: Excellent / good / fair/ poor / very poor	N	Y	N	Y
	Support from TSP		N	Y	N	Y
	Resources available to you		N	Y	N	Y
	Curriculum		N	Y	N	Y
	Success of TSP in your classroom/with your pupils so far		N	Y	N	Y
21	Thinking about the impact TSP has had in your classroom, how would you rate how TSP has helped to improve:	Single select: Excellent / good / fair/ poor / very poor	N	Y	N	Y
	Pupil wellbeing		N	Y	N	Y
	Pupils' reading comprehension & literacy skills		N	Y	N	Y
	Pupils' wellbeing/emotional vocabulary		N	Y	N	Y
	Pupils' empathy		N	Y	N	Y
	Pupils' understanding of abstract wellbeing concepts (e.g., resilience)		N	Y	N	Y
	Wellbeing discussion in your classroom		N	Y	N	Y
	Pupils' oracy		N	N	N	Y
	Pupils' emotional regulation		N	N	N	Y
	Pupils' behaviour		N	N	N	Y
	Pupils' reading for pleasure		N	N	N	Y
22	To what extent would you recommend The Story Project to other primary school teachers:	Single select: Not at all recommend Slightly recommend Moderately recommend Strongly recommend Very strongly recommend	N	N	N	Y
	wanting to promote wellbeing for pupils		N	N	N	Y
	enhancing Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE) outcomes for pupils		N	N	N	Y
	enhancing Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) outcomes for pupils.		N	N	N	Y

23	Describe The Story Project in three words	Open text	N	N	N	Y
24	Do you have any comments to explain your ratings or about the resources, curriculum, training and support you have received from TSP?	Open text	N	Y	N	Y
25	Do you have any other comments or feedback on TSP? This question is optional to provide an opportunity for you to share your feedback on the programme. Although individual responses to this question may be shared directly with the programme team to help improve delivery, this will not be linked to your name, school and other survey responses.	Open text	N	Y	N	Y



## Appendix C – Analysis Approach

### Quantitative data

To analyse staff and pupils' progress towards achieving the intended outcomes, we only included individuals who had a 2024-25 endline survey result that we could match with either a 2023-24 baseline or a 2024-25 baseline. Only including matched sample in the analysis meant we could calculate the percentage change by individual. For pupils, we conducted further subgroup analysis by Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), in receipt of Pupil Premium funding (PP), or who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL).

ImpactEd Evaluation conducted descriptive statistical analysis on the survey responses. Most survey questions asked were responded to using Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly negative) to 5 (strongly positive). This data was analysed to give an overall average response score, percentage change from between the time points. We then calculated the distribution of response by category (strongly disagree to strongly agree) at baseline and then at endline, and then calculated the changes in percentages for each category between baseline and endline. This was the change that was reported on to show the changes within overall pupil and teacher populations.

We also conducted statistical significance testing on survey results. We conducted t-test between matched pre and post results. Most findings we include in the report included statistically significant findings in the report. Where they are not statistically significant, this has been explicitly stated.

### Qualitative data

To understand individuals' personal experiences of The Story Project, pupil and staff focus group were conducted. We conducted qualitative research with 15 teachers across three focus groups and with 12 pupils across two focus groups 2024-25.



**ImpactEd**  
Evaluation



Contact information:

[www.impactgroup.uk](http://www.impactgroup.uk)

[hello@impactgroup.uk](mailto:hello@impactgroup.uk)