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# talk2learn highlights

Inspiring leaders;  
improving children's lives

Issue 23b

In case you missed it...

Recent highlights from NCSL in Dialogue, talk2learn's  
online community for national education debate

Also available as a podcast

## SEAL

### What is the best way to embed SEAL – the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme – into the curriculum?

School leaders shared their views in a recent NCSL in Dialogue open forum discussion in talk2learn. The discussion was suggested by Sophie Addison who is studying the topic for her Leadership Pathways programme.

Key points to emerge were:

- assemblies are a good starting point for introducing SEAL
- a whole school approach has worked well for some primaries
- while secondaries find gradual roll-out in selected areas effective

Many contributors highlighted the assembly materials as a key way in to SEAL.

*"The children love the use of puppets, displays and role play in the programme. It works in our setting by being explicit and having a whole school approach,"* said one infant school subject leader. *This year, I am more familiar with it and can use it more effectively."*

Sarah Zettel's secondary school has introduced SEAL and she advised others to start small.

"We have embedded it into our Year 7 PSCH, tutor time and assemblies and are now currently introducing it into Year 8 in the same way. However, I am looking at taking this further by having a push with a group of departments. *I feel that if we get a few departments on board, we can then share the positive results we have and roll it out to others.*"

Jo Bull, an assistant headteacher at West Midlands secondary, said her school had been piloting SEAL for 18 months and has taken a three-tiered approach, covering whole school issues, the curriculum and SEAL around the child.

"It cannot be an add-on or taught in discreet lessons," she said. "It must be something that pervades and invades every part of a school."

Some contributors were sceptical of SEAL's benefits, however. One described what happened when her school was asked to pilot the scheme.



*"We found our own PSCH curriculum was better as it was tailored to the needs of our school but we did use some bits from SEAL and added them to our own scheme.* But I don't think it is the answer to everything. In my opinion, some of the units are, frankly, dull and your own school will probably teach it in a much better way."

Another felt schools should take their time and trial the scheme for a year before applying it across the board.

"People tend to pay lip service to it if it is narrowly implemented. I can honestly say that I didn't follow it religiously but I took the main themes and ran them within my established PSCH curriculum.

Christine Hearne, a deputy headteacher in a Merseyside primary, was more keen and said her school was driving SEAL throughout both key stages.

*"A lot of thought has gone into assemblies to ensure that it takes off and has a whole school approach and is received enthusiastically.* Alongside this we have focused on circle time, having invited in a specialist teacher to give inset during staff meetings. Circle time has been an effective way of incorporating some of the SEAL materials. *Our children love it!"*

If you are not yet a member of talk2learn and would like to join, more information is available at [www.ncsl.org.uk/onlinecommunities](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/onlinecommunities).