Evaluation Summary	
Age range	1 cohort from mid year 4 through to end of year five
Number of pupils	Approx. 600
Number of schools	15

Intervention

Positive Action Programme, which is an evidence based comprehensive Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD) program that includes a school-wide climate change component together with a sequenced curriculum that are delivered to all student levels.

The Positive Action program is an approach to teaching positive actions/behaviours for the whole self: the physical, intellectual, social and emotional. It teaches positive actions for all ages in schools—reception through high school—through age-appropriate lesson manuals. Positive Action aims to promote character development, academic achievement, and social-emotional skills and to reduce disruptive and problem behaviour.

This project is a two phase implementation study of Positive Action. The first phase explores initial reactions to the programme over 6 months. The second phase explores implementation factors that have a relationship with any observed outcome change during a full school year of the programme.

Research questions

Questions the project is designed to answer.

Evidence to support the theory of change

What does the literature say about theory of change underpinning positive action? (Review prepared during Phase 1).

What is the logic model for the Positive action programme in the UK? (Developed at the end of Phase 1)

What reliable, valid and usable outcome measures overlap best the Positive Action logic model (primary and secondary outcomes)? (Assessed at the end of Phase 1)

Did project data support the pathways in the programme logic model? (Assessed at the end of Phase 2)

Feasibility

Was the Positive Action programme implemented adequately over the trial period? (Assessed at the end of Phase 2.)

What were the major programme adaptations required? (Assessed at the end of Phase 1 and Phase 2)

Readiness for trial

What implementation factors (e.g. exposure, engagement, fidelity, and delivery quality) influenced outcome change? (Assessed at the end of Phase 2)

Were important implementation factors a risk to scaling up for efficacy trial? (Assessed at the end of Phase 2)

Methods

Recruitment

15 primary schools will be recruited through the delivery team's network of schools in Kent.

All pupils and teachers in year 4 will be included in the study and followed for 1.5 years to the end of year 5. Opt out consent will be sought for parents to withdraw their child's data from the study.

Data collection

The pilot will be run over 2 phases. The first phase of the pilot would run from January 2016 to June 2016 and will give the delivery team a chance to embed Positive Action in schools. It will also provide an opportunity to check the feasibility and acceptability of the programme in a UK context. During this period QUB will trial a range of measures and develop a programme logic model. The second phase of the pilot will begin in September 2016 and end in Sep 2017. It will be focused on collecting quantitative data on outcome measures and implementation factors. The implementation data will be related to outcome change in order to assess the key implementation factors and re-evaluate the programme logic model.

Phase 1 (pilot implementation)

Data will be gathered on several key areas of interest including: training processes; school climate; heads' attitude to PHSE; pupil exposure to the programme; engagement and enjoyment; teacher adaptations and displacement (i.e., other PHSE instruction that is removed or conflicts with the programme). This will mainly be done through interviews, classroom observations, and focus groups with school staff, students and the delivery team. Observations will be conducted in at least one class in the 15 schools. In addition, there will be a sample from five different schools, where one group of students, one teacher and the school leader will be interviewed about the early phase implementation of the programme.

Several measurement tools will be piloted with groups of Year 5 children and teachers in four schools, specifically exploring ease of administration and usability of these measures. A range of character measures (across a wide range of domains) will be considered, drawing on those used in previous PA research, and those used by CEE in other similar research projects (see examples in Table 1).

Table 1: Potential character measures

Outcome	Potential measures	
	Cited in previous PA research	**Previously used by CEE**
Behaviour	Normative beliefs about aggression scale - Child report (Huesman et al., 1997)	Child behaviour checklist - Child, teacher and parent versions available) (Achenback, 2008)
	Aggression scale – Child report (Orpinas & Frankowski, 2001)	
	Behaviour Assessment System for Children (2) - child, teacher and parent ratings available (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004)	
	Child problem behaviour scale	
Affect/ wellbeing	PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) – Child report	Kidscreen-10 – Child report (Kidscreen group, 2006)
	Student life satisfaction – Child report (Huebner, 1991)	
		Self Description Questionnaire

		(Marsh, 1992)
Emotional and character development	Child SECD scale – Child report (Ji et al., 2013)	
Self Regulation		Child Self-Control Rating scale (Rorhbecket al .1991) ; (Child Trends, 2014)

All phase 1 data will also feed into a retreat focused on refining the programme logic model and the programmes adaptations required for implementation in UK schools. A logic model will be generated through a stakeholder meeting involving the research team, delivery team, head-teachers and year 5 teachers. This logic modelling process will be facilitated by the study's Principal investigator (Dr Liam O'Hare). After completion of the logic model a decision on which tools to be used in Phase 2 will be made by the evaluators, Positive Action, and the EEF by the 1st September 2016. The protocol will be updated at this time to reflect this.

Phase 2 (implementation study)

This phase of the study will explore the feasibility of a full year implementation of the programme. The implementation information (gathered from pupils and teachers) will be directly related to outcome change thus providing an indication of readiness for trial. All of this information will be fed into a further revision of the programme logic model.

Outcome Data: Year 4 pupils from Phase 1 of the pilot will now be in year 5 and followed throughout that year. Pupils will complete a questionnaire measuring pupil character outcomes at both the beginning (Sep 2016) and end of the year (June 2017 - i.e., pre and post-test questionnaires). The outcome measures included will be decided after the completion of phase 1 by 1st September 2016. The protocol will be updated at this time to reflect this.

Implementation Data: Pupils will also complete a post-test implementation/satisfaction questionnaire (adapted from relevant scales for example 'Client Satisfaction Questionnaire' (CSQ-8) Larsen et al, 1979); 'My Class Inventory' Fisher and Fraser, 1981 and 'Facilitator Disposition Checklist' O'Hare et al, 2010). In addition, all Year 5 teachers will complete short monthly implementation reports throughout the school year (adapted from relevant scales for example 'PA weekly implementation report' by Beets et al., 2008 and informed by the implementation study), incorporating a cost capture assessment. The implementation measures included will be decided after the completion of phase 1 by 1st September 2016.The protocol will be updated at this time to reflect this.

Again, all 15 schools will be visited at least once for further process data collection. In each school there will be one observation, the research team will also repeat the five focus groups with pupils, five interviews with teachers and five interviews with school leaders (with the same participants were possible) about the overall implementation of the programme at the end of the school year.

Queen's university will collect all study data.

Ethics and registration

Ethics will be applied for through QUB School of Education Ethics Committee. The ethics will request that parents are provided consent forms to opt their child's data out of analysis. Opt in parental consent will be collected for any pupil's inclusion in focus groups.

Personnel

The project team, **Positive Action UK** will:

- Deliver the Positive Action programme kits (teacher's Instructor's Kits and the primary Climate Development Kit) to the schools prior to training
- Deliver 1 day training in the week beginning of 18th January 2016. The program will begin February 1, 2015
- Be the first point of contact for any questions about the evaluation and implementation

- Provide on-going support to the school
- Provide half day workshop every other term
- Send out regular updates on the progress of the project through a newsletter

The research team, **Queens University, Belfast & IOE** will:

- Conduct the data collection
- Analyse all the data from the project
- Ensure all staff carrying out assessments are trained and have received CRB clearance
- Disseminate research findings

The team will include:

Liam O'Hare (LO, QUB): Dr Liam O'Hare, Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Effective Education & Operations Manager of the Improving Children's Lives Project at Queen's University Belfast. As Principal Investigator in the study Liam will have overall responsibility for efficient delivery of the project on time and in budget and leading the production of the final report.

Andy Biggart (AB, QUB): Dr Andy Biggart, Assistant Director of the CEE. Andy, will lead on the ethics and analysis aspects of the project.

Karen Orr (KO, QUB): Dr Karen Orr is a Research Fellow with the Improving Children's Lives initiative at Queen's University Belfast. Karen will act as trial manager on the project and work closely with the RA, managing the day-to-day activity of the trial and liaising closely with the PI to ensure the project remains on track.

Patrick Stark (PS, QUB): Dr Patrick Stark is a researcher for the Centre for Effective Education at Queen's University Belfast. Patrick will conduct data collection and data management for the project.

Chris Bonell (CB, IOE): Chris Bonell is a Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at University College London. Chris will advise on logic modelling, trial design, and interpretation of findings.

The School will:

- Consent to participate in the pilot for the entire period and allow time for:
  - Teachers to deliver the age-appropriate curriculum given to them by teaching a complete 15-minute lesson at least three times per week.
  - The entire school personnel: administration and support staff will participate in the school climate activities contained in the Elementary Climate Development Kit.

- Allow time for each testing phase and liaise with the evaluation team to find appropriate dates and times for testing to take place
- Release staff so that they can attend the initial training session and the workshops
- Allow teachers time to complete implementation reports.
- Ensure the shared understanding and support of all school staff for to the project and personnel involved.
- Distribute research consent forms to parents/carers.
- Be a point of contact for parents / carers seeking more information on the project.

Risks

A risk analysis of School of Education and CEE activity has been undertaken establishing the potential risks to the funder and the controls and contingency measures that are in place to minimise these risks (available on request). One of the major benefits of EEF funding this proposed evaluation are the extensive experience, strong controls and contingency measures that Queen's University of Belfast will be able to provide. This adds security to the funding body and peace of mind that the proposal will be delivered on specification and on-time.

Timeline

Date	Phase	Activity	Responsible
Nov 2015 – Aug 2016 Phase1: Pilot study			
Nov 15 -Jan 16	Set-up	• Ethics application QUB school of Education • School recruitment (for all schools across both stages of the research) • Establish schools Memorandum of Understanding (again for all schools across both stages of the research) • Consent process • Initial school training • Observe training	QUB Delivery Team (DT) QUB & DT QUB QUB DT QUB
Feb – Mar 16	Data collection	• Literature review of the Positive Action programme (implementation, efficacy and measures audit) • 1 site visit to each school o Classroom observations (15) o Teacher interviews (5) o Pupil focus group (5) o Leadership interviews (5) o Measurement testing (4 schools)	QUB
Apr - May 16	Data analysis	• Data analysis and interpretation	QUB
Jun 16	Retreat	• Logic model development and review • Programme adaptations	QUB + IOE, DT & School Stakeholders
2016/2017 Phase 2: Implementation study			
July/August 2016		Trial planning, capturing the learning from the pilot study: • Finalising measures (including Self-regulation) • Adaptation to teacher training	QUB
August/ Sep 2016		Set up with schools: • Reminder of schools Memorandum of Understanding	 QUB QUB
Sep/ Oct 2016	Pre-testing	• Pre-testing outcomes in 15 schools • Provide refresher training to 15 schools • Observe training	QUB DT QUB
Sep/Jun 2016/2017	Implement study: all teachers	• Administration of teacher implementation questionnaire (monthly)	QUB
Jan/Feb 2017	Process evaluation: Sub sample group (n=4)	Site visits at sub-sample classes • Classroom observations (15) • Teacher interviews (5) • Pupil focus groups (5) • School leader interviews (5)	 QUB QUB QUB
May/Jun 2017	Post-testing	Post-testing outcomes in 15 schools Post test pupil implementation questionnaire	QUB
Aug/Sep 2017	Data analysis Review report	• Data analysis and interpretation • Report writing • Review logic model	QUB + IOE QUB + IOE
Sep/ Oct 2017	Review & Finalise	• Review report • Final report submitted	QUB