

# ***Better Movers and Thinkers Direct Intervention Model Report***

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*Better Movers and Thinkers can be linked to purposeful learning by developing key Executive Function skills and increasing the engagement of learners. Given the wealth of evidence linking Executive Functions to learning, embedding the pedagogy of Better Movers and Thinkers can support schools and teachers to help raise attainment and potentially close the poverty related attainment gap.*

The Better Movers and Thinkers Direct Intervention Model involved pupils from Fife's Scottish Attainment Challenge primary schools. Its aims were to develop key Executive Function skills, increase the engagement of learners, support the development of staff in implementing and embedding the pedagogy of the BMT approach and to make strong and relevant links to the wider school curriculum. The results from this BMT Direct Intervention Model show significant improved overall scores in measures of Focus of Attention (54% of pupils), in Working Memory (42% of pupils), in Inhibition Control (52% of pupils) and in Cognitive Flexibility (35% of pupils).

These results are potentially important findings and provide evidence in support of BMT having a positive impact on learning. The improvements identified in executive functions hold specific significance to learning and educational processes as executive functions are considered the most basic and fundamental concepts required for learning. As a result of the specific focus that BMT has on the development of Executive Function skills and in particular the enhancement of working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility, it could be suggested that improvements in Executive Function skills may lead to associated improvements in attention and concentration levels as a result of improvements in self-regulatory behaviours.

An improvement in engagement of 66 % of pupils was identified. It may be proposed from the findings of this intervention, that BMT has supported the development of attention and engagement with an interrelated impact on learning.

Teachers were asked to evaluate student learning behaviour in class, their perceived impact of BMT on students' learning across the curriculum and their own confidence to deliver BMT pedagogy. Teachers reported an improvement in their pupils' engagement and in pupils' learning behaviours. For cross curricular impact, teachers reported positive transfers of learning behaviours (such as better

focus, improved resilience and less time off task into the classroom).

All of the teachers surveyed rated their confidence levels for taking BMT pedagogy forward as having improved over the course of the intervention.

Responses from pupils were analysed to gauge pupil's perceptions of their learning and engagement in BMT activities and in class-based activities, and of their ability to make links to the wider school curriculum. Their responses showed a strong understanding of how and why they had engaged in BMT session and what they had learned. Responses specifically related to engagement and learning in BMT and wider school curriculum showed that learners had an insightful understanding of the benefits of BMT and how it can influence positively on their learning across the curriculum.

The findings from this Direct Intervention Model categorically show how the pedagogy of Better Movers and Thinkers can be linked to purposeful learning by developing key Executive Function skills and increasing the engagement of learners. Biggest gains were seen in classes where BMT was undertaken consistently, twice weekly. Additionally the Direct Intervention Model in itself was evidenced to support the development of staff to implement and embed the pedagogy of the BMT approach and make strong and relevant links to the wider school curriculum. Given the wealth of evidence linking Executive Functions to learning, embedding the pedagogy of Better Movers and Thinkers can support schools and teachers to help raise attainment and potentially close the poverty related attainment gap.

***Brian Batchelor and Carol Heddle are Seconded to Fife's PEPAS team to support the region's Scottish Attainment Challenge Schools.***