

## Zippy's Friends

*Gill Rowley (Assistant Head Teacher) and  
Jan Cook (ICT Training Officer)*



'Zippy's Friends'<sup>1</sup> is a mainstream, primary, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) resource, pioneered by the charity, Partnership for Children, that has been developed to teach six-and seven-year-old children daily coping skills while promoting their mental health and emotional well-being. It is being implemented successfully in over 11 countries worldwide.



Although the programme content met Sunfield's current whole-school, curriculum plans for PSHE, it was not accessible to the majority of students in terms of format, medium and developmental level. A pilot action research study was carried out with four classes from a range of key stages using the first module ('Feelings') of Zippy's Friends. Sunfield and Partnership for Children work collaboratively with teachers to deliver the programme using alternative resources, strategies and lesson plans, based upon the original scheme, which allows students access to learning at their developmental level. Students who participated in the pilot programme demonstrated notable increases in knowledge, skills and understanding in the areas taught.

Following the successful pilot study (Rowley and Cook, 2007), the whole school is now working with the programme, which is being adapted differently to reflect students' learning and age-related needs. The six modules cover: feelings; communication; making and breaking relationships; conflict resolution/beating the bullies; dealing with change and loss; and coping with social situations.





Questionnaires have been given to all Sunfield teachers asking them to identify the progress that students have made in social learning and emotional development through using the Zippy's Friends programme. The researchers are seeking to establish what students now 'know', 'understand' and 'can do' that they did not before commencing work on the programme. Funding is currently being sought to enable Sunfield and Partnership for Children to trial the adapted programme in other special schools.

*Footnote*

1 <http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/index.html>

*Reference*

Rowley, G. and Cook, J. (2007) 'Zippy's Friends: Developing Curriculum Resources to Support the Mental Health Needs of Young People with Special Educational Needs'. B. Carpenter and J. Egerton (eds) *New Horizons in Special Education: Evidence-Based Practice in Action*. Clent, Worcs, Sunfield.