



Massage in Schools Programme (MISP) Research 2001 – 2012

The Massage in Schools Programme (MISP) was first introduced into UK schools in 2001. It is a programme of positive touch and clothed peer massage for children aged 4 – 12 years and their parents. It is used in schools, child centred organisations and the home to improve children's wellbeing.

A number of studies have been done in the UK using different methodologies. The outcomes from the studies in this overview of research show that the main benefits of the MISP are:

- Improved calmness and concentration
- Increased self confidence and self esteem
- Improved social skills with a greater number of relationships/friendships with peers and adults
- Children feel happier and more relaxed
- A reduction in aggressive behaviour and bullying
- A more positive attitude and greater engagement with learning
- Improved ability to work in groups and independently
- Greater creativity and problem solving
- Increased awareness of the body and signs of stress and anxiety

This document gives an overview of the studies derived from the implementation of the Massage in Schools Programme.

<p>Title:</p> <p>Promoting Child Mental Health through Massage in a Primary School (South London)</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Carol Trower</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <p>Significant improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration • Co-operation • Confidence • Ability to work in groups and ability to work independently • Improved social interaction with peers and adults • Reduced bullying and aggressive behaviour • Greater empathy skills • More friendships • Calmer environment and classroom community • Children happier at school. <p>This study provides some evidence that child to child massage is effective in improving social functioning and ability to learn.</p>	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>RGN, RM, RHV</p> <p>Post Grad Dip in Child Emotional Health</p> <p>Year: 2001</p> <p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p> <p>Publication:</p> <p>Peer reviewed</p> <p>Accepted for publication</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>An evaluation of the impact of MISP in a Renfrewshire Primary School</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Dr Richard Woolfson, Lindsay Campbell, Margaret Banks, Dr Lisa Woolfson</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved concentration • (on-task – behaviour) <p>Note: MISP tasters were given to all 60 primary schools in Renfrewshire and 40 schools implemented MISP in at least 1 class. Two schools implemented MISP across all classes.</p>	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>University of Strathclyde</p>
	<p>Year: 2005</p>
	<p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p>
	<p>Publication:</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>What are the effects of introducing a peer massage programme in my school?</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Pearson-Shaul, Edward</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive effect on social relationships and friendships • Relaxing (for children and teachers) • Children more attentive • Calming when angry • Enjoyable • Increased friendships • Developed sense of responsibility when giving a massage • Calm, quiet environment • Children recognising signs of stress in parents 	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>University of East Anglia</p>
	<p>Year: 2006</p>
	<p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p>
	<p>Publication:</p> <p>None to date</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>Cornwall Childrens' Fund - MISP Project</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Sally Rodgers</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <p>Project Outcomes showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children were calmer • Improved concentration • Improved confidence • Increased readiness for learning • Recognition of good and bad touch • Respect themselves and others • Reduction in bullying and aggressive behaviour • Created a harmonic atmosphere throughout the school and thus improved the children's quality of life in school. • Proves massage is fun and can be adapted to any subject of the curriculum. 	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>Cornwall College, FdSC in Complementary Health Therapies</p> <p>Year: 2007</p> <p>Type of study:</p> <p>Use of secondary research/literature</p> <p>Publication:</p> <p>None to date</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Massage in Schools Programme at two primary schools.</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Penny Boyd</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increase in children’s concentration • An increase in children’s perception of their emotional literacy. • Increased calmness and relaxation • Reduced aggression. • Enjoyed by children and made them feel happy. • Well received by parents and teachers. 	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>Leicestershire LEA</p>
	<p>Year: 2008</p>
	<p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p>
	<p>Publication:</p> <p>None to date</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>Evaluation of the Massage in Schools Programme in one primary school (6 month study)</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Lesley Marsh</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <p>This article discusses the potential benefits of the Massage in Schools Programme (MISP), a programme originating in Scandinavia, which has been introduced into schools in the UK since 2001. Meeting four out of five targets for the Every Child Matters agenda, the review of the literature aims to separate anecdotal and media evidence from the small number of published studies. A description of one six—month study in a primary school in the UK follows, showing the (teacher rated) benefits to the participating children. An author's update concludes with comments on further developments both in the local authority and within the Massage in Schools Association (MISA).</p> <p>Overall the Children showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased respect • More attentive • Greater concentration • More tolerance • More caring • Reduced aggression 	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>Stoke on Trent (Educational Psychologist)</p>
	<p>Year: 2009</p>
	<p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p>
	<p>Publication:</p> <p>Educational Psychology in Practice – June 2011</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>Moving against the grain?</p> <p>Investigating the efficacy of a touch-based intervention in a climate of suspicion</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Helen MacIntyre, Jennifer Colwell, Dr Cathy Ota</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The findings of this project demonstrate that the number of social relationships reported by children did increase post intervention. • The authors conclude that a touch-based intervention such as the Massage in Schools Programme may have a positive and potentially educational value for children and schools and support the growth of social and emotional skills. • MISP had a positive effect on children’s relationships both in the classroom and in the playground • MISP Increased social networks and created a sense of calm • MISP reduced aggressive behaviours 	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>Education Research Centre, University of Brighton, UK.</p>
	<p>Year: 2010</p>
	<p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p>
	<p>Publication:</p> <p>Pastoral Care in Education Volume 28, March 2010 (online).</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>Massage in Schools Programme (MISP) – Evaluation in Northamptonshire TaMHS Project</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Mike Simons</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive impact on mental health of pupils • Increased self-esteem • Increased friendships • Calming • Class cohesiveness • Greater engagement with learning • Now embedded into the Building Blocks of Provision for Building Mentally Healthy Schools in Northamptonshire <p>Note: MISP is now included in the 'Building Blocks of Provision' for 'Building Mentally Healthy Schools in Northamptonshire'.</p>	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>Senior Educational Psychologist</p> <p>TaMHS Project Manager and Programme Lead.</p> <p>(Northampton)</p> <p>Year: 2011</p> <p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p> <p>Publication:</p> <p>TaMHS Research project</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>An evaluation of the effectiveness of peer massage in one primary school</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Donna Davis</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <p>The combined scores for both year groups showed a striking improvement in relation to difficulties and pro-social behaviour in the Intervention classes, which contrasts with deteriorations in the Control classes of for the same attributes. This suggests that peer massage contributed substantially to the overall behaviour and wellbeing of those children who received it.</p> <p>The consequences of not receiving peer massage showed up more strongly in the Year 1 Control group, suggesting that the early introduction of peer massage is especially desirable.</p> <p>Particular benefits were observed in the Year 1 Intervention class in relation to hyperactivity/inattention. Initially eight pupils presented as ‘abnormal’ in this area but after six weeks of peer massage this had reduced to two. This group showed a marked improvement in Emotional Difficulties, where the number of children presenting abnormal profiles reduced from six to zero.</p> <p>The qualitative comments received from teachers, parents and pupils in the Intervention groups were overwhelmingly positive, suggesting an extremely favourable perception of peer massage.</p>	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>Edge Hill University accredited CPD</p>
	<p>Year: 2010</p>
	<p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p>
	<p>Publication:</p> <p>None to date</p>

<p>Title:</p> <p>An evaluation of MISP in 5 schools in Nottinghamshire</p>	<p>Author:</p> <p>Jane McLennan & Pip Bateman (HHT) and Dr Alan Pringle and Mike Smith (SAMHS Consultancy)</p>
<p>Outcomes – abstract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children experienced reduction in worrying and increase in feelings of calm and happiness. • Teachers reported children were calmer, better behaved, and quicker to settle and had better concentration. • Children reported feeling more confidence in talking to other children and a stronger sense of feeling safe. • Teachers reported children were generally keen to learn and more confident at speaking out in class with some specific improvements in certain children with learning difficulties. 	<p>Qualifications/Institution:</p> <p>The Holistic Health Team Nottingham.</p>
	<p>Year: 2011</p>
	<p>Type of study:</p> <p>Quantitative</p> <p>Qualitative</p>
<p>Publication:</p> <p>None to date</p>	



The Massage in Schools programme (MISP) can be part of a school's toolkit that complements and adds to any existing (or previous) schemes and policies on health and well-being for both staff and pupils. The MISP links to "The framework for school inspection" in OFSTED (January 2012) as it:

- Contributes to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development
- Is an inclusive programme respecting the needs of the range of pupils within a school, including the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
- Helps in eliminating discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and encouraging good race relations
- Is an activity that engages with the diverse needs of ALL pupils and as such pupil premium should be considered

Previous schemes and policies to which the MISP has contributed:

- Every Child Matters outcomes, particularly in promoting physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Emotional literacy programmes such as Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)
- Emotional health and well-being themes within the Healthy Schools framework (EHWB)
- Anti-bullying Policies, as the Massage in Schools Association, which supports the MISP, is a member of the Anti- Bullying Alliance funded by Department of Education.

For further information please contact: admin@misa.org.uk