

Introduction

Within the school, children gain a range of different social experiences, they establish relationships with fellow pupils, their identities and self-awareness are influenced, they learn about their own health and develop a basis for making their own choices, for example, in relation to intoxicating substances. The social and personal development which they gain in the school can have just as far reaching consequences on their future lives as their accomplishments in the various school subjects.

The majority of pupils in the school learn and gain experience which leads them to develop in a positive direction and to become "useful and independent individuals in the home and in society" as it states in the mission statement in the Objects Clause of The Education Act. However, there are always children and adolescents in the primary and lower secondary school who receive a range of negative experiences and who do not develop in a desirable direction. These pupils can experience huge setbacks, be socially isolated, become victims of bullying, have a poor relationship with their teachers, be unhappy and have difficulties in attending school. They can be noisy, restless and disruptive and some can show, or be in danger of showing, serious behavioural problems such as theft, vandalism, violence and drug/alcohol abuse. This type of negative experience and behaviour increases the likelihood that these children and adolescents, as adults, will have difficulties entering the work force, have drug- and/or alcohol-related problems, have tendencies to be involved in criminal activities and have poor physical and mental health

Today we also have expertise which shows that there is a connection between the pupils' behavioural problems in school and their scholastic achievements (Nordahl 2005). In addition, it is also clear that pupils with good social skills have a tendency to have better academic results than pupils with poor social skills. This shows that preventative work aimed at the pupils' social and personal development is not just an aim in itself, but is also vital in order that the pupils can gain the best possible learning outcome

The importance of the school in the children's and adolescents' development and learning appears to be becoming even greater, partly because the children and adolescents spend an increasing amount of their upbringing in educational institutions. The majority of children are in day-care centres, schools, and involved in out-of-school activities programmes all day, five days a week from when they are three years old until they are eighteen. It can therefore be both inadequate and too late for the children and adolescents who present behavioural problems, or those who are clearly developing in a negative direction, for the school then to implement measures. It is vital that the school operates a scheme which encourages good health and positive social and personal development. This report aims to give school owners, school managements and teachers a good basis for carrying out preventative work in the daily running of the school. Based on research work, recommendations are given on suitable measures which can be taken by the school in order to achieve the best results for children and adolescents.

Background

The Social, Health and Education Directorate, and the Norwegian Board of Education after being commissioned by the previous Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education and Research instigated the drawing up of guidelines for the school system. These guidelines comprised a variety of methods for promoting good health and for preventing problems in the school. The Social and Health Directorate was to draw up a

summary of the expertise available on measures aimed at preventing drug and alcohol abuse with

the focus on the school. An assessment and an evaluation of a variety of programmes and measures for use in schools, would be carried out. This work was divided into two parts, with one group preparing a summary of the status of expertise and a research group which would evaluate the various programmes aimed at preventing drug and alcohol abuse. The Directorate for Education and Training was to revise Report 2000 (KUF/BFD 2000). This report was an evaluation of a variety of programmes aimed at reducing problem behaviour and developing social skills. The Education Directorate was also to make a summary of the expertise available on the teacher as leader in connection with the introduction of the curriculum for the Knowledge Promotion reform. Linked to these evaluations, both directorates intended to prepare strategies for the implementation and remedial work within the schools. In this case, the strategies which could be practically employed to implement the research-based expertise in the primary and secondary school, would be assessed.

The two directorates decided that these varied tasks should be seen in relation to one another and placed under a common heading. The purpose for this was to avoid the use of different criteria in the evaluation of the programmes and measures to be used in the school system, and at the same time, to avoid the overlapping of work. Further, the work would be published as a joint report for the school system and thereby make it easier for school managers and teachers to gain access to this expertise. In this way the directorates would also ensure that unambiguous professional recommendations would be given to the school system. With this background, in addition to the committee which would formulate a status report on the expertise available on drug and alcohol abuse, four research groups were appointed. The groups would work within the following confines:

- Evaluation of programmes aimed at reducing problem behaviour and developing social skills
- Evaluation of different programmes for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse in the school
- The development of the status of knowledge concerning the teacher as manager
- Implementation strategies in the school

These four research groups have had regular joint meetings in order to formulate common professional principles concerning the work. However, within each individual evaluation area, each group is responsible for its own work. The practical coordination of the work has been carried out by the Directorate for Education and Training in cooperation with the Social and Health Directorate. Professor Thomas Nordahl, University College in Hedmark has led the work.

Composition of the various committees and their mandates.

In each of the directorates, professionals from different fields of expertise have been recruited to take part in the evaluation work. At the same time, mandates for each group have been formulated. Below is information relating to the composition and mandate of each committee.

Evaluation of programmes for the reduction of problem behaviour and for the development of social competence.

Research fellow Hege Knudsmoen,

(leader) University of Oslo

Professor Per Holth, *Akershus University College*

Professor Poul Nissen,

Denmark's University of Education

Associate Professor Jon Håkon Schultz,

University of Oslo

Adviser Arne Tveit,

The Central Regional Resource Centre for Behaviourial and Emotional Difficulties (MKA)

Associate Professor Torbjørn Torsheim,
University of Bergen

"The committee shall provide a research-based evaluation of different programmes and teaching-packages which have as their objective the prevention and management of problem behaviour and programmes which lead to increased social competence and a good learning environment in primary and secondary school. The committee shall give advice and recommendations on further use of the programmes in primary and secondary schools."

Evaluation of different programmes for the work in school aimed at the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse

Professor Thomas Nordahl,
Hedmark University College (leader)
Associate Professor Henrik Natvig,
University of Oslo
Associate Professor Oddrun Samdal,
University of Bergen
Psychologist Reidar Thyholdt,
University of Bergen
Professor Britt Unni Wilhelmsen,
Bergen University College

"The committee shall provide a research-based evaluation of different programmes and teaching-packs which have as their objective the prevention of drug misuse. This includes dependence-producing substances such as alcohol, drugs and tobacco."

The status of knowledge concerning the teacher as a leader

University College lecturer Karin Rørnes,
Tromsø University College (leader)
MST leader/adviser Terje Overland,
MST Hedmark and Oppland
Professor Erling Roland,
Centre for Behaviourial Research
Senior Adviser Kirsti Tveitereid,
Lillegården Resource Centre

" The committee shall review the research-based expertise concerning various aspects of the teacher's role as a leader in the educational process. The committee should lay particular emphasis on the potential effect this has for the pupils' academic and social education. Based on the evaluation, the committee is to provide recommendations on how the teacher can best fulfil his role as leader in the educational process.

Implementation strategies in the school
Associate Professor Torill M. Bogsnes Larsen,
University of Bergen Betanien DH (leader)
Associate Professor Kari Lamer,
Oslo University College
Professor Willy Tore Mørch,
Tromsø University College
Professor Dan Olweus
University of Bergen
Psychologist Sturla Helland
Kvinnherad municipality

"Using research methods, the committee shall evaluate and provide a summary of the principles

for implementation which appear to be vital for achieving the results relating to the prevention and reduction of differing forms of problem behaviour, the development of social competence and the establishment of appropriate learning environments in the school. ”

Knowledge Platform ¹ for work related to the promotion of better health in the school

Social Geographer Øystein Gravrok,

North Norway Competence Centre - Drug and alcohol abuse

Sociologist Vegard A. Schancke,

North Norway Competence Centre - Drug and alcohol abuse

Sociologist Marit Andreassen,

North Norway Competence Centre - Drug and alcohol abuse

Sociologist Pål Domben,

North Norway Competence Centre - Drug and alcohol abuse

Conflicts of interest

In a small country such as Norway, it is very difficult to find professionals with expertise within the various disciplines, who themselves have not worked with the development, introduction or evaluation of programmes and measures within the school system. The result is that many of the professionals within the various committees can have a conflict of interest with regard to individual programmes. This issue of conflicting interests is solved in that none of the professionals have evaluated a programme he or she , or his or her own institution, has had a role in, or connection with. Furthermore, no assessment has been made of the various programmes at meetings where all research groups have been present. In addition, no information has been given across the professional groups on how individual programmes have been assessed and which recommendations they have been assigned.

The various groups have had joint meetings in order to arrive at criteria which the individual groups have used in assessing the different educational programmes or teaching schemes. These criteria have received widespread agreement and they have been applied systematically by the groups. This has obviously strengthened the independence and validity of the work. These criteria are listed below.

Criteria for the evaluation of the various programmes

In the evaluation of the various programmes² associated with problem behaviour, social competence and the school as the arena for measures for the prevention of drug abuse, it is crucial to have criteria which allow for a collective basis for evaluation. The criteria shall ensure that the programmes are evaluated on the basis of the same requirements and standards. In addition, the criteria shall also be the basis for the recommendations given to the school system. By applying these criteria, the research groups shall have a good basis for evaluating each individual programme.

The criteria are based on models of classification which have been used earlier in both an international and a national connection (Ferrer-Wreder et al. 2005, Babor et al. 2003). The expertise-based foundation (theoretical and empirical), the implementation strategies and the evaluation results, are the three areas given the most weight in the development of the criteria. It is stressed that the programmes should both refer to, and utilise, theoretical and empirical knowledge within the relevant subject area. Furthermore, the programmes should have implementation strategies which ensure a successful completion.

It is also considered essential that the programmes have evaluations that can show results within their target spheres and that these are based on an evaluation-design which allows for the

documentation of results. Results in this work are related to the behaviour amendment of the children and adolescents within the specific target areas and, to some extent, to the alteration of intervening variables.

In evaluating the programmes' contents and activities, it is important that the programmes should be employed in the school system and have a pedagogic foundation. With respect to the evaluation of programmes, the research groups have tried to find a balance which ensures that approaches and criteria from many research traditions have been adhered to.

The criteria, which were applied by both the research groups in evaluating the programmes, were divided into the following three categories

1 Programmes with a low probability of achieving results

- These programmes are characterised by having little foundation in knowledge. That is to say, they are only to a limited extent based on theory and/or empirism and the likelihood of achieving the desired results within the priority area are small.
- In these programmes, there are signs that intentions, ideologies and assumptions have been given priority over research-based expertise concerning the subject area covered by the programme.
- These programmes seldom have clear implementation strategies. They would therefore not become a part of the institution's daily work. Many of these programmes are often characterised by having little or limited time input. The programmes can also be identified by the fact that they use their own instructors or that a presentation is held for which the individual school and teachers have no responsibility.
- Few of these programmes have been evaluated and in those instances where evaluations exist, it is rarely possible to document any development or alteration in the behaviour of the children and youngsters.
- The cognitive orientation in the programmes may have a one-sided focus in that the dissemination of information itself constitutes the main strategy aimed at altering the behaviour. Many of these programmes emphasise that the pupils' attitudes will be influenced by giving the pupils isolated emotional experiences and that this will later lead to changes in behaviour.
- In the programmes emphasis is seldom given to the importance of interaction between the children/adolescents and their surroundings.

2 Programmes with a high probability of achieving results

- Programmes with a high probability of achieving results build on theoretical and/or empirical knowledge which supports the assumptions of positive results of the programmes. They are founded on fundamental theoretical approaches to the subject area, or they may also have been developed from empirical knowledge of, for example, relationships between the priority areas and pupil behaviour.
- The theoretical and/or empirical foundation is indicated and documented in the programmes' specifications, instructions or manuals. The content and activities of the programmes have a clear link with this knowledge base.
- The programmes have not documented the impact on the relevant areas' results. This may be because either the programmes have not been evaluated or, that they have not been evaluated in a manner that enables the results to be documented.
- Programmes likely to have an effect, have implementation strategies which are based on measures used in the school over time. Usually, it is stressed that staff in the institution will have a clear responsibility for implementing and carrying out the programme.
- In relation to changes in behaviour, this will often involve more than a one-sided cognitive approach such as purely the passing on of information.
- The programmes will, to some extent, build on knowledge concerning links between behaviour and environment. This can involve an emphasis on contributing to changes in the learning environment and the child's environment by strengthening protective mechanisms.

3 Programmes with documented results

- Programmes with documented results build on research-based knowledge which supports assumptions of positive results of the programmes. They are based on fundamental theoretical approaches and/or empirical knowledge within the specialised field.
- These programmes have been well tested in relevant institutions, and have documented positive results, in at least one evaluation.
- The evaluations have a design which allows results to be documented. This means that the research design should satisfy the following criteria;
 - There is a "before"pre and "after" post measurement in the evaluation (pre- and post-design). Follow-up surveys alone, which are based on subjective estimations of results from various repondent groups, are not sufficient.
 - The evaluation has a basis for comparison. This can be in the form of a control group, a cohort, or other documentation of the children's and adolescents' normal behaviour/ability within the relevant specified areas.
 - In the evaluations, more variables are measured than just those related to the input factors and results, thus enabling an assessment of the potential positive and negative side effects.
 - The desired result variables in the programme should be documented. The evaluation results may be linked to changes in intervening variables provided that there is knowledge of the links between the intervening variables and the desired result variable.
 - The programmes should primarily be evaluated in Norway. If no Norwegian evaluations exist, the programme should have been evaluated in at least two independent foreign studies of which one should have been under "normal conditions". The component parts of the programme should not have been altered regarding content during translation or their use in Norway.
- The evaluation design is also assessed on the basis of many criteria without demands being made that these should be fulfilled. The most important of these assessment questions are:
 - Are the samples randomised and does the evaluation describe how the samples were drawn?
 - Does the evaluation include measurements of the desired and undesired side effects of a the programme?
 - Is the evaluation based on multiple respondents?
 - Does the evaluation include a follow-up assessment carried out more than six months after the introduction of the initiative?
 - Does the statistical analysis take account of effects at the individual, group and school level?
 - Has the effect of the programme been repeated at least once in an independent study under "normal conditions"? In other words, that no additional resources or other support were assigned to the programme, other than those which would be needed to carry out the programme in the majority of educational establishments.
- The programmes have clearly defined implementation strategies which support the initiative over time. It is often emphasised that employees at the day-care centre/school should receive training and be given responsibility for the implementation.
- The programmes generally involve all the employees and rarely have purely theoretical basis such as an emotional or a cognitive approach.

Notes

- 1 The " Knowledge Platform " builds on work originally instigated by the Social and Health Directorate in cooperation with all the Norwegian Competence Centres for the prevention of drug/alcohol abuse.
- 2 The term programme refers to limited teaching plans or pedagogic strategies which are

designed to achieve learning results amongst pupils within the relevant areas for this evaluation. The programmes should have documentation in the form of descriptions of the aims, content, implementation strategies and results which make evaluation possible.