

Evaluation of The Place2Be in Edinburgh

Providing therapeutic and emotional support in primary schools

Ruth Bryan | May 2007



Introduction

- What is The Place2Be?
- Aims of the evaluation
- Research methods
- Results
- Conclusions



What is The Place2Be?

- **National charity** – 106 schools, 11 'Hubs'
 - Edinburgh Hub – 2 pilot schools, then 10
 - Areas of multiple deprivation
- **Service aims**
 - Help encourage confidence
 - Nurture independence
 - Raise children's self-esteem
- **P2B staff**
 - School Project Managers (SPMs)
 - Volunteer Counsellors (VCs)
 - Part-time service



What is The Place2Be?

■ Core services

■ All school-based

■ 1-to-1 & group work

- Short and long-term interventions

- Usually 50 minutes a week for 1 year

- Art, drama, play therapy in P2B playroom

Story-telling (eg using puppets and soft toys)

Role playing of real and imaginary situations

Creative work (eg painting, making plasticine models)

Talking about real situations (eg experiences from home and from school that have affected the child)

What is The Place2Be?

■ Referral to The Place2Be

■ Referral usually by teachers

- Although some by social work/parents as they become familiar with P2B

■ Reasons for referral

- Many and varied, eg:
- Bereavement, parental separation, drug/alcohol misuse in the family, bullying, anxiety, depression

What is The Place2Be?

- **The Place2Talk**
 - Drop-in counselling service
 - Self-referral
 - The P2B post box
 - 15 minute slots
 - 1-to-1 or groups
- **Work with parents & teachers**
 - Place2Think
 - Place for Parents



Aims of the evaluation

■ Process evaluation

■ Implementation

- Planning and set-up, barriers etc

■ Current operation

- Organisation, service delivery, management structures

■ Outcome evaluation

■ Impact on:

- Individual children
- School environment
- All stakeholder groups

■ Recommendations

Research methods 1

■ Qualitative consultation

- In-depth interviews (face-to-face, telephone), focus groups
- Head teachers, teachers, learning assistants etc
- P2B staff & volunteers
- Children (service users & non-users)
- Parents
- Funders (SE, CEC, NHS Lothian)
- External agencies (social work, educational psychology etc)
- Total of **178** consultees

Research methods 2

- **Quantitative data analysis**
 - Secondary data – provided by CEC
 - **Attendance**
 - **Exclusions**
 - **Attainment** (% reaching expected level in Reading, Writing & Maths)
- 2000/01 onwards for 2 pilot schools
- Academic years 2003/04 and 2004/05 for 8 newer schools
- Change since P2B introduced?

Results: Impact of P2B

- **Measuring impact is difficult**
 - **Goodman's Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)**
 - 25 items, 5 psychological attributes → assign children to 3 clinical categories (abnormal, borderline, normal)
 - Completed pre- and post-intervention
 - 2004/05 Hub Data (teachers' ratings):
 - Abnormal: 73% → 49%
 - Normal: 11% → 32%
 - Self-reported scores also improved
 - **BUT:** problems associated with relying on SDQ data

Results: Impact of P2B

■ 1-to-1 work

- Self-awareness & emotional literacy
- Communication skills
- Relationships with family/friends
- Confidence, resilience, ability to cope better
- Behaviour
- Happiness levels/positive outlook
- Some improvement in attendance and attainment
- **BUT:**



- An observable or measurable impact was not evident in every case
- Some initial negative impacts
- Likely to be longer-term?

Results: Impact of P2B

■ Views of children & parents



"I feel that I don't think about what happened to me as much. I can get on with life". (Boy, aged 11)



"You get all your feelings and that out the way – you can just get on with it". (Girl, aged 11)

"Oh she has definitely [changed]... In the way she feels about her school life, her home life, and just the way she is in herself – she is a lot happier, calmer than what she was before she came here". (Parent)

Results: Impact of P2B

■ The Place2Talk

- Safe, non-judgemental, confidential
- One-to-one attention from someone who has time to listen
- Increased emotional awareness → impacts on behaviour & relationships between children
- Peer mediation
- Relieved teachers of some of their additional listening/helping roles
- Ongoing support for children after a previous Place2Be intervention/as a stop gap
- New referrals to other interventions



"It makes you feel a lot happier, instead of being frightened inside it makes you feel, it takes a weight off your mind".

(Girl, aged 9)

Results: Impact of P2B

■ Impact on the school environment

- Accessibility/availability → reassurance/security
- Delivered *within schools* – no stigma
- Classroom behaviour/bullying/atmosphere
- Filled a gap in existing service provision – especially for children who would not otherwise have received any support or intervention

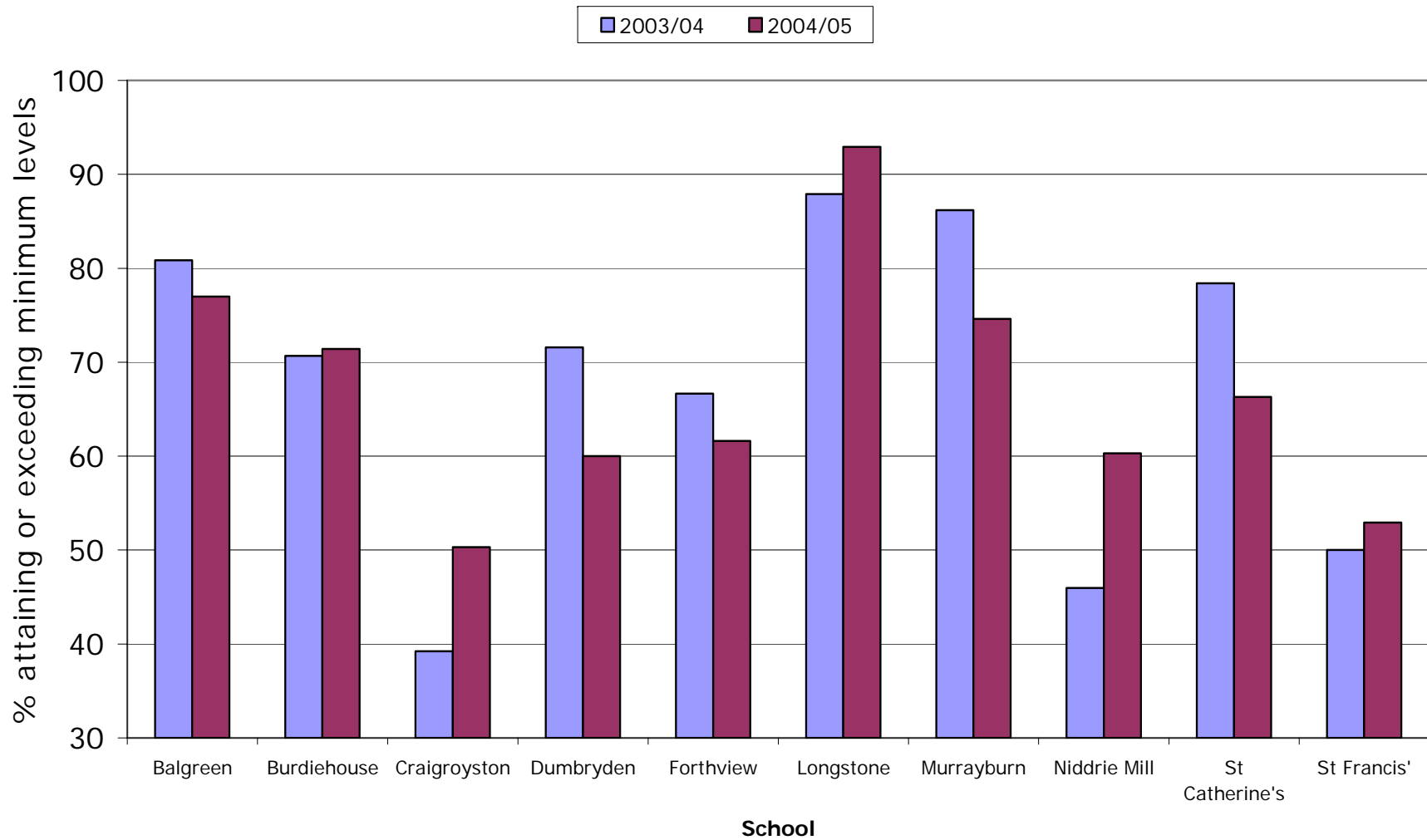


Results: Impact of P2B

■ Quantitative data

- No consistent patterns of improvement or decline in attendance, exclusions or attainment
- For example...
 - Analysis of Maths attainment by school

Results: Impact of P2B



Results: Impact of P2B

■ Caveat to quantitative results

- Unlikely to have impact in the short-term
- Very small number of children involved
- Numerous other factors (eg parental influence on attendance)
- Attainment Vs Achievement
- Crude measure
- Focus was always on emotional needs

“I think the biggest measure is in trying to support children to become resilient individuals, to see that they’ve got a place and that they’re important, and that they can make a contribution – and you can’t measure that” (Head Teacher)

Conclusions

■ Conclusions

- Range of positive impacts reported
- Overwhelming support for roll-out
 - Deprivation not necessarily a factor
 - Adapt model to secondary schools?
- Importance of qualitative measures in evaluating P2B





Any questions?