A Systematic Literature Review to Support the Curriculum Specification Development for the area of Wellbeing

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List of Acronyms

CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
DE	Department of Education (from 22/10/2020)
DES	Department of Education and Science (from 01/10/1997)
	Department of Education and Skills (from 02/05/2010)
DoH	Department of Health
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Disorder/Difficulties
EE	Entertainment Education
FMS	Fundamental Movement Skills
LEAPS	Learning, Eating, Active Play and Sleep
LCBC	Little Children, Big Challenges
MHL	Mental Health Literacy
MVPA	Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
PA	Physical Activity
PATHS	Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies
PE	Physical Education
PEO	Population Exposure Outcome
PERMA	Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PMA	Primary Mental Abilities
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
RQ	Research Question
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education

SACD	Social and Character Development
SEE	Social and Environmental Education
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning/Socio-Emotional Learning
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SERCCH	Socio-economic factors, Emotional intelligence, Relationships, Communication, Contentment and Happiness (Peill 2022)
SHANARRI	Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014)
SLR	Systematic Literature Review
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	Social Personal and Health Education
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TPSR	Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

Glossary of Terms

Emotional regulation	The ability to control emotions and express them appropriately. This involves the ability to dampen or heighten an emotion to fit the context.
Eudaimonic wellbeing	Living life according to one's values, reaching one's potential and flourishing.
Executive functions	A set of mental processes and skills that include attentional control, working memory, problem-solving and inhibition, which enable a person to plan, organise, manage, monitor and execute their goals.
Grit	Perseverance and passion or purpose to attain a goal.
Hand search	A searches of academic articles outside of a systematic literature review
Hedonic wellbeing	Experiencing pleasure and feeling good (usually in the short term)
Mindfulness	A practice of paying attention in a given moment. Attention can be brought to thoughts, emotions, the senses, or the environment.
Parent-child dyad	This is where a child and one of its parents are paired together for research purposes.
Pupil agency	The child is invited to co-construct knowledge in the educational setting, where it is possible for them to own and guide their own train of thought and make choices.
Resilience	The ability to recover from setbacks in life, deal with adversity and develop coping mechanisms.
Restorative practices	A structured approach to conflict resolution based on core values and the promotion of specific skills that enables children to build trust, sustain relationships and be empathetic.
Teacher agency	Teachers as reflective, competent and capable of exercising professional judgement in response to learning needs in a variety of contexts

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Executive Summary

Increasing attention has been paid to wellbeing in recent years; not only at international level, but at national level, in both government and educational policy. While there may not be consensus on a definition of wellbeing or indeed on the exact presentation of the word (wellbeing/well-being), there is agreement that wellbeing is inextricably linked to a child's experience of school. Recent policy developments in the Irish educational landscape, in Early Childhood Education and at Junior Cycle, highlighted the importance of wellbeing in education. It seemed only a matter of time before wellbeing would be included in a more explicit and formal way in primary education. The redeveloped curriculum, entitled *The Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools* (Department of Education (DE) 2023) identifies Wellbeing as one of five broad curriculum areas. It has envisioned Wellbeing as encompassing Physical Education (PE) and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) commissioned a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to provide evidence of the philosophical and educational basis for Wellbeing in the curriculum, and the specific Wellbeing curriculum content and processes to support pupils' learning and development. The NCCA framed four questions to be answered, which form the basis of this review.

Research Questions

The four research questions which guided the SLR for the curriculum specification of Wellbeing were:

1. Through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?
2. What evidence is provided by the literature on children's learning and development for the integrated curriculum area of wellbeing in stages 1 and 2-junior infants to second class, and the subjects of Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education in stages 3 and 4-third to sixth class?
3. In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content (knowledge, skills, values and dispositions) for children's learning and development in Wellbeing/Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education within the broad primary curriculum?
4. What aspects of the curriculum area (the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions) support integration in stages 1 and 2, and what aspects of the subject area support integration in stages 3 and 4?

The current review provides an extensive systematic analysis of the philosophical, conceptual and educational basis for the inclusion of Wellbeing[1] as an area of learning in the primary curriculum, supported specifically by the subjects of Physical Education (PE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).

Methodology

The approach utilised for this study was a SLR. A detailed search, screening, and review of literature based on empirical research on Wellbeing, PE and SPHE topics published in the English language between 2012 and 2022 was undertaken. Four populations were included in the searches: children in early childhood, primary, post-primary and special education settings. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. It was interesting to note that in this search there were insufficient articles for PE that emerged when it was combined with the term 'wellbeing'. Therefore, an amended search related to PE, which excluded reference to the term wellbeing was conducted. It included terms such as physical education, physical learning, physical literacy, fundamental movement skills, fundamental motor skills and meaningful physical education. The full process resulted in the inclusion of 180 full-text articles.

This search also did not produce adequate research to address Research Question One, therefore a separate SLR was carried out for this, which yielded 24 full-text articles. Some additional narrative searches of literature were undertaken to address elements of wellbeing that returned limited results from the SLR process, including literature on integration, spiritual wellbeing, pupil agency and teacher agency. These findings are presented in : Integration and Agency and: What Now for Wellbeing in the Redeveloped Curriculum?.

Question One: Main Findings

Chapter One forms the basis for understanding Wellbeing in response to the research question about the philosophical and educational basis for Wellbeing. The definitions of wellbeing presented in this document are evidence of the complexity of the concept, and the multiple interpretations that exist. The literature also indicates the need to present a definition of Wellbeing for this particular area of learning before the curriculum specification is developed. The definitions sourced from the SLR and the educational policy documents are presented to highlight similarities and differences. Rather than place the emphasis on one definition over another, the components of wellbeing that are specific to education are presented. These include; physical health, mental health, active learning, right to play,

[1] It should be noted that throughout this document, wellbeing is typically denoted with a lowercase w, but where wellbeing represents the curriculum area, it is denoted with an upper-case W

agency, social/emotional learning, potential, resilience/grit, spirituality, relationships, sense of belonging, feeling valued, respect and the Arts. These components will support the development of a definition for the curriculum specification.

The presentation of the philosophical basis for Wellbeing ensures a deep understanding of the development of the concept and the nuanced interpretations of wellbeing in education. Debates about wellbeing go back to the time of Aristotle, who presented views on one of the most fundamental dualisms in wellbeing discourse: hedonism and eudaimonia. The hedonic tradition views wellbeing in terms of pleasure and feeling good, while the eudaimonic tradition equates it to flourishing or living well. Alignment to either ends of this continuum alone will impact the function and purpose of wellbeing in schools.

In addition to the theme of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, seven other philosophical approaches which emerged from the content analysis of the literature, are included. These are; subjective versus objective wellbeing, wellbeing as a capabilities approach, wellbeing as culture, wellbeing as (mental) health, wellbeing as positive psychology/flourishing, wellbeing as social-emotional learning, and 'beyond wellbeing' to focus on holistic education. Affiliation to a philosophical tradition can assist with making decisions about Wellbeing in the curriculum.

In addition to these philosophical approaches, wellbeing in education has been conceptualised in different ways, typically leading to a model which can be used to inform key elements of a curriculum or Wellbeing programme. Seven conceptual approaches arose from the literature. These include; the medical model, the biopsychosocial model, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development, the SHANARRI wheel, the PERMA model, the SERCCH model and the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model. While it is clear from undertaking the literature review that there is no satisfactory conceptual model of wellbeing, Bronfenbrenner's model is the one most frequently endorsed by the DE. The SHANARRI wheel was developed in Scotland from key legislation which informed the teaching of Wellbeing in schools. The name is derived from the first letter of what are deemed to be key indicators of educational Wellbeing: feeling Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. By contrast, the PERMA model was developed by Martin Seligman, who is often referred to as the 'father of positive psychology'. His model represents what he has distilled as five key elements of Wellbeing in education: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement/Accomplishment. The SERCCH model was developed in response to the complexity of applying wellbeing models to early-childhood practice. It provides a user-friendly way of evaluating children's wellbeing in early-years settings. It stands for Socio-

economic factors, Emotional intelligence, Relationships, Communication, Contentment and Happiness. Finally, the TPSR model, traditionally used in PE, supports positive and moral behaviour.

In addition, a number of psychological theories are presented which are influential in the field of wellbeing and have the potential to support a strong pedagogical argument for Wellbeing in the curriculum. Key theories include the works of Maslow, Dweck, Deci and Ryan, Bowlby and Bandura. Thereafter, a synthesis of the key educational benefits of Wellbeing are outlined, which are further expounded across this SLR. Benefits include; higher academic achievement, learning skills, social-emotional competence, positive behaviour, reduced incidents of bullying, reduction of anxiety and mental health, physical wellbeing and health, values development, and support for learners 'at risk'. The *Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools,* through its vision, principles and key competencies, clearly articulates that Wellbeing is a fundamental aspect of education, and through this SLR there is evidence that its inclusion in the curriculum is merited.

Question Two: Main Findings

In response to the research question about the evidence for the curriculum area of Wellbeing and/or the subjects of PE and SPHE for pupils' learning and development, there were many important findings. Twelve themes emerged which included; Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Development; Mindfulness; Health Education; Bullying; Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes; Establishing a Positive Classroom Climate; Integration of Arts Education to Support Wellbeing Outcomes; Values Education; Physical Education; Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Sense of Belonging; Choice, Agency, and Active Learning; and The Role of Play. The findings across the themes reviewed in this chapter provide evidence that Wellbeing is best taught through a variety of contexts which mirror the current contexts for teaching SPHE: through a positive school culture and climate, discrete time, and through integration.

SEL featured widely in the literature, but this was partly due to the fact that SEL is the term for Wellbeing used in the United States of America (USA), which was the most commonly featured country in this SLR. For the discrete teaching of Wellbeing, a number of initiatives have emerged which were evaluated to ascertain successful enhancement of pupils' SEL skills. The aims of many of these initiatives were in line with aspects of the current SPHE curriculum, such as recognising and labelling emotions. Other programmes focused on areas not currently addressed specifically in the curriculum, such as resilience. For the most part, teacher-led, classroom-based, structured programmes enhanced pupils' SEL through discrete lessons. Some health education programmes, focused on the teaching of discrete lessons, also produced promising outcomes in terms of pupils' wellbeing, but did not

necessarily improve the help-seeking behaviours of pupils, nor reduce their risky behaviours. This indicates that more than content knowledge is required for behavioural change to emerge. In addition, the discrete teaching of values to young children resulted in better school readiness, social confidence, family involvement and social-emotional development. The teaching of values to older pupils was equally as successful, with results reporting the need to teach values for today's society. Such values should include curiosity, resilience, courage and leadership. Mindfulness, when taught in discrete lessons, has also emerged as an approach to support pupils' wellbeing in terms of cognitive control, optimism, perspective taking, and behaviour. However, Crawford *et al.* (2021) warned of the misuse of mindfulness in the classroom and the need for transparency around its purpose.

PE was found to be valuable, both as a subject area in its own right and as a vehicle for teaching or reinforcing aspects of wellbeing. The teaching of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) emerged as a central aspect of PE as this supported gross-motor skill development, which impacts on children's ability to engage in a range of games and sports. Consequently, when pupils could participate in games or sports they were more likely to engage with this outside of school. They also had more positive attitudes to physical activity than children who did not play sport. This discrete teaching of skills was highlighted in a number of articles, where PE was associated with long-term academic, personal and social goals. PE and sports present opportunities for socio-moral development and Values Education. In some studies, the authors stressed the necessity for pupils to be active during PE, while a small number of articles emphasised the creative aspects of PE, such as Dance, for enhancing pupils' wellbeing.

In an age of educational marketisation, there have been studies to examine the effects of discrete SEL and wellbeing on academic outcomes. In one three-year longitudinal study, self-management was reported to be the competence most strongly related to pupils' future academic outcomes. Other aspects of wellbeing which impacted academic outcomes included emotional intelligence, sense of belonging, school climate, classroom climate, emotional engagement, and relationships. However, there was evidence to suggest that academic outcomes also impacted pupils' wellbeing. The SLR highlighted a number of key wellbeing outcomes that are affected by pupils' academic success at school. These include self-efficacy, emotional learning, hope, and pro-social behaviour.

School and classroom climate were also noted to be much more significant than impacting on academic achievement alone. They have been highlighted in the literature as a vital context for the teaching of wellbeing. The context of a positive school culture and climate includes relationships, teaching approaches, and the physical environment of the school and classroom. In the broader understanding of Wellbeing, a positive climate is associated with a greater sense of belonging among

pupils. This, in itself, can lead to fewer behavioural issues, less aggression and a decrease in bullying and victimisation. A sense of belonging was particularly significant for pupils with learning needs. Indeed, strong peer relationships were deemed to be a protective factor when transitioning from primary to post-primary school. Studies from the SLR have indicated that the way in which schools and classrooms are organised and managed can influence the experiences of learners. Some of the many factors of school and classroom climate that matter to pupils' wellbeing include; teaching methodologies, values, adequately challenging learning opportunities, leadership, teaching resources, environment, and behaviour management (particularly restorative practice). A number of studies noted the importance of the school and classroom climate for teaching character values. They highlighted the importance of living the values and having the pupils experience such values in their school experiences.

Finally, Wellbeing can also be taught and promoted very successfully through its integration with other subject areas. Arts education was the most prominent subject area which emerged as impacting on wellbeing; Music, Visual Arts, Drama, and Dance/Movement. One initiative, 'Singing for Wellbeing', highlighted the difference in teaching the Music curriculum and singing to promote wellbeing. Teacher participants indicated that the curriculum was a constraint, but when they sang with pupils with no focus on the curriculum, they were conscious of not meeting curriculum outcomes. This demonstrates a core issue with integration across the curriculum: the integrity of a subject area. Another study reported on the success of teaching social justice issues through the Visual Arts, which enhanced pupils' SEL. Drama, through using short plays performed by actors, and puppetry, were found to be other useful approaches for teaching SEL. Other researchers have highlighted the wellbeing outcomes evident from a mindful approach to the teaching of the Arts.

The findings from the literature also provide evidence that a broad range of approaches can be used in the classroom to promote Wellbeing in an integrated manner. In particular, the studies illustrated the value of digital technologies, play, drama, puppetry, games, music, dance, and various visual media. Studies also aligned active play with wellbeing. While most of these studies on play were carried out in early-childhood settings and stages 1-2 of primary school, they indicated the value of playful pedagogies, play-based learning experiences, risky play and socio-dramatic play for academic and emotional outcomes. In addition, the promotion of pupil voice through dialogue, choice and student committees was found to enhance participation and engagement in school life. This in turn can impact on a sense of belonging, and consequently, pupils' overall wellbeing.

Question Three: Main Findings

In response to Research Question Three, which acknowledges an overloaded curriculum, literature was synthesised to identify the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development in Wellbeing/PE/SPHE. The findings are presented under six themes; Skills, Values, School and Classroom Culture and Climate, Health, Voice/Agency, and Processes and Content.

The literature highlighted the importance of teaching specific skills to enhance wellbeing. Due to the number of studies which emerged from the USA as part of this review, SEL skills were dominant. These included; resilience, self-regulation, emotional regulation, social skills, self-efficacy, self-concept, positive thinking, stress management, growth mindset, optimistic thinking, and self-esteem. A number of programmes and interventions have been developed to explicitly teach these and other skills and were, for the most part, effective. The literature highlighted groups of children deemed to be 'at risk' for poorer levels of wellbeing than their peers. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) were one such group. It was concluded that the discrete teaching of self-regulation, emotional regulation and social skills reduced behavioural issues and supported social inclusion for this cohort of pupils. Other skills included those related to movement, PE and sport. Fundamental movement skills, when taught explicitly, facilitated children's engagement in a range of physical activities, thereby enhancing their wellbeing, both physically and socially.

A range of studies emphasised the value of teaching specific elements of health. One study concluded that teachers were reluctant to teach mental health topics, but benefited from professional development. A number of mental health interventions were also evaluated as part of the SLR. Many of them had successful outcomes, in terms of mental health knowledge and skills, but some noted a disconnect between pupils' knowledge and behaviour.

Children also benefited from being taught values through discrete content. Studies which highlighted the benefits of this content had focused on the teaching of kindness, empathy, peace, responsibility, sharing, co-operation, gratitude, hope, and a range of character values. In some of the studies that highlighted the benefits of explicit teaching of skills or content, they also emphasised the additional benefits of reinforcing this learning through the classroom climate, in how a teacher supports pupils, promotes positive behaviour, communicates and assesses pupils' learning. Bhatti *et al.* (2021), in a study in Pakistan, indicated that Values Education was positively impacted by teachers being good role models and through the social, religious and moral traditions of the school culture. This is essentially

underscoring the importance of not simply teaching values, but also allowing the pupils to experience them in their day-to-day school life.

As highlighted in the response to Research Question Two, Wellbeing can also be taught through integration with other subject areas and through the positive climate of the classroom and school. This addresses the issue of curriculum overload to a large degree. Positive school and classroom climate have particular value for the teaching of Wellbeing in an overloaded curriculum. One of the most significant recurring findings was the link between positive pupil-teacher relationships and wellbeing. The establishment of positive and supportive relationships is clearly an investment with enormous return. It impacts positively on all pupils, and particularly those deemed to be 'at risk'. The teacher has a particularly important role, which is influenced by such life experiences as exposure to mental illness and connection to their own identity, spirituality and wellbeing.

Another important facet of climate is a sense of school belonging. When this is promoted in a school or classroom, children are likely to experience better social interactions, be more self-efficacious and enjoy school. Curriculum processes are also part of classroom climate. Studies have highlighted the benefits of these processes in the implicit promotion of wellbeing. Such processes included high quality instructional interactions, a well organised curriculum, agreed whole-school teaching approaches, effective school structures and procedures, promotion of pupil voice, clear routines, a positive external and internal environment, and a degree of pupil autonomy.

In terms of PE, it is not merely the teaching of physical skills that matters. Physical activity can predict quality of life in adolescents (Vaquero-Solis *et al.* 2021) and it has the potential to support a life-long interest in physical activity (Cristian *et al.* 2013). The teacher's attitude and way of teaching also impact on pupils' wellbeing. One study indicated the positive differences in pupils' experiences of co-operative games over competitive games during PE. Co-operative games increased motivation to engage in PE. Wellbeing can also be promoted through teaching methodologies, such as mindful approaches, use of the Arts, picture books and play. Wellbeing is also enhanced when PE and SPHE are integrated with one another and with other subjects including Visual Arts, Music and Drama.

Question Four: Main Findings

The fourth research question was concerned with the aspects of Wellbeing to support integration in stages 1 and 2, and the aspects of PE/SPHE to support integration in stages 3 and 4. The findings for Research Question Four are presented under nine themes; Social and Emotional Learning across all Curricular Areas for Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes; Integration between PE and SPHE; PE and Children's Mental and Physical Health; PE, Movement and Academic Outcomes; Integration with Arts

Education; Integration with SESE; Integration through Teaching Methodologies; School Climate as a Facilitator for Integration; and Social Environment as a Facilitator for Integration.

The findings from the reviewed studies highlighted the potential to integrate Wellbeing, and specifically SEL, across the school day. Pupils' lived experiences can provide educators with opportunities to scaffold learners' emotional, cognitive, and social skills during play, academic tasks, behaviour management and social interactions. Integration of PE and SPHE concepts were illustrated through various studies and included the potential for PE to provide important opportunities for social and moral development, and Values Education. PE can also positively influence pupils' mental health. The literature recommended the integration of physical activity into the classroom and across the school day due to its positive effects on pupils' cognitive abilities. It also demonstrated how PE can be integrated with Dance, Drama and aspects of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) to enhance pupils' wellbeing.

Elements of SPHE can similarly be integrated through Arts Education. Research has indicated how emotional learning through Visual Arts can be a powerful tool to support pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing. Care for the self, others and the environment can be taught through the integration with SESE. As has been highlighted in Research Questions Two and Three, the teaching methodologies used in different subject areas can also enhance pupils' wellbeing knowledge, skills, values and dispositions. The methodologies cited in the literature included collaborative and co-operative learning, games and Circle Time, which supported pupils' learning and their social-emotional development.

Finally, the school climate facilitated the integration of a range of knowledge, skills, values and dispositions, such as; relationship building, friendships, and physical activity. School-wide events and whole-school approaches are important for promoting wellbeing. Some studies highlighted the value of academic supports for children with SEN, as well as a caring atmosphere and unique wellbeing activities. The school environment was also a key factor for integration. Pupils' opinions indicated that technology, green spaces, play resources and learning materials are valued commodities. The environment was also acknowledged in the literature to provide diverse learning spaces for curriculum tasks and pupils' break-time activities. Some studies concluded that the environment facilitates wellbeing integration, as the teaching of various curriculum content and skills in the outdoors enhances pupils' wellbeing.

Integration and Agency

The use of integration is considered in Chapter Seven. While integration has the potential to make learning more meaningful, enhance pupil involvement, and lead to deeper learning, the limitations also need to be considered. The workload associated with integration and the concern that some subject areas may be inadequately covered through an integrated approach are highlighted. Some key considerations to overcome the challenges associated with integration are also presented.

The *Primary Curriculum Framework* key competency of 'Being Well' acknowledges the place of spirituality in developing and experiencing a sense of meaning in life for children. A small number of articles about spirituality and wellbeing emerged from the SLR, but Chapter Seven examines it further through the lens of integration. Findings from a narrative search of literature on this topic indicated the potential of spirituality to contribute to increased self-confidence and self-esteem, which play an important part in shaping identity; with identity being a key factor in spirituality.

An integrated curriculum promotes pupil agency. Consequently, enhanced pupil agency supports enhanced teacher agency. When one considers curriculum change, and in this case, the introduction of a newly crafted curriculum area, teacher agency and pupil agency need to be examined. Articles on these topics were also searched for outside of the SLR process. The findings are presented in Chapter Seven.

Conclusions

Chapter Eight draws this SLR to its conclusion by proposing some considerations for Wellbeing in a redeveloped curriculum, with specific attention to the subjects of PE and SPHE. The unique learning experience offered through PE, with explicit opportunities to learn about and through movement, while children are learning about themselves, others and the world around them, is presented. Recent research on meaningful PE provides an overall framework for teacher pedagogical decision-making. The attainment of physical literacy through play-based approaches is recommended, and consideration needs to be given to include attention to fundamental motor skills development within a physical literacy framework. Specific recommendations for the PE specification include; inclusion of a broad range of activities to provide children with ample opportunities to develop their movement skills and explore new passions; a holistic approach to PE (recognising its potential to develop physical, cognitive and affective learning), and the importance that all activities within curricular PE must have a clear learning focus.

Similar to PE, it is recommended that SPHE be retained as a distinct and discrete area, which contributes to Wellbeing. Some considerations for development in terms of SPHE include a specific

focus and naming of the skills that are developed in and through SPHE. A stronger focus on feelings and emotions should be considered, and an emphasis on a range of strategies that enable children to cope with emotions. The identification of the different family structures that exist in society should be identified in the curriculum to support teachers in addressing the diversity in family life. The *Stay Safe* programme is currently the only mandatory programme on the *Primary School Curriculum,* and its place in the overall curriculum structure is very important. Developing the curriculum in the area of relationships and sexuality with a greater focus on areas that children will need knowledge of, such as sexualities, gender identities, pornography and consent at primary level will require particular consideration. There are opportunities to consider further integration across the curriculum, for example, the current strand units of 'My Friends and Other People' and 'Relating to Others' is one area where content may be combined and the strand unit of 'Developing Citizenship' naturally integrates with the content of the Geography curriculum.

As a final word, this literature review has repeatedly highlighted that tailored continual professional learning opportunities for teachers, and the provision of adequate resources are critical to the success of curriculum innovations targeting Wellbeing in schools.

Introduction

Wellbeing, well-being, being well … While the term wellbeing has become firmly established in national policy over the past 20 years, it is only recently proposed as a designated area of learning in primary schools. Curricular developments at other school levels have already taken place, with wellbeing introduced as a theme in *Aistear: The early childhood curriculum framework* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) 2009), and at post-primary level with the *Junior Cycle Framework* (NCCA 2015). This, coupled with the fact that schools report a growing trend in pupil wellbeing issues, means that teachers and schools are aware of the need to support the wellbeing of children at primary level in recent years (Nohilly and Tynan 2019).

Despite wellbeing not being a designated subject area of the *Primary School Curriculum* (Government of Ireland (GoI) 1999a), pupil wellbeing has been explicitly acknowledged as a key aspect of learning and development through curricular principles and aims. The *Primary School Curriculum: Introduction* (GoI 1999a), highlights the role of the teacher in supporting pupils' wellbeing through a strong pupil-teacher relationship. One of its specific aims concerns enabling children to 'appreciate the potential and importance of health and well-being' (GoI 1999a, p.35). Furthermore, the Arts are highlighted as contributing to children's wellbeing, with Music deemed to foster 'a deep sense of well-being' (GoI 1999b, p.5), yet no explicit reference to wellbeing appears in either the Drama or the Visual Arts curricula. Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is deemed to provide 'particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child' (GoI 1999c, p.2), although in this subject area wellbeing is consistently paired with health, through the term 'health and well-being'. Physical Education (PE), by contrast, is promoted as a subject area in which the 'general well-being' of children is promoted (GoI 1999d, p.2).

More recently, schools have been supported in developing an understanding of wellbeing and in defining the concept, through '*Well-Being in Primary Schools: Guidelines for mental health promotion*' (Department of Health (DoH) and DES 2015) and the '*Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice'* (DES 2019). The 2015 Guidelines define wellbeing and outline the role of schools in promoting wellbeing and mental health, framed within the model of student support by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). The 2019 Guidelines, by contrast, situate wellbeing within Bronfenbrenner's *Bioecological Model of Human Development,* which places the child at the centre of the various systems influencing their lives, including the educational system.

This systematic literature review (SLR) attempts to develop an understanding of wellbeing as a complex concept. The inclusion of Wellbeing[2] as an area of learning warrants interrogation; the curriculum redevelopment taking place across other subject disciplines also requires consideration in an effort to support meaningful integration and address the concern of curriculum overload. The NCCA has posed four questions on which this report is based:

1. Through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?
2. What evidence is provided by the literature on children's learning and development for the integrated curriculum area of Wellbeing in stages 1 and 2 – junior infants to second class, and the subjects of Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education in stages 3 and 4 – third to sixth class?
3. In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content (knowledge, skills, values and dispositions) for children's learning and development in Wellbeing/Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education within the broad primary curriculum?
4. What aspects of the curriculum area (the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions) support integration in stages 1 and 2, and what aspects of the subjects support integration in stages 3 and 4?

Following a general overview of the development of wellbeing policy in education in Chapter One, the methodological approach to the SLR is presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Three, Chapter Four, Chapter Five and Chapter Six are dedicated to answering the four specific research questions. A Wellbeing curriculum requires attention from a broader educational perspective, therefore, Chapter Seven discusses the issues of integration and agency for both pupils and teachers. The penultimate chapter, Chapter Eight, poses the question 'What now for Wellbeing in the redeveloped curriculum?'. While it synthesises the key findings from Chapter Three, Chapter Four, Chapter Five and Chapter Six, the chapter also highlights limitations and issues that emerged from the methodological approach to the research questions. These include specific considerations for PE and SPHE as discrete subject areas.

[2] The reader is advised that the curriculum area of Wellbeing is denoted with a capital W, while wellbeing in other contexts remains in lowercase letters.

Chapter One: Setting the Context

1.1 Introduction

In March 2023, the *Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools* was developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and published by the Department of Education (DE). This is the first ever framework for primary education in Ireland, replacing the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* (2020). It envisions a curriculum that provides a foundation for every child to 'thrive and flourish' and be a 'caring' individual (DE 2023, p.5). This vision clearly articulates wellbeing as an integral curriculum component, further reinforced with 'being well' identified as a key curriculum competency, and Wellbeing named as one of five broad areas of learning. The eight accompanying principles that support schools to pursue this vision are linked in overt and overlapping ways to the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of wellbeing, presented in Chapter Three.

Wellbeing has not been a whimsical addition to the Irish curriculum. It has been founded on an increasing visibility of wellbeing in international policy documents, including those related to education. Consequently, wellbeing is becoming more frequently cited in Irish policy documents, including curriculum policy, which has influenced the introduction of Wellbeing as a curriculum area.

1.2 Influential Policy Developments on Wellbeing as a Curriculum Area

A number of national policy developments that focus on children's and young people's outcomes in Ireland have included wellbeing as a central tenet, particularly since the turn of the new millennium. While a review of these policy initiatives is beyond the scope of this literature review, an outline of these Government policy documents is referenced in Figure 1.1.

2000	National Children's Strategy, *Our Children-Their Lives*
2006	*Growing Up in Ireland*: *National Longitudinal Study of Children*
2013	*Healthy Ireland Framework*
2014	*Bigger Outcomes Better Futures*: *The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*
2019	*Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025* *First 5: A Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and Their Families 2019-2028*

Figure 1.1 Timeline of Wellbeing Development at Government Policy Level

A similar timeline in relation to key educational developments in the area of Wellbeing is illustrated in Figure 1.2

1999	*Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum*
2009	*Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*
2013	*Well-being in Post-Primary School: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention*
2015	*Well-being in Primary School: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion*
2017	*Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines*
2018	*Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*
2021	*Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* (updated)

Figure 1.2 Timeline of Wellbeing-related Developments in Educational Policy

While Physical Education (PE) has supported the 'health and well-being' of children in the curriculum, the term wellbeing was not used alone. However, the aims of the *PE Curriculum* (GoI 1999d, p.10) clearly support aspects of wellbeing, which are not related to health, with a focus on the development of 'positive personal qualities', 'social and emotional development' and 'enjoyment and positive attitudes' towards PE and physical activity, all of which are integral to a contemporary conceptualisation of wellbeing. The inclusion of the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum in the *Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999c) takes cognisance of the implicit place of wellbeing in the Irish education system; 'Social, personal and health education provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual child' (GoI 1999c, p.2). Indeed, as reflected in the mission statements of numerous Irish primary schools, the wellbeing of children has been acknowledged as a goal of education.

The introduction of *Aistear: The early childhood curriculum framework* (NCCA 2009), a curriculum framework from birth to six years, explicitly included wellbeing in education. Wellbeing in *Aistear* is one of four interconnected themes, which describe children's learning and development. The Wellbeing theme includes two main elements; physical and psychological wellbeing, and has four aims, with a number of learning goals aligned to each aim. The four aims include:

1. Children will be strong psychologically and socially;
2. Children will be as healthy and fit as they can be;
3. Children will be creative and spiritual;
4. Children will have positive outlooks on learning and on life (NCCA 2009, p.17).

In 2013, *Well-being in Post-primary Schools: Guidelines for mental health promotion and suicide prevention* (Department of Education and Skills (DES) and Department of Health (DoH)) was published, followed by *Well-being in Primary Schools: Guidelines for mental health promotion* (DES and DoH) in 2015.The guidelines provided a framework for schools to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. However, the title of both sets of guidelines, and their contents, aligned wellbeing with mental health rather than a broader conceptualisation of wellbeing. The *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015) included wellbeing as a new area of learning for students in post-primary schools. The *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* were published in 2017 and updated in 2021. Notably, the spelling of wellbeing from earlier policy documents evolved from 'well-being' to 'wellbeing'. These particular guidelines aim to support schools in developing a coherent wellbeing programme (NCCA 2017; 2021). Such policy developments resulted in the establishment of a clearly defined space for wellbeing at both early years and post-primary level, but left an obvious gap at primary level. Research has highlighted that, despite this gap, wellbeing has become part of the discourse of primary school teachers in recent years (Nohilly and Tynan 2022).

The *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* was first published by the DES in 2018 and updated in 2019 for use in all schools and centres for education, where it required them to 'include wellbeing promotion as a focus for their School Self-Evaluation (SSE)' and involve 'the development, implementation and review of wellbeing promotion in their schools' (DES 2019, p.1). The timeframe for engaging with the SSE cycle for wellbeing was extended to 2025 due to the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. The document outlines that a multi-component, preventative and whole-school approach to the promotion of wellbeing is the most beneficial and evidence-informed approach for schools to consider (DES 2019, p.15). The recommended framework, informed by the Health Service Executive's S*chools for Health* process is illustrated in Figure 1.3. It highlights four areas of wellbeing:

1. Culture and environment;
2. Curriculum (teaching and learning);
3. Policy and planning;
4. Relationships and partnerships.

Figure 1.3 Whole School Approach: Four key areas for wellbeing promotion (DES 2019, p.16)

The wellbeing framework presents indicators of success for each of the four key areas; these are the broad outcomes that schools should aspire to accomplish as presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Wellbeing Promotion Indicators of Success (DES 2019, p.21)

Key Areas	Indicators of Success
Culture & Environment	• Children, young people and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. • Systems are in place so that the voice of the child/young person, teacher and parent are heard and lead to improvements in school culture and ethos.
Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)	• Children and young people experience positive, high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, which provides opportunities for success for all. • Children and young people access curricular activities to promote their physical, social and emotional competence to enhance their overall wellbeing.
Policy & Planning	• Schools and centres for education use a Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process to develop, implement and review wellbeing promotion. • Schools and centres for education incorporate wellbeing promotion into whole school policies and practices.
Relationships & Partnerships	• Children and young people, their parents and other external partners are actively involved in wellbeing promotion within the school community. • All adults in schools and centres for education have an increased awareness of the importance of wellbeing promotion, including listening to children and young people, and signposting them to internal or external pathways for support when needed.

The wellbeing promotion areas and indicators of success are aligned with some of the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of wellbeing in education, which are presented in Chapter Two.

1.3 Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools

The publication of the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* by the NCCA (2020) heralded the inclusion of Wellbeing as one of five broad curricular areas, the others being Language; Social and Environmental Education; Arts Education; and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education. This categorisation was retained when the *Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools* was launched in 2023. In addition to the five broad curriculum areas, school patrons offer a religious/ethical/multi-belief and Values Education programme that reflects their school ethos. Values Education is fundamental to wellbeing as an area of learning.

Wellbeing is proposed as the over-arching term for the two subject areas of PE and SPHE, with both subjects having intrinsic value as distinct subject areas in their own right, as is currently the case in the *Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999a). The weekly time allocation for Wellbeing across all stages of primary school, from Infants to Sixth class, has increased from the combined offering of one hour and thirty minutes to two hours and thirty minutes at stage 1 (Junior and Senior Infants), and three hours for stages 2, 3 and 4 (First to Sixth class). This increased time allocation heralds the place of Wellbeing in the curriculum as comparable to Mathematics and Language in terms of time. However, there are currently no guidelines on how this time should be divided between PE and SPHE.

While wellbeing is an intersecting theme across all seven competencies of the *Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools* (DE 2023), it is also named as one of the seven, as a distinct standalone competency. This competency, entitled 'being well', is outlined in broad terms and includes specific reference to various wellbeing subsets including physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The child's own sense of self is recognised as integral to their experience of being well. The competency supports children to become healthy and positive, and to develop meaningful relationships with others, in addition to supporting the spiritual dimension of meaning in life (DES 2023). This is reflected in the attributes developed for the 'being well' competency, which include self-awareness, self-acceptance, resilience and health.

1.4 Current Physical Education Curriculum Structure

Physical Education (PE) in the *Primary School Curriculum* (GoI 1999d) is presented as a subject that contributes to a child's overall development. Through a focus on the body and physical experiences, PE is argued to be uniquely positioned within the school curriculum to help children lead active healthy lives. It focuses on promoting enjoyment of physical activity to help prepare the child to be active throughout their life. PE is a subject area that is considered a vital and unique part of the curriculum through facilitating physical, social, emotional and intellectual development opportunities for children. The curriculum is divided into six strand areas and further subdivided into a range of strand units, which are referenced in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Strands and Strand Units of the PE Curriculum

Strand	**Strand unit**
Aquatics	• Hygiene • Water safety • Entry to and exit from the water • Buoyancy and propulsion • Stroke development • Water-based ball games • Understanding and appreciation of aquatics
Athletics	• Running • Jumping • Throwing • Understanding and appreciation of athletics
Dance	• Exploration, creation and performance of dance • Understanding and appreciation of dance
Games	• Sending, receiving and travelling • Creating and playing games • Understanding and appreciation of games
Gymnastics	• Movement • Understanding and appreciation of gymnastics
Outdoor and Adventure Activities	• Walking, cycling and camping activities • Orienteering • Outdoor challenges • Water-based activities • Understanding and appreciation of outdoor and adventure activities

It should be noted that all strands encompass an 'understanding and appreciation' strand unit that supports the child to develop a deeper experience of physical activities.

The PE curriculum facilitates the development of children's personal and social skills, including opportunities to develop their self-esteem. Concepts, such as learning to work with others, engage in fair play, and accept success and failure are among the numerous qualities emphasised. The curriculum is focused on enabling children to develop an appreciation of movement and an understanding of the use of the body as an instrument of expression and creativity. Broad objectives

identified in the PE curriculum are focused on social and personal development, physical and motor development, knowledge and understanding, creative and aesthetic development, health-related fitness, and an awareness of safety (GoI 1999d, p.11). The PE curriculum acknowledges that while PE and sport are closely linked, they are not synonymous. Sport places a particular emphasis on competition whether against oneself, others, or the environment. The focus of the PE curriculum is on the child's holistic development. The curriculum acknowledges the fact that competition is not incompatible with the holistic development of the child, particularly if it supports achievement of potential. A balanced approach to competition is recommended, with elements of fun, enjoyment and satisfaction evident (DES 1999d, p. 6).

The *Teacher Guidelines* for PE, which support its implementation, recommend the use of a broad range of approaches and methodologies for the successful implementation of PE. The direct-teaching approach, the guided-discovery approach, and integration are the specified methodologies for PE implementation. It is also recognised that the strands of the curriculum lend themselves to the use of a variety of teaching methods (GoI 1999e, p. 42). It is recommended that PE assessment be formative and inform the teaching and learning of a broad and balanced PE curriculum (GoI 1999d). Assessment should be planned to capture pupil achievements and inform further learning opportunities for the child in each strand. This in turn should act as a form of feedback to the pupil on their achievements, while also providing the child with opportunities to critically reflect on their learning.

1.5 Current Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum Structure

The *Social Personal and Health Education* (*SPHE) Curriculum* (GoI 1999c) outlines how, as a subject area, SPHE seeks to promote intrapersonal development, by enabling children to recognise, understand and accept themselves as unique individuals who feel valued and loved. The curriculum also aims to foster the personal development, health, and wellbeing of the individual child, and help them to create and maintain supportive relationships, whilst also becoming active and responsible citizens in society. It provides learning opportunities through three distinct avenues; by creating a positive school culture, climate and atmosphere; through discrete time (an allocated 30 minutes per week) and through an integrated approach across a wide range of subject areas.

A positive school climate and atmosphere fosters the health and wellbeing of the school community. It provides a safe and secure environment where pupils experience a sense of belonging, and where the views and contributions of children, parents, teachers and members of the school community are valued. The discrete SPHE time is generally used to impart knowledge, develop and practise skills, and

explore many issues, including the safety of children through specific child abuse prevention lessons. Through an integrated approach, and consequent variety of learning experiences, children can work together, solve problems, make decisions, engage in dialogue and reflect critically. A number of issues regarding integration of SPHE with other subject areas are highlighted, including an awareness that integration should be meaningful and that the integrity of individual subjects should not be compromised. The SPHE *Teacher Guidelines* (GoI 1999f) provide suggestions on how integration can occur: through thematic teaching, subject-based integration or integration of learning processes across the curriculum (for example, fostering independence or critical reflection). The content of the curriculum is represented in three strands and related strand units as outlined in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Strands and Strand Units of the SPHE Curriculum

Strands	**Strand Units**
Myself	• Self-Identity • Taking care of my body • Growing and changing • Safety and protection • Making decisions (Third Class to Sixth Class only)
Myself and Others	• Myself and my family • My friends and other people • Relating to others
Myself and the Wider World	• Developing citizenship • Media education

Myself is concerned with the personal development of the individual child and their health and wellbeing. This strand fosters self-awareness, self-care, self-respect, and sense of personal responsibility. *Myself and Others* promotes a sense of respect and care for others, and supports pupils to acquire the skills and dispositions to enable living and working with others and act in socially responsible ways. It also fosters communication skills, including the ability to be empathic, assertive, co-operative, and to resolve conflict. In the strand, *Myself and the Wider World*, children explore various communities, and the traditions and cultures within society. They also examine the issues associated with caring for the local and international environment, and are encouraged to be socially responsible. The SPHE curriculum specifically addresses critical issues for children, for example, substance use, relationships and sexuality, child abuse prevention, prejudice and discrimination.

Under the *Safety and Protection* strand unit, pupils are taught the mandatory *Stay Safe* programme (MacIntyre and Lawlor 2016), which supports pupils to develop the skills necessary to enable them to recognise and resist abuse, and potentially abusive situations. The programme is generally taught every second year. On alternate years, as part of the *Taking Care of My Body* and *Growing and Changing* strand units, pupils must be taught the key and sensitive components of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). These strand units form a cornerstone of the SPHE curriculum.

As with PE, SPHE encourages the active participation of children in their own learning, so that they can make sense of what is being learned, make informed judgements, and construct new meanings. Active learning methodologies are promoted, and include; play, discussion, drama, cooperative games, multimedia programmes, use of ICT, television and video extracts, interpreting pictures and photographs, and interpreting surveys and data (GoI 1999c, p.57). Critically, pupils also have the opportunity in SPHE to reflect on their own work and to transfer the learned skills to their own lives.

In SPHE, although assessment is an important feature of the teaching and learning process, it is recognised that particular outcomes may be dependent on the emotional, intellectual and social maturity of the child, and may only become evident when the child has left the primary school context (GoI 1999c, p.71). Generally, teacher observation, teacher-designed tasks and tests, portfolios and projects are used to assess SPHE. Teachers may assess behaviours, skills and competencies, in addition to content knowledge. This could include, for example, how a child co-operates in groups; their emotional maturity; or their readiness to undertake challenges.

In summary, SPHE supports many aspects of a child's wellbeing, in line with a contemporary understanding of the concept.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the context for the SLR by highlighting the place of wellbeing in education policy and the place of PE and SPHE in the 1999 *Primary School Curriculum*. It has highlighted the distinct contribution these subjects make to children's learning and development, before they are framed as part of the overall curriculum area of Wellbeing, as proposed in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. It is within this context that a SLR is undertaken. It aims to provide evidence for decision-makers regarding the development of curriculum specifications for the area of Wellbeing in Irish primary and special schools.

Chapter Two: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, Chapter One, established the context for wellbeing in education from a policy perspective. It examined the curriculum areas of Physical Education (PE) and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in the current 1999 Curriculum, as these will be the components of the Wellbeing curriculum area as proposed in the *Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools* (DE 2023). The current chapter outlines the research design used to conduct the systematic literature review (SLR) to provide answers to the four research questions which will support the development of a curriculum specification for the area of Wellbeing for primary schools in Ireland.

2.2 Research Questions

This research aimed to gather evidence from literature about the possible philosophical and educational basis for the subject area of Wellbeing. It also aimed to identify the key knowledge, skills, values and dispositions for children's learning and development in Wellbeing, SPHE and PE, and to identify aspects of these curriculum subjects that support integration. The specific research questions addressed are outlined, as follows:

1. Through the lens of the vision and principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework*, what is the philosophical basis and educational basis for the curriculum area/subjects?
2. What evidence is provided by the literature on children's learning and development for the integrated curriculum area of Wellbeing in stages 1 and 2 – junior infants to second class, and the subjects of Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education in stages 3 and 4 – third to sixth class?
3. In response to curriculum overload, what are the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content (knowledge, skills, values and dispositions) for children's learning and development in Wellbeing/ Physical Education and Social, Personal and Health Education within the broad primary curriculum?
4. What aspects of the curriculum area (the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions) support integration in stages 1 and 2, and what aspects of the subjects support integration in stages 3 and 4?

To address these research questions a SLR was conducted. In brief, this involved systematically searching, screening and reviewing literature based on empirical research on Wellbeing, SPHE and PE

topics in educational contexts published between 2012 and 2022. The recommendations outlined in the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* (PRISMA) 2020 Statement (Page *et al.* 2021) for conducting and reporting SLRs were adhered to in so far as was practical. The evidence that emerged from the literature was subsequently synthesised qualitatively. Figure 2.1 summarises key stages of the research process, which is described in greater detail throughout this chapter.

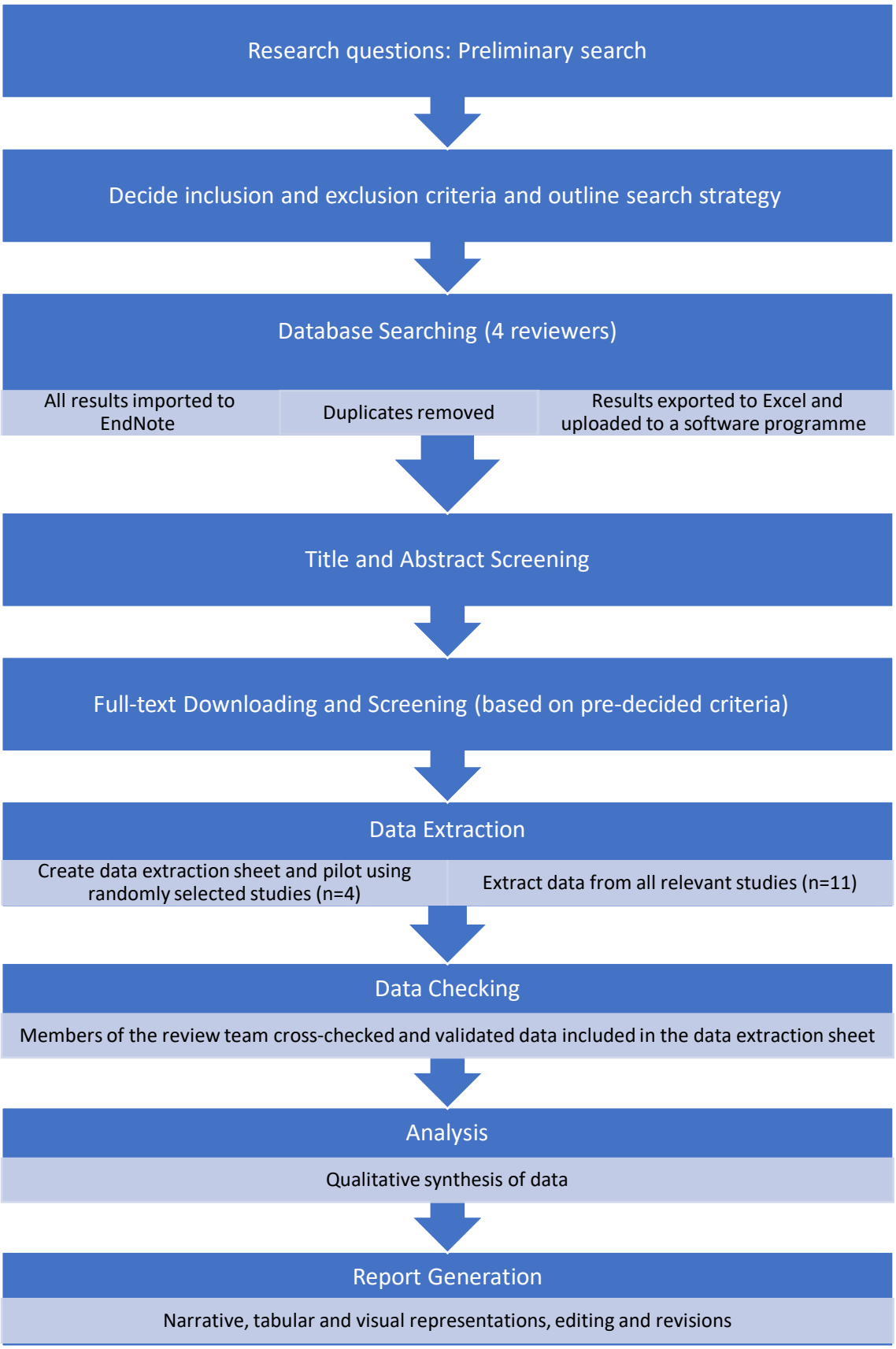


Figure 2.1 Summary of Literature Review Process

2.3 Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

The aim of the SLR was to identify and present the evidence from the literature on children's learning and development associated with the curriculum area of Wellbeing and the subject areas of SPHE and PE. The SLR was conducted in four phases:

- Database search strategy;
- Literature screening;
- Data extraction;
- Data analysis and qualitative synthesis.

2.3.1 Phase One: Database Search Strategy

The project team adopted a sophisticated methodology to conduct the requested literature review through systematic, dynamic, structured, and comprehensive searching of available resources. To achieve this, frameworks including FINER, SPICE, PICO and SPIDER were considered. The PEO (Population Exposure Outcome) Framework for vocabulary control was adapted to suit the needs of the project. The PEO Framework was chosen over PICO as it is more easily adapted for secondary qualitative research in the social sciences (Leavy *et al.* 2022). The table was initially created using the NCCA's definition of Wellbeing in Education (NCCA 2020) (Figure 2.2) and then expanded using synonyms, acronyms, plural word forms and geographic variations where necessary. The project team also incorporated author-supplied keywords, subject terms and other metadata derived from the academic literature. This resulted in the development of a comprehensive keywords table that allowed for consistent, structured, and systematic searching across all resources (Appendix A).

> The area of Wellbeing should support children's social, emotional and physical development now and into the future. It should enable children to develop self-awareness and knowledge, build life-skills and develop a strong sense of connected-ness to their school and to their community and wider society. To develop these skills and dispositions, it is important for children to develop their own ethical understanding of the world, and in doing so learn to make good decisions. Children should be encouraged to value what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts. The area of Wellbeing should provide structured opportunities for children to be as physically and emotionally well and healthy as they can be. This will happen by building their motivation and commitment to physical activity and informed healthy lifestyle choices. Wellbeing also supports children to value positive and healthy relationships with others, that includes acquiring an understanding of human sexuality that is balanced and connected with the relational and emotional aspects. (NCCA 2020, pp.13 – 14)

Figure 2.2 Definition of Wellbeing (NCCA 2020)

The table was then used to incorporate a range of appropriate search syntax to achieve accurate and dynamic searching. These included the use of phrases (“”), truncation (*), wildcards (?), parentheses, and Boolean operators resulting in a range of advanced-level searches to be applied to selected databases (Appendix B). As identified in Appendix B, the populations of interest included Early Years, Primary School, Secondary School or Special Education pupils or teachers. Research related to wellbeing, curriculum (SPHE and/or PE related), curriculum integration, curriculum process or content, pupil voice or teacher agency in relation to these populations was necessary within educational settings for studies to be included.

The databases searched were ERIC and Education Database through ProQuest, Academic Search Complete, APA PsycArticles, APA PsycInfo, Education Source and SportsDiscuss through Education Source. Due to their relevance within educational research, Taylor and Francis, and Sage Journals were also searched. Each search phrase in the population column (early years, primary, secondary and special education) was searched with every exposure across each of the four databases. A total of 220 searches were completed by four researchers. Some of the search phrases were slightly adapted depending on the Boolean operators and symbols recognised by the specific databases. Searches included Title, Abstract and Keywords. The searches used standard inclusion and exclusion filtering that was suitable for the project. These included, but were not limited to, peer-reviewed, full-text, date range 2012-2022, English language, and source type filters, in addition to a focus on searching the document title, subject heading and abstract of the specific literature. To ensure consistency in the searches, the researchers created visual guidelines for searching each database.

The initial searches conducted in November 2022 resulted in 8643 returns. Due to insufficient PE articles after screening, an amended search related to PE, excluding reference to the term ‘wellbeing’ was conducted in March 2023 within the same databases and with the same filtering criteria applied. The additional search is indicated in Appendix B. This search resulted in 118 additional articles. From this point onwards, they are combined and treated the same as all other articles, therefore the total number of articles returned for screening was 8761. In addition, 87 of the returned articles related to the definition or philosophical basis for wellbeing. Due to the theoretical focus of research Question One, these articles were treated separately and were removed from the repository, leaving a total of 8674 articles. The breakdown of results according to population and databases is outlined in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Search Results according to Population and Database

Population	ProQuest	SAGE	Taylor and Frances	EBSCO	Total
Early Years	661	104	421	423	**1609**
Primary	1034	55	377	683	**2149**
Secondary	2654	176	666	814	**4310**
Special Education	439	8	53	106	**606**
Total	**4788**	**343**	**1517**	**2026**	**8674**

2.3.2 Phase Two: Literature Screening

All results were exported in RIS format into EndNote where the initial duplicates were removed (n=55). These 8619 articles were subsequently imported into the software programme *Cadima*, an online Open Access, systematic review platform that facilitates data management and supports researchers in collaborating on literature reviews. *Cadima* was used to facilitate screening of chosen articles and to supply data for completing the PRISMA flowchart (Figure 2.3). Further duplicates were identified through *Cadima* (n=1088) and removed, resulting in 7531 articles being screened for inclusion.

For a study to be reviewed, it must have satisfied all of the inclusion criteria and none of the exclusion criteria from the PEO framework. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were clearly stated for transparency. Table 2.2 outlines the list of criteria applied to screen titles and abstracts for inclusion. It is important to note that these criteria were only applied to the studies included in Questions Two, Three and Four since the focus of Question One (i.e. philosophical basis) was theoretical and therefore required a different approach to the remaining three questions.

Table 2.2 Criteria Applied for Title/Abstract Screening

Criteria	**Key element**
Must include 0-18 years, population of early years/school-going age OR teachers (re question on teacher agency)	Population
Setting: must be related to school (mainstream/special/specialised), early years or home schooling	Outcome
Outcomes must be presented in terms of wellbeing (physical, mental, psychological, social, emotional, educational achievement)	Outcome
Must be related to wellbeing in education, learning/development, curriculum, thematic teaching, integration, PE, SPHE, curriculum overload, knowledge/skills/ dispositions/values, agentic child/teacher (teachers as reflective, competent and capable of exercising professional judgement in response to learning needs in a variety of contexts; the child has rights in the co-construction of knowledge; possible for them to own and guide their own train of thought)	Outcome
Type of publication: must be original research (no Systematic Literature Review or reports)	Outcome

Four researchers were involved in the screening phase of the literature review. The titles and abstracts of possible articles were initially reviewed and analysed to decide which met the inclusion criteria. To ensure consistency, all four researchers independently applied the criteria to 50 articles each within *Cadima*. The inter-rater reliability score revealed substantial agreement among the researchers (k=0.63). The researchers reviewed the results of the consistency check and engaged in a discussion to clarify inconsistencies. To ensure further rigour in selecting the articles, titles and abstracts were screened independently by two researchers. Where there was disagreement in the decisions made, the researchers reviewed the inconsistencies and, where appropriate, engaged in a discussion to come to a consensus. After this rigorous process of screening the titles and abstracts, the full text of each remaining article was retrieved (n=1333). The screening criteria for the full-text review were reviewed and modified. Table 2.3 outlines the criteria applied to screen full-texts for eligibility. A consistency check was repeated again to ensure inter-rater reliability for the full-text screening.

Table 2.3 Criteria Applied to Screen Full Texts for Eligibility

Criteria	**Key element**
Children in education (primary), or home schooled. Teacher (regarding teacher agency for wellbeing); Children in preschool or post-primary regarding continuity/alignment in wellbeing learning to/from primary	Population
Setting: must be related to school (mainstream primary/specialised) or home schooling; early years or post-primary where there is alignment with primary in a wellbeing area; early years which supports the integrated nature of learning in wellbeing	Outcome
Outcomes must be presented in terms of wellbeing (physical, mental, psychological, social, emotional, spiritual, sexual, educational achievement), curriculum integration regarding wellbeing and/or knowledge/skills/dispositions/values related to wellbeing	Outcome
Outcomes must be related to agentic teacher (teachers as reflective, competent and capable of exercising professional judgement in the area of wellbeing) and agentic child (as in the co-construction of knowledge for them to own and guide their own train of thought in the area of wellbeing)	Outcome

The criteria outlined in Table 2.3 were applied by each of the four researchers independently followed by a discussion to clarify inconsistencies. The same procedure was then applied in screening the full texts for eligibility with each article double-blindly screened independently by two researchers. A further 964 full-text articles did not meet the inclusion criteria. The PRISMA flow chart (Page *et al.*, 2020), in Figure 2.3 illustrates the number of studies identified, screened, and excluded at each stage of the process to ensure transparency and replicability. The remaining 369 articles were included in the data extraction phase. Following the same procedure, two reviewers completed the screening phase for the articles included for Research Question 1. Figure 2.4 illustrates the number of studies excluded at each stage of the process.

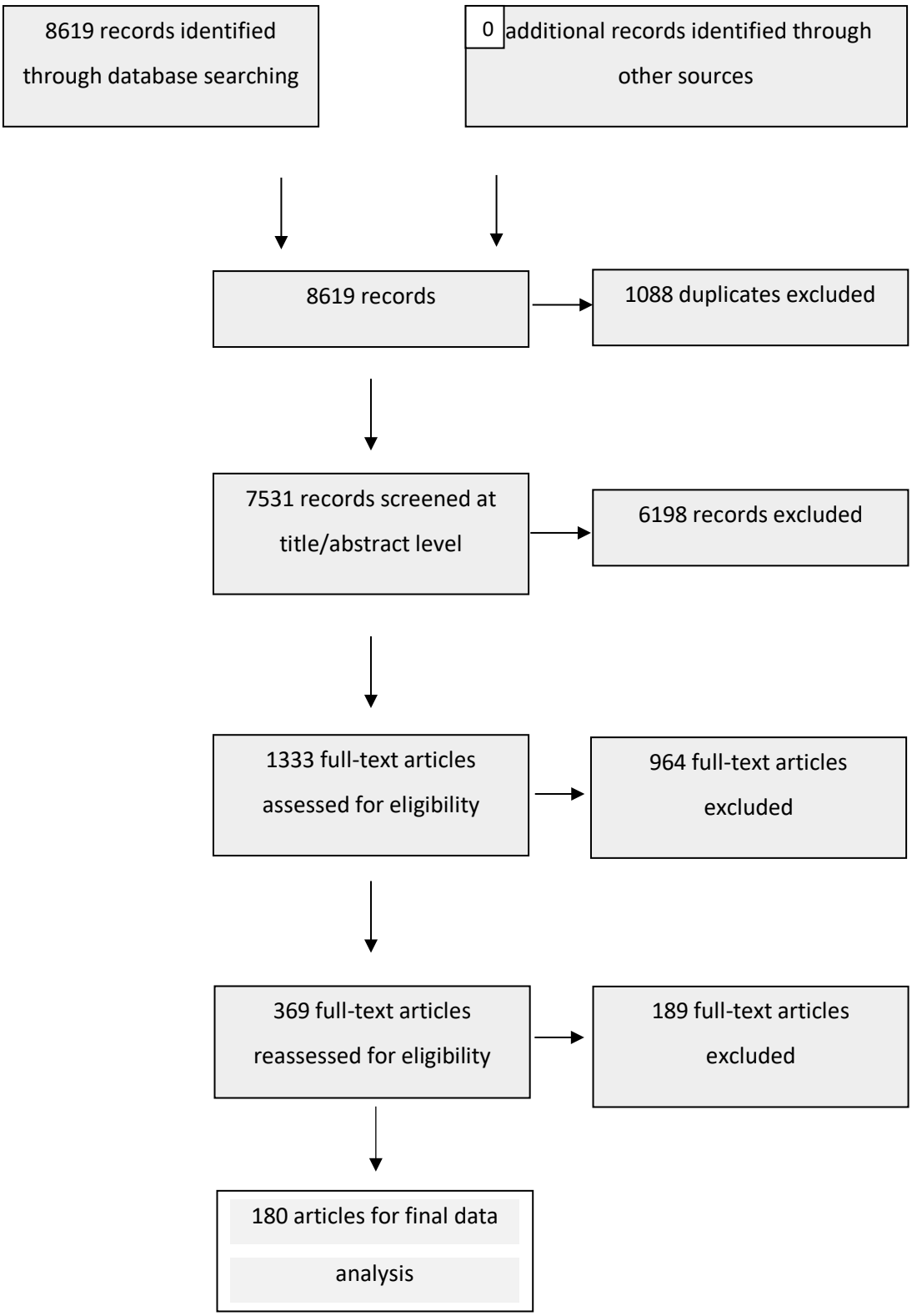


Figure 2.3 PRISMA Flow Chart for Research Questions Two, Three and Four

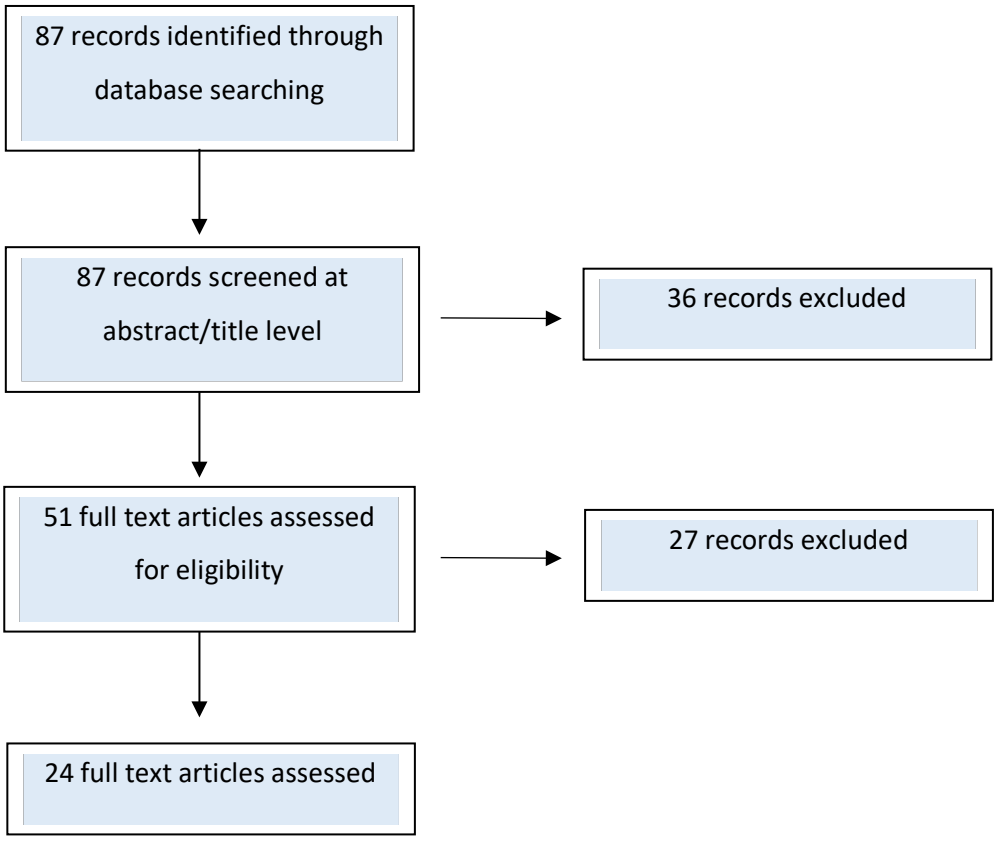


Figure 2.4 PRISMA Flow Chart for Research Question One

2.3.3 Phase Three: Data Extraction

Full texts of the included articles (n=369) were retrieved. A data extraction form was developed by the research team using Microsoft Excel and piloted to ensure that it was fit for purpose. The articles were organised thematically and distributed among the wider research team (n=11), for data extraction. Individual reviewers extracted data from their assigned articles and summarised them in tabular form. Data concerning title, country of research, sample size, study design, research objectives, description of intervention and outcomes were extracted from the articles. Reviewers also identified relevant information, if applicable related to the research questions. Further articles were removed if they were not relevant to answer any of the research questions (n=189), with an additional 24 articles related to Question One included. Data extraction files from all reviewers were compiled into one master data file. Data were cross-checked for accuracy by four reviewers.

2.3.4 Phase Four: Data Analysis and Qualitative Synthesis

The extracted data were subsequently analysed and synthesised by four reviewers. Reviewers worked in pairs to record, analyse and synthesise the evidence related to two research questions each.

Themes emerged inductively from the data and articles were grouped according to these themes. If the data from an article was relevant to multiple questions or themes then it was included in each. A qualitative synthesis of the themes, which emerged was subsequently conducted.

2.4 Limitations

The purpose of this SLR was to identify, analyse, validate and summarise the existing evidence from relevant individual studies to support decision-makers in the development of a curriculum specification for the curriculum area of Wellbeing for primary schools in Ireland. Though the design of this review is rigorous, the research team acknowledges that similar to all systematic reviews, it is not without its limitations. Firstly, while the research team endeavoured to capture all relevant literature from the databases, international variations in the key search terms and the application of exclusion criteria mean that there is a possibility that pertinent studies may have been excluded. It must also be noted that, within this study, inclusion criteria limited selection to published, peer-reviewed articles, which indicates that the results may be disposed to the risks posed by publication bias. An additional limitation is that to meet the inclusion criteria, articles needed to be published in English. This means that pertinent studies from non-English speaking nations, that may have significant empirical research in the field of Wellbeing in education have not been included. This limitation also resulted in a large proportion of included studies conducted in the USA. Due to time limitations, a further requirement for inclusion in the current review was that the full-text article had to be available to the researchers, either through Open Access or the researchers' institutional library databases.

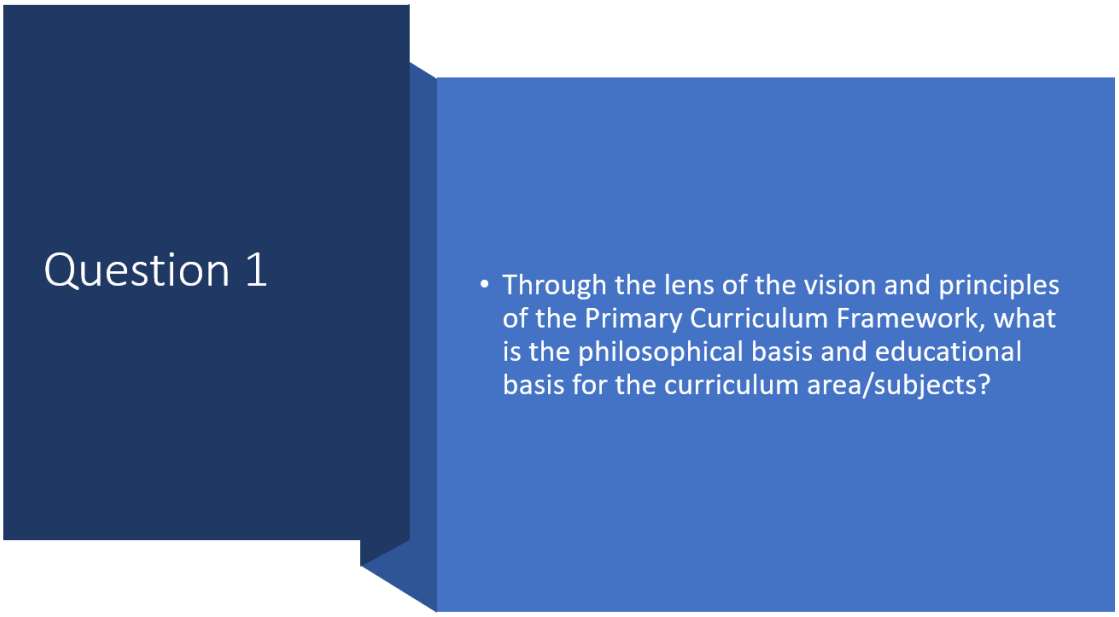
Quantitative studies, particularly randomised controlled trials (RCT), are typically the focus of SLRs. However, considering the value of qualitative research in informing pedagogical practice, no limitations were placed on the methods of inquiry for inclusion in the current review. Therefore, studies with a diverse range of study designs (for example, quasi-experiments, case studies, cross-sectional studies, etc.) and data types (for example, self-report questionnaires, reflections etc.) were included. Naturally, this led to a significant variation in the sample sizes of the included studies with, for example, some case studies based on very small samples (for example, n=5). Due to the inclusion of such variety in study designs and data types, it was not possible to perform a meta-analysis of the data nor to assess study quality using a single appraisal tool. Therefore, while the inclusion of the various study designs allowed for a comprehensive overview of the existing evidence, the methodological limitations (for example, no control group, small sample, etc.) of the included studies highlight the need to interpret their reported findings, as well as the results of this review, with caution. Finally, it is important to note that a comparable number of studies was not available for

both SPHE and PE with significantly fewer studies related to the latter (n=71). Furthermore, in various cases, it was also not possible to distinguish the data presented for stages 1 and 2, and stages 3 and 4, as many studies included a range of class levels across the stages.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined how the research questions were addressed by conducting a systematic literature review. Details regarding each phase of the review process were outlined; the database search strategy, literature screening, data extraction, data analysis and qualitative synthesis. The methodological limitations were also acknowledged. The findings, which emerged from the systematic literature review process, are presented in Chapter Three, Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Addressing Question One



3.1 Introduction

The vision of the *Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools* is articulated thus:

> The curriculum aims to provide a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish, supporting them in realising their full potential as individuals and as members of communities and society during childhood, as they progress through primary and special education and into post-primary education. Building on their previous experiences, the curriculum views children as unique, competent, and caring individuals, and it views teachers as committed, skilful and agentic professionals. It supports high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment that is inclusive and evidence-based, recognising the right of all children to make progress in all areas of their learning and development (DES 2023, p.5).

Several of the terms outlined in this vision encapsulate key elements of wellbeing. The concept of flourishing is a key component of wellbeing in education. It is also clear that the curriculum adopts a social constructivist approach, embedding Vygotskian views of children as active agents in their own learning. They are ideally supported by a more knowledgeable other, in this case the agentic teacher, where they learn skills that support their participation in society. It further highlights the commitment to support children to achieve their full potential through inclusive and evidence-based approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. This suggests an inclusive approach to education, echoing Ireland's commitment to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994), which aims to realise inclusivity through the educational system. However, it should be noted that inclusive education, for the purpose of this literature review, is not synonymous with mainstream education. Special classes, special schools, and

home education are also valued contexts for learning and operate with the intention of supporting individual children to reach their full potential.

Furthermore, the eight principles of the *Primary Curriculum Framework* (Figure 3.1) provided a basis for how the literature related to the philosophical basis for Wellbeing (PE/SPHE) in the curriculum was synthesised.

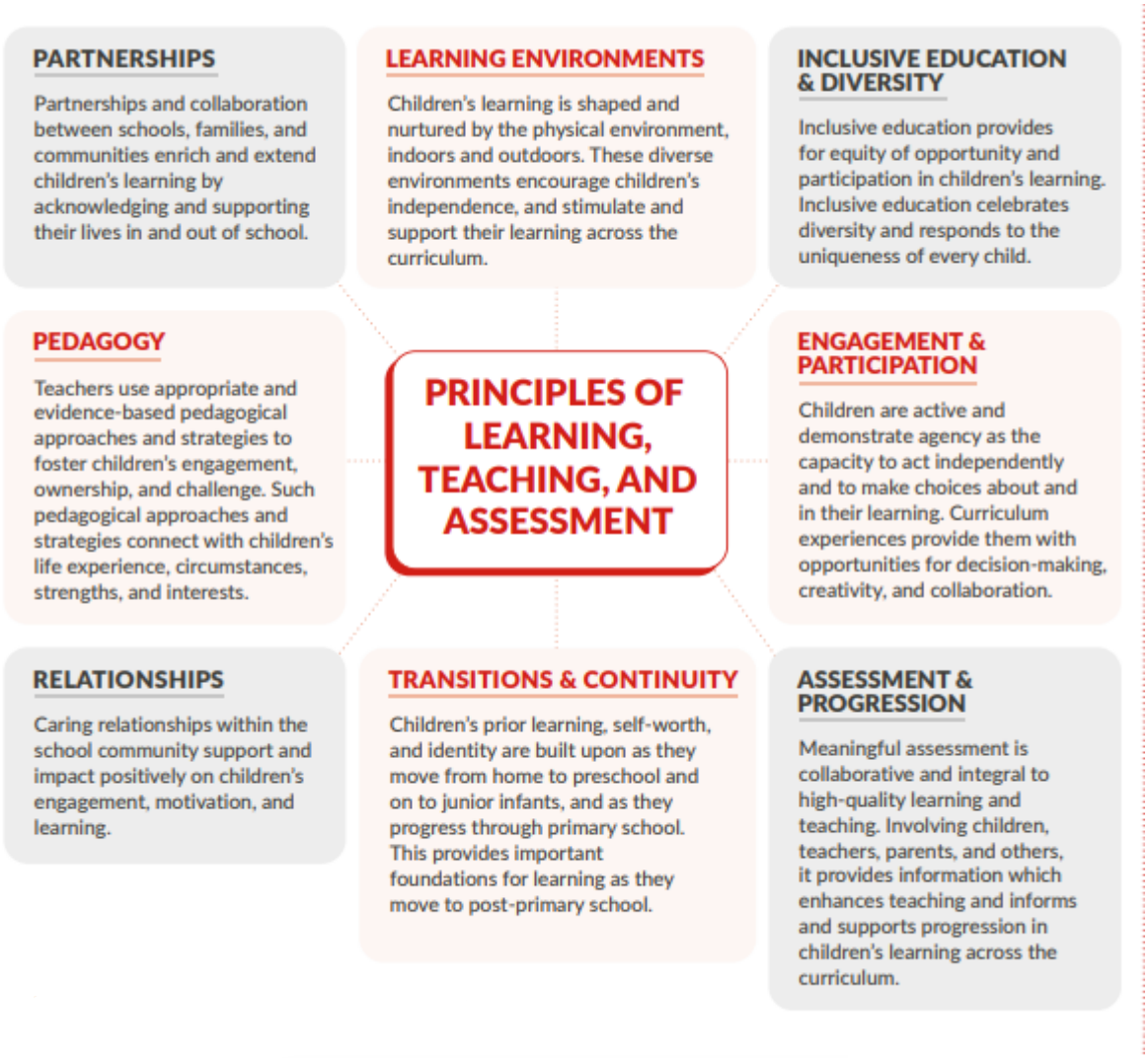


Figure 3.1 The Eight Principles of the Primary Curriculum Framework (DES 2023, p.6)

This chapter begins with an exploration of the definitions of wellbeing to highlight the complexity of this concept and the conflicting views which exist. Once a shared understanding of the concept has been developed with the reader, the philosophical basis for wellbeing in education is presented. Section 3.3 identifies the different wellbeing traditions and their legacy in education, but also the development of the philosophy of wellbeing and the issues that have emerged. To ensure Wellbeing as a curriculum area has integrity, a number of conceptual models are presented to support an applied

understanding of Wellbeing. Again, many of these models are open to criticism, depending on the intended role of, and vision for, Wellbeing in the curriculum. Thereafter, the psychological theories which underpin aspects of Wellbeing are highlighted. The benefits of Wellbeing in education are synthesised to indicate its value in the curriculum.

3.2 Defining Wellbeing

> Definitions of well-being vary across discourses, across disciplinary fields and across cultures, although happiness and health seem to be common factors in most definitions of the word. In education well-being is frequently linked to being happy and healthy: socially, materially and economically (Camfield, Strueli and Woodhead 2010, p.68).

In presenting an overview of philosophical underpinnings and conceptual representations of wellbeing, it is clear that a wellbeing definition cannot capture what is a multi-dimensional, multi-component concept. However, definitions of wellbeing serve a purpose; they enable a fundamental understanding of the concept for a school community. A definition of wellbeing can support school personnel in determining the subsets or elements of wellbeing that are particularly important for their individual context. It also establishes a starting point for engaging with the wellbeing requirements of schools as outlined by the DE. Furthermore, it enables schools to consider who the definition of wellbeing relates to: pupils, staff or the whole school community. Schools may also consider if they are using a general definition of wellbeing or one specific to education.

Table 3.1 presents a number of definitions of wellbeing reflected in wellbeing guidelines and education policy developments in recent years.

Table 3.1 Definitions of Wellbeing from Educational Policy Documents

Source	**Definition**
Well-Being in Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion Department of Education and Skills and Department of Health (2015)	The presence of a culture, ethos and environment which promotes dynamic, optimal development and flourishing for all in the school community. It encompasses the domains of relationships, meaning, emotion, motivation, purpose and achievement. It includes quality teaching and learning for the development of all elements related to healthy living whether cultural, academic, social, emotional, physical or technological with particular focus on resilience and coping.

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2017; 2021)	Wellbeing is present when a student realises their abilities, takes care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community.
Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice Department of Education and Skills (2019)	Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.
Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools Department of Education (2023)	Wellbeing supports children's social, emotional and physical development now and into the future. It enables children to develop self-awareness and knowledge, build life skills, and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school, their community, and wider society.

The systematic literature review (SLR) did not return many definitions of wellbeing. The articles reviewed, in the main, focused on its conceptual and philosophical underpinnings. Further definitions focused on subsets of wellbeing, including social and emotional wellbeing, and subjective wellbeing in particular. There was a dearth of definitions that specifically focused on the concept of educational wellbeing. Some of the general definitions extracted from the literature are outlined in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Definitions of Wellbeing from Literature

Wellbeing, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is 'the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy' and is fundamental to one's ability to function and live well (Cram 2014; Durie 1998)
Well-being was the overall evaluation of satisfaction with life and the intensity of positive and negative emotions perceived (Andrew and Withey 1976).
Wellbeing is conceptualised as a dynamic process of inter-related material and environmental circumstances (such as assets, welfare, standards of living), relational aspects (social relations, access to public goods, capabilities and attitudes to life), and subjective aspects (including personal perceptions and cultural values) (White 2008).

Wellbeing definitions capture concepts of health, contentment and flourishing, refer to personal and communal aspects and to having the psychological, social and physical resources needed to meet life challenges (Svane *et al.* 2019, p.210)
Wellbeing is the balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced (Dodge *et al.* 2012).
Wellbeing is influenced by an individual's capacity to manage constructive and undesirable 'inputs' to maintain this balance point, and to repeatedly do so over time (Gillett-Swan and Sergeant 2015).
Wellbeing concerns how happy, healthy, and satisfied children are (UNICEF 2019, cited in Peill 2022)
Well-being aligns one's health to social, emotional, mental, physical and intellectual wellness. With respect to these elements, factors considered to be important include agency, autonomy, respect, community, happiness, being valued, satisfaction and relationships (Cassidy 2022)
In education, wellbeing is a state of mind and being that empowers all members of the school community to fully engage with, and create, opportunities for growth through all aspects of school life, including quality teaching and learning (Education working group with representation from the Teaching Council and Irish Primary Principal's Network, cited in Tynan and Nohilly 2018).

Rather than present a further definition of wellbeing, Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 present the components of wellbeing that may feature in a definition of wellbeing and the components that are most relevant to wellbeing in an educational context, as emerged from the SLR.

Figure 3.2 Components of Wellbeing that Emerged from the Literature

Figure 3.3 Components of Wellbeing Specific to Education that Emerged from the Literature

3.3 The Philosophical Basis for Wellbeing in Education

Despite the relatively recent focus on wellbeing in education, discourse about the philosophical basis for wellbeing has a long history. It is evident from the literature that this is a complex concept, and one which continues to be developed, interpreted and conceptualised in different ways.

Wellbeing has been written about since the time of Aristotle where there has been a duality in how it was interpreted. One fundamental aspect was the hedonic tradition, which viewed wellbeing in terms of pleasure and feeling good. The opposing tradition was that of eudaimonia. Aristotle's writings about

eudaimonia have formed the basis for various modern interpretations of wellbeing. Eudaimonic wellbeing is equated to flourishing or 'living a good life' (Wilson-Strydom and Walker 2015, p.311). However, some researchers asserted that Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia has been interpreted too narrowly as the mental state of happiness or life satisfaction. Nassbaum (1997) defined eudaimonia as 'a complete and flourishing life that lacks no activity that would make it better or more complete' (p. 119). It should therefore be interpreted as a life lived to a person's intrinsic values. Casas and Gonzalez-Carrasco (2021) further defined eudaimonic wellbeing as a focus on meaning and virtue, the fulfilment of one's natural potential. However, having meaning in life is an ongoing process and once attained, is not necessarily always retained. This basic understanding of the conceptualisation of wellbeing is an important first step to understanding the philosophical basis for wellbeing in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*. While the majority of research articles that form the basis of this SLR ascribe to the eudaimonic tradition, there are elements of some approaches to wellbeing in education, which focus on a more hedonistic view centred on personal pleasure and personal feelings of happiness. This cultural component to wellbeing requires unpacking and forms a fundamental question regarding the philosophical basis for wellbeing in schools: does the curriculum wish to promote a positive sense of individual wellbeing for the present moment or a more lifelong sense of fulfilment and life satisfaction?

The SLR highlighted a number of articles, which present different philosophical assumptions about wellbeing. A content analysis of the articles is presented in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Content Analysis of the Philosophical Basis for Wellbeing in the Literature

3.3.1 Theme 1: Hedonic versus Eudaimonic Wellbeing

Studies have established that hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions are not always independent nor completely separate constructs (for example, Strelhow *et al.* 2020). Cases and González-Carrasco (2021) explained the link between the two through the concept of meaning in life. This term is not new. In 1973, Battista and Almond theorised that meaning in life had two components; framework and fulfilment. Separating these two components illustrated that many of the positive outcomes associated with meaning in life only occur when an individual is able to fulfil their purpose in life: having the framework alone is insufficient (Danvers *et al.* 2016). This highlights the role of agency in finding meaning in one's life. Experiencing positive emotions, which is primarily hedonism, is linked to the perception of meaning and, therefore, an element of eudemonic wellbeing (King and Hicks 2012). Seligman (2011) maintained that eudaimonia includes some hedonic dimensions. Positive emotions tend to lead to the perception of meaning (King and Hicks 2012). The link between positive affect as a

predictor of eudemonic wellbeing is also cited by others (for example, Urry *et al.* 2004; Garcia and Siddiqui 2009). Casas and González-Carrasco (2021) have also observed this to be true, not just for adults, but for adolescents too.

Within an educational context, some literature harks back at this basic philosophical distinction. The whole area of Positive Psychology, developed initially through the work of Martin Seligman and which is referenced in Section 3.3.6, is often critiqued from this philosophical basis. While it is generally accepted that this approach is a merger of both the hedonic and the eudaimonic (for example, Keyes 2009), there are concerns about an over-emphasis on the hedonic, focusing on so called 'positive emotions'. This can be interpreted as an avoidance of any emotions that cause discomfort, when the full range of emotions are, in fact, a part of life and a part of being human (Shirley 2020). There is a further concern that this approach emphasises the wellbeing of the individual over the wellbeing for both the individual and others (Wilson-Strydom and Walker 2015).

3.3.2 Theme 2: Subjective versus Objective Wellbeing

Western and Tomaszewski (2016) claimed that subjective and objective wellbeing are the two conceptual approaches which dominate wellbeing research. They defined objective wellbeing as comprising the objective components of a good life and subjective wellbeing as people's own evaluation of their lives.

Subjective wellbeing, or how a person feels about their life, is important for a sense of enjoyment in life, feelings of happiness and life satisfaction. Indeed, Suldo *et al.* (2016) asserted that subjective wellbeing is a scientific term for happiness (p. 434-435). This can be measured in terms of cognition and positive/negative emotional state (Western and Tomaszewski 2016). Diener *et al.* (2003) explained that this primarily hedonic feeling of happiness leads to eudaimonic wellbeing, as the person is then more capable of fulfilling their ambitions and living by their values. When people feel satisfied with life and their subjective wellbeing is high, they are more likely to think positively, and consequently, contribute positively to society.

The ability to measure the wellbeing of people in an objective way stems from the field of welfare economics and is linked to the works of Sen, as cited in Clarke (2005). Objective wellbeing comprises the measurement of income, housing, nutrition, health and education (Western and Tomaszewski 2016). It has been used to highlight social inequalities and measure poverty. Objective wellbeing measures allow for comparisons between groups of people and between nations using aggregate scores. There are a number of social indicator frameworks used widely for this purpose, including *The*

United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index and the OECD's *Better Life* initiative. These frameworks also highlight those members of society who are more likely to have a poorer sense of wellbeing, and therefore be deemed to be 'at risk' in terms of wellbeing. Western and Tomaszewski (2016) noted that those 'at risk' include people of low socio-economic status, of ethnic minorities, of low educational status, of female gender, and those with a disability. They also asserted that it should not be assumed that those in egalitarian societies have an equal distribution of objective wellbeing among its citizens. Diener and Suh (1997) critiqued the concept of objective wellbeing and reminded readers that 'many considerations must enter into interpreting the numbers' (p. 195). They highlighted the limitations of social indicators which include the subjective nature of the choice of variables used for measurement, the difficulty in measuring certain aspects of life and the fallibility of social indicators.

3.3.3 Theme 3: Wellbeing as a Capabilities Approach

The ability to objectively evaluate wellbeing has led to the development of core human capabilities needed for a fulfilling life. The concept of these capabilities has been heavily influenced by the work of Sen (1999), who was essentially concerned with social economics. Wilson-Strydom and Walker (2015, p.313) explained this philosophical approach eruditely: the endeavours of humans, the 'being' and 'doing', are called 'functionings'; the opportunities in life to achieve these functionings are called capabilities. The capabilities approach highlights the limitations of subjective measures of wellbeing in creating fair and just societies. Rather, it concerns individuals having opportunities to choose and do what they value most, what they are intrinsically motivated to do, and what they deem to be personally worthwhile activities. Sen (1999) also argued that the key to understanding wellbeing is the concept of agency. Agency involves being able to make choices and to act on them. This is an aspect that will be explored in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Nussbaum (2000) developed the capabilities approach further, thus suggesting the ten central human capabilities (2000), which she lists as;

- life,
- bodily health,
- bodily integrity,
- the ability to use the senses to think and to imagine,
- the ability to express emotions,
- to exercise practical reason and autonomy with respect to one's own life,
- to affiliate,

- to live with dignity,
- to live in and with nature,
- to play,
- to control one's own political and economic environment, through education, work and political and social participation.

Wilson-Strydom and Walker (2015) linked elements of the capabilities approach to wellbeing in education, specifically practical reason and affiliation. Yet, they portrayed a more social conception of wellbeing, whereby learning is deeply social and relational. They concluded from their empirical research that the capabilities approach provides 'a philosophical grounding that explicitly takes account of both personal and relationship well-being and agency - through the capabilities of practical reason and affiliation' (p.321).

3.3.4 Theme 4: Wellbeing as Culture: Individualism versus Collectivism

Wellbeing has a strong cultural component (Morrow and Mayall, 2009 cited in Peill, 2022). Research in this field is dependent on the country in which the research takes place, or the groups of people with whom the research is conducted. Shalaby (2022) identified two distinct cultures providing a philosophical basis for wellbeing: the individualistic, which focuses on the needs of the individual and their goals, and the collectivistic that focuses primarily on the needs of the family. Chirkov *et al.* (2003) explained that this is dependent on the priority assigned to the individual's needs being met and to the achievement of personal goals, compared to the priority assigned to societal goals and social norms to the groups with which they identify. Individualism promotes the person as important, unique, free, and agentic in their own right. Collectivism, by contrast, is sustained by interdependence, the 'common good' and obedience. Regardless of the culture, Chang *et al.* (2022) noted that improved intercultural competence, which encompasses respect for the cultural values, beliefs, traditions and views of others, strengthens wellbeing and resilience. Religious culture can also be influential. Religious identity has been observed to impact wellbeing. Davis and Kiang (2016) highlighted that religious identity was significantly associated with higher self-esteem, greater feelings of positivity and meaning in life and reduced depressive symptoms. By contrast, Weber and Pargament (2014) asserted that religion can have both positive and negative effects, depending on how it is used and understood.

3.3.5 Theme 5: Wellbeing as (Mental) Health

Wellbeing is often presented as an add-on to health: health and wellbeing, but it has also been constructed as a subtext of psychological or mental health. UNICEF (2019) defines wellbeing as how happy, healthy, and satisfied a child is. This is also evident in definitions by Seaman and Giles (cited in

Peill 2022). The Scottish Wellbeing Indicators (from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014) is commonly represented as the SHANARRI Wheel (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included), and includes 'health' as a component of wellbeing.

As outlined in Chapter One, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Department of Health (DoH) collaborated on documents distributed to schools linking health and wellbeing. Keyes (2002) highlighted an increasing agreement among psychologists that mental health is most accurately conceptualised on a continuum from clinically significant psychopathology to psychological wellbeing or flourishing. However, one is not necessarily synonymous with the other, because the absence of mental health issues does not mean the individual will experience complete mental health (Keyes 2009). Suldo *et al.* (2016) explained this as a person who is not symptomatic of a mental health difficulty, but reports a decreased sense of wellbeing, or an individual with a diagnosed mental health issue experiencing a good quality of life. However, while empirically distinct, they are related (Keyes 2009). There is a danger in this philosophical basis for wellbeing that wellbeing becomes pathologised, and particularly in the case of children, factors can be attributed to within-child rather than to the environment. The medicalisation of childhood symptoms has been advocated against in education for several decades. This is also true for children with social and emotional difficulties. In one of the few Irish studies included in this review, Banks *et al.* (2012) discussed the issue with the diagnosis of Emotional Behavioural Difficulties (EBD). They explain how there are objective ways of evaluating certain conditions, which affect a child's learning, for example, visual difficulties, but other conditions are more subjectively evaluated, such as EBD. This means that parents or teachers frequently report issues for a child, but often for different reasons. In an analysis of the *Growing Up in Ireland* data, McCoy *et al.* (2012) reported that children (particularly boys) from economically inactive and one-parent homes, and children enrolled in disadvantaged schools are more likely to be diagnosed with EBD than other children. They suggested that the subjective nature of the EBD diagnosis results in disproportionate numbers of children from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds with the condition. This is not unique to Ireland, there is also the case of heightened numbers of particular social and ethnic groups in special education in various jurisdictions (Gabel *et al.* 2009; Bruce and Venkatesh 2014; Barrio *et al.* 2023). This disproportionality in special education leads to the question about how schools measure the wellbeing of pupils, and how bias of the majority culture in the assessment process can be negated.

The notion of wellbeing on a continuum from wellbeing to illbeing was described by O'Brien and O'Shea (2016) as a helpful representation of wellbeing being a fluid aspect in a person's life, likely to change at any point, depending on the person's lived experience. There have been criticisms about

this interpretation of health and wellbeing, that being well was simply the absence of illness. Seligman (2006) rejected this view of psychology in particular. In the preface to his seminal text *Learned Optimism* he states, 'Like almost all researchers with a background in clinical psychology, I was accustomed to focusing on what was wrong with individuals and then how to fix it' (p. Iii). This led to the birth of positive psychology, described in more detail in Section 3.3.6.

3.3.6 Theme 6: Wellbeing as Positive Psychology/Flourishing

There is a significant issue that arises when what is traditionally a health issue (wellbeing) is brought into educational spheres: it retains a medical model with its focus on illness, limitations and within-person deficits. Martin Seligman is described as one of the founding fathers of positive psychology (Pluskota 2014). Seligman (2012) described an approach to psychology concerned with the positive aspects of life rather than pathology. He explained how happiness can be pursued in three ways:

(i) for the 'pleasant life': a need to emphasise positive emotion;
(ii) for the 'engaged life': a focus on personal strengths and talents and using them across different aspects of life;
(iii) for the 'meaningful life': using these strengths and talents to belong to, and participate in, something which is larger than the individual.

There are clear links to the first theme of hedonic/eudaimonic wellbeing, with the pleasant life being clearly hedonic, and the engaged life/meaningful life being eudaimonic. Indeed, the very word 'flourishing' is a conceptualisation of eudaimonia. The 'educationalisation' of wellbeing has led to application of positive psychology in schools to promote student wellbeing (Kristjánsson 2012).

There is some criticism of positive psychology. Wilson-Strydom and Walker (2015) explained the issue with the focus on the self. Wellbeing is interpreted as a personal endeavour, and achieved for the self, which supports an individualist culture. They cited the example of Seligman's emphasis on the need for positive relationships; this is presented as good for the individual rather than its possible positive impact on others. This means that it is more than individualistic in its view, it is egocentric, and does not support the common good of the wider social system in which any person exists. Wilson-Strydom and Walker (2015) took the element of flourishing and explained how it should be considered in and through education. Flourishing *in* education means attention must be paid to the wellbeing and agency of students. Flourishing *through* education by contrast concerns the role of education in promoting wellbeing beyond the individual by fostering a social and moral consciousness among students to be a lived capability. This links to the philosophical assumptions of a capabilities approach. Flourishing, from this perspective, is understood as the extent to which a person is able to be and do

what they have reason to value being and doing (Sen 1999). In a review of Seligman's book *Flourish*, Layard (2011) highlighted this point. He states that Seligman recommended the cultivation of emotions, such as empathy, not because it supports others, but because it is good for the self. Layard contrasted this with a capabilities approach, which promotes ethical individualism. Similarly, in the Irish context, O'Brien and O'Shea (2016) claimed that there is a need to acknowledge wellbeing in relation to physical and mental illness, unhappiness and suffering. They claim 'Ill-being can have significant meaning goals, which are crucial for human flourishing' (p.30).

In summary, positive psychology is embedded in educational systems around the world. The main positive education strategies adopted by schools involve the discrete teaching of wellbeing skills to pupils through independent short-term courses, or integrated into the existing curricula (Zhang 2016).

3.3.7 Theme 7: Wellbeing as a Skill Set (including Social Emotional Learning (SEL))

The idea of wellbeing comprising a skill set rather than a set of dispositions emphasises individual agency. Skills can be learned and developed, and are not dependent on an innate set of personality traits that determine an individual's sense of wellbeing or illbeing. This connects to the concept of accrued wellbeing. Accrued wellbeing facilitates an exploration of the myriad factors that impact on a person's overall wellbeing and takes account of the fact that an individual's wellbeing will develop and change across the lifespan. This type of wellbeing will be influenced by life's experiences, both positive and challenging. It places a value on wellbeing challenges, that in times of 'illbeing' there is a space to learn and understand the self, and perhaps develop skills that may be a future protective factor. The most obvious set of skills, related to wellbeing, has been social emotional skills, which have already been presented. Other skills that are commonly cited in literature are grit and resilience.

In many ways, the philosophical assumption that wellbeing can be taught as a set of skills is appealing to the education community. Schools are concerned with the business of teaching and learning. Skills are an integral aspect of what is taught in schools, and it is understood that they be taught, both discretely, and through the curriculum content. For this reason, Seligman *et al.* (2009) claimed that schools are an excellent location for wellbeing initiatives. This has led to a significant growth in wellbeing programmes being developed, with a focus on skills. One such skill is resilience.

The term resilience comes from the Latin word 'resalire', which means to rise up again. It is essentially concerned with coping successfully, or the ability to recover from adversity (Earvolino-Ramirez 2007). There has been a societal shift from a fixed mindset of resilience, and other wellbeing skills, as being part of a personality or inbuilt competencies, to a growth mindset that these skills can be developed over time (Walsh 2006). A person's resilience is also dependent on their environment (Ungar 2011).

According to Haröardóttir *et al*. (2015, p.352-3), resilience refers to 'a dynamic developmental process, which involves an interaction between risk and protection, both internal and external, that together act to modify the effects of risk factors in an individual'. This reference to risk and protective factors is used in many definitions and conceptualisations of wellbeing, including those of the DE.

SEL was the most commonly cited wellbeing theme in this SLR. This is partly because many of the articles emerged from the USA. There are some indications as to why the Americans have focused on this aspect of wellbeing for decades. When the *Head Start* initiative developed into an early childhood intervention to support children 'at risk' of educational disadvantage, several studies highlighted how social emotional variables impact significantly on children's learning, school readiness and successful transition to primary school. Later studies highlight that the development of SEL in young children impacts their social, academic, cognitive and health outcomes (Rudolph and Heller 1997; Blair 2002; Zins *et al.* 2007).

In 1994, CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) was developed in the USA as a collaboration between researchers, educators, practitioners and child advocates with the aim of promoting SEL in educational settings. According to CASEL, SEL is the process of learning to 'integrate thinking, feeling, and behaving to achieve important life tasks' (Zins *et al.*, 2007), while providing high quality, evidence-based SEL. The CASEL framework (2019) has five competency areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. SEL supports children's increasing skills to develop relationships and to 'experience, regulate, and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn-all in the context of family, community, and culture' (Yates *et al.* 2008, p. 2).

In a recent critical review by Mondi *et al.* (2021), it was concluded that various skills-based interventions have been developed to support children in early care and educational settings. However, they believed that there is a need for researchers to agree a clear definition and measurement of SEL to allow for a consistency between studies. They also emphasised the need for developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive assessments. They noted that a balanced early years curriculum should include literacy, numeracy and SEL, but that funding was essential for this to be implemented at different ecological levels, including home and school.

3.3.8 Theme 8: Beyond Wellbeing: Holistic Education

In 2020, Shirley published a paper entitled *'Beyond well-being: The quest for wholeness and purpose in education'*, which took a critical view of wellbeing in education. He warned of the danger of over-

simplifying the complex concept that is wellbeing. He also noted that many models of wellbeing neglected students' physical health and prioritised SEL. This has been a key finding of the current SLR. His thought-provoking article is a reminder of the educational ambition to continually enhance literacy and numeracy scores through country comparisons with assessments, such as the PISA and the TIMMS. He argues that teaching to tests narrows the curriculum and prevents teaching for wholeness, which is what he equates as wellbeing. Similarly, he cautions against a purely positive psychology approach to wellbeing in schools, as he believes that an over-emphasis on positive emotions devalues other emotions, which are part of the human condition. If wellbeing is about wholeness, then there must be an acknowledgement of the full spectrum of human feelings and emotions. But he also cautioned against too much emphasis on wellbeing itself in the curriculum: 'An education that focuses excessively on well-being is missing out on part of the mystery of what makes the human condition so complex and compelling in the first place' (p.550). He also warned that 'Important aspects of the human condition such as community engagement, physical education, and the creative arts have a value in and of themselves whether they relate to a given theory of well-being or not' (p.550).

In summary, the eight philosophical approaches to wellbeing highlight the difficulties in developing a Wellbeing curriculum. It is clear from this SLR that many are focused on a dualism: hedonic/eudaimonic, objective/subjective, wellbeing/illbeing, wellbeing/mental health issues, individualism/collectivism. It is interesting to examine how Wellbeing in education has been conceptualised from these different philosophical theories. These philosophical approaches will now be examined through current applied conceptual frameworks.

3.4 The Conceptualisation of Wellbeing in Education

The educationalisation of wellbeing has led to the development of a number of conceptual frameworks. These facilitate an understanding of underpinning philosophies and pedagogies, while indicating the focus for teaching 'for' and 'about' wellbeing in the curriculum. There is no idea conceptual model of wellbeing in education. Sumner and Mallett (2013) discussed the historical development of wellbeing conceptual models as containing certain factors about wellbeing; its multidimensionality (including the material, the relational and the subjective), and its cross disciplinary nature. Many frameworks have been designed to measure aspects of wellbeing, such as the *British Office for National Statistics' Wellbeing Dashboard* and the OECD *Better Life Index*, but are not readily applicable for educational purposes.

A number of wellbeing frameworks, which arose from the SLR, are critiqued for their possible use in educational contexts. They include:

i. The Medical Model
ii. The Biopsychosocial Model (Engel 1977)
iii. Bioecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner 1979)
iv. The SHANARRI Wheel (from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014)
v. The PERMA Model (Seligman 2011)
vi. The SERCCH Model (Peill 2022)
vii. Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (Helliman 2011)

i. The Medical Model

The medical model has simply been 'gifted' to education from the medical space. It is based on the premise that disease or illness exists and must be treated. It therefore adopts a deficit, in-person approach, and focuses on 'curing' the individual rather than examining the person's physical, social and emotional environment. This model has been used in Irish education, over several decades, for teaching students with learning difficulties. The focus was on the diagnosis of an issue and working to remediate the related difficulties. This approach is no longer appreciated in education and there is a transitioning from this model also for mental health (NEPS 2008). A more acceptable version of this has been the wellbeing continuum from illbeing to wellbeing, as proposed by O'Brien and O'Shea (2016). This continuum presents wellbeing as a fluid aspect of the individual's life, that changes based on personal needs and how they are met. The medical model has been largely replaced in the area of inclusive education by the biopsychosocial model.

ii. The Biopsychosocial Model (Engel 1977)

The biopsychosocial model, frequently used in the field of special and inclusive education, has the potential to be included in a wellbeing framework. However, it is infrequently acknowledged in the literature. It holds potential for celebrating the agentic child, as an individual, with strengths, challenges, interests, motivations, values, beliefs and genetic predispositions. This is the chosen model by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in Ireland for supporting learners with social, emotional and behavioural needs. NEPS explains (2008, p.8) that no theoretical model provides all the answers, but the biopsychosocial model recognises that 'humans are complex beings whose functioning is determined by interrelated and interdependent biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors'. This facilitates the integration of different concepts and models to best support a child. It takes account of the child in a holistic way, their strengths, difficulties, interests, family background and school context.

iii. Bioecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner 1979)

The biological model of human development (Figure 3.5) is frequently cited in wellbeing literature and is espoused by DES (2019). It highlights the various influences on a child's development. Bronfenbrenner used concentric circles to represent the different levels of the child's environment to illustrate the many factors which interact with the individual. According to MacBlain (2021), the Microsystem represents the child's immediate environment and those in this environment, such as parents, siblings, friends, neighbours and school peers. A step removed from this is the Mesosystem, which encompasses the connections between the child's different environments (for example, home and school). The Exosystem, another step removed from the child, includes the external environments which impact indirectly on the child, such as the workplace and colleagues of the child's parents, and the friends and extended family of the child's parents. This layer is further surrounded by the Macrosystem, which represents the social, political and cultural environment in which the child lives. The final circle is the Chronosystem, which allows for change over time and acknowledges how events and transitions are part of the human experience. However, this layer of the bioecological model is not always presented, as it was a later iteration by Bronfenbrenner in collaboration with Morris (2006). When the DES (2019) used the iteration without the chronosystem, it presents a more fixed interpretation of wellbeing. The inclusion of the chronosystem can accommodate the concept of 'accrued wellbeing' (Gillet-Swan and Sergeant 2015), which acknowledges that skills and strategies can be developed over time to enhance one's wellbeing. This is educationally significant as, through the Wellbeing curriculum, pupils would potentially learn knowledge, skills, competencies and dispositions to support and enhance their wellbeing during their time at school.

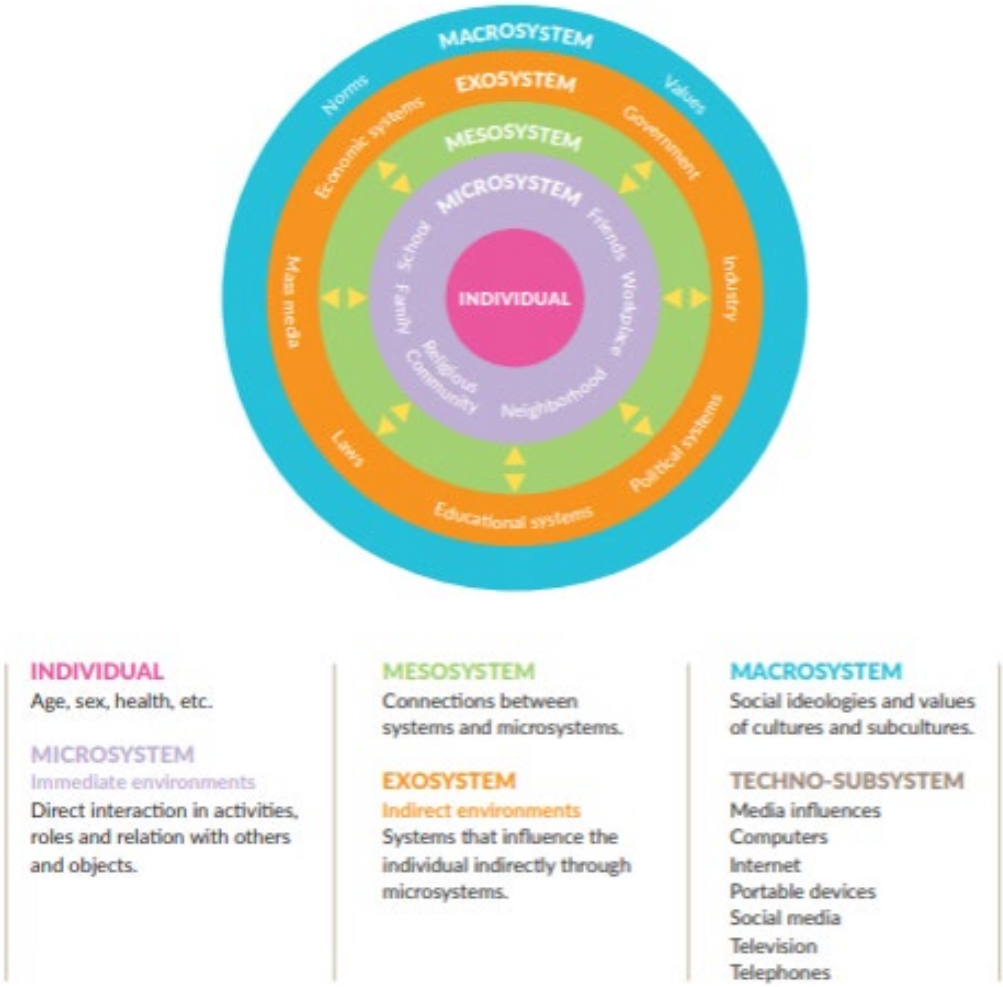


Figure 3.5 Bioecological Model of Human Development (Bronfenbrenner 1979)

3.4.1.1 3b Tynan and Nohilly Wellbeing in Education Model (2021)

The bioecological model was further developed by Tynan and Nohilly (2021) (Figure 3.6) to situate wellbeing within an educational framework. It places the individual as the central focus: the individual as an individual, but also the individual as a relational self (for example, as a member of the school community). The model is inherently a merging of Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* (1943; 1970; 1987), the *Bioecological Model of Human Development* of Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) and the wellbeing-illbeing continuum (O'Brien and O'Shea 2016). Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, first developed in 1943, acknowledges that the individual has needs to be met: physiological, safety, love and belonging, and esteem needs, to enable self-actualisation. Without certain needs being met, such as physiological needs, the higher needs cannot emerge. However, this model, revised by Maslow in 1970, is better represented as having eight levels divided into deficiency needs (physiological, safety,

love/belonging and esteem) and growth needs (cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualisation and transcendence). In 1987, Maslow himself acknowledged that having a need fully satisfied is not necessary before other needs emerge.

The individual at the centre of this model will experience a sense of wellbeing differently to those around him/her, partly determined by the ways in which their needs are met. This influences the self in relation to other people and the self in relation to learning. This highlights the potential of a Wellbeing curriculum to merge both the individualistic interpretation of wellbeing with the collectivist interpretation. In such an approach, the individual requires their needs to be satisfied, and learns to satisfy them in a socially acceptable way, while also living in relationship with others. It is through the classroom environment, the rules and routines, the teaching of rights and responsibilities and through strong relationships with adults and peers alike, that the child understands how their actions impact on the wellbeing of others.

When Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* is examined through the lens of wellbeing, the hierarchy is influenced by risk factors and protective factors for the individual within the different levels. When deficiency needs and growth needs are met, one experiences a sense of 'self-actualisation', which the authors equate to a sense of wellbeing. Maslow's model alone does not reflect the dynamic relational aspect of wellbeing in education. If wellbeing is conceptualised as a continuum from illbeing to wellbeing, as proposed by O'Brien and O'Shea (2016), then wellbeing can be understood to be a fluid aspect of the individual's life that changes based on personal needs and how they are met, but also the risk and protective factors in an individual's life, and the interactions of the individual with others and the world around them. Therefore, there is a need to combine this concept with later iterations of Bronfenbrenner's *Bioecological Model of Human Development* (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006). This recognises the complexity of the individual's wellbeing within their individual contexts, namely home, school and community. The individual is placed in the centre of this model, which the authors name the Endosystem. This acknowledges the person as an individual, with strengths, challenges, interests, motivations, values, beliefs, behaviours, genetic predispositions, mind sets etc., which will impact on how they interact with others, and hence, how they experience wellbeing.

Each concentric circle of the framework is influencing the others, producing a dynamic process constantly in flux. The framework acknowledges the relational nature of life and accommodates the concept of 'one good adult', an adult in the child's Microsystem, which is typically the child's parent (home), but equally could be a teacher/SNA (school) or coach (community). Perhaps most importantly, the framework addresses Chronology, which is central to wellbeing. Personal wellbeing changes over

time. Indeed, Gillet-Swan and Sergeant (2015) discuss the concept of 'accrued wellbeing', which acknowledges that skills and strategies can be developed over time to enhance one's wellbeing. This conceptual framework is presented in Figure 3.6.

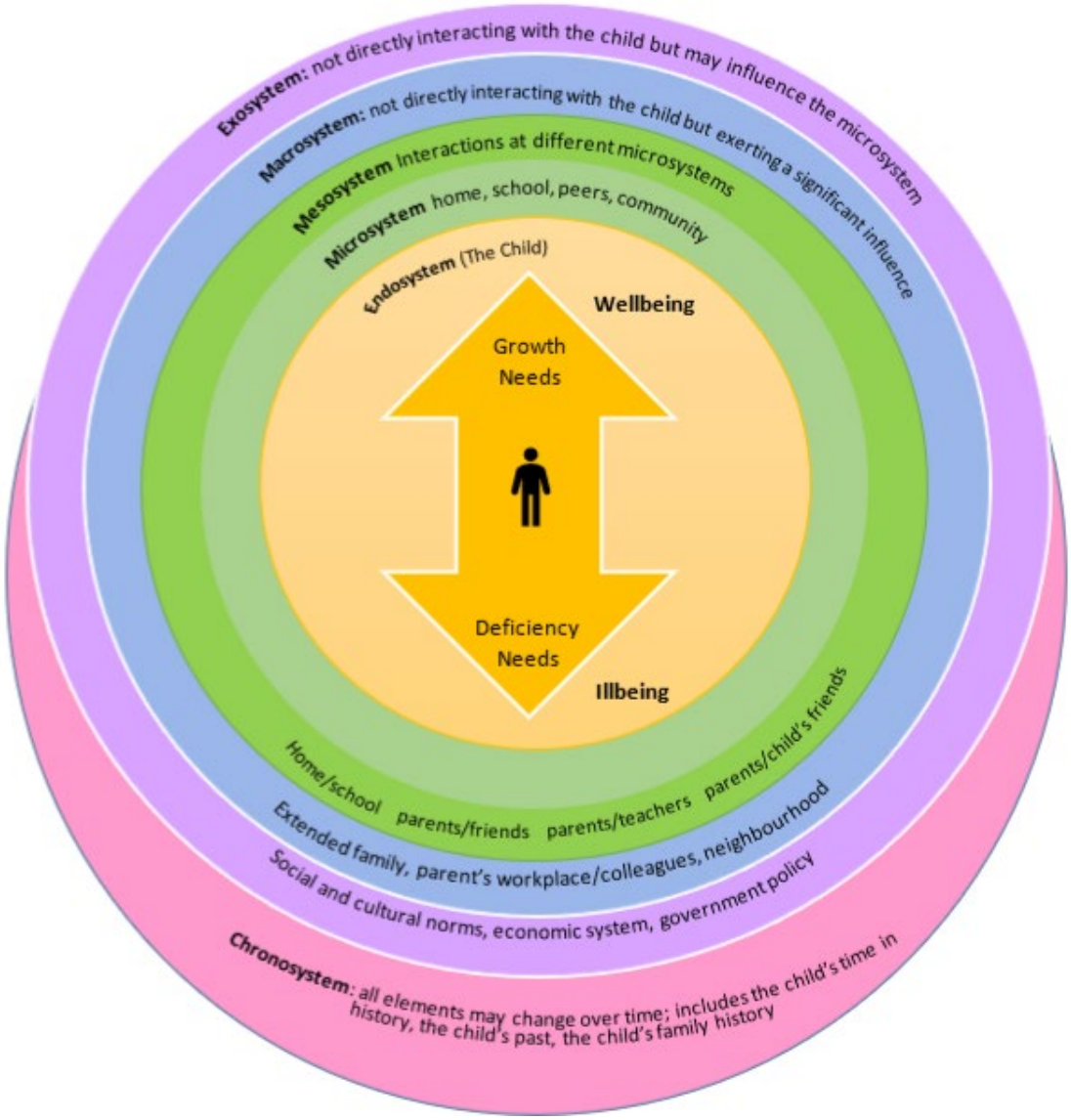


Figure 3.6 Wellbeing in Education Model (Tynan and Nohilly 2021)

iv. The SHANARRI Wheel (The Scottish Wellbeing Indicators (from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014)

The Scottish Wellbeing Indicators, commonly represented as the SHANARRI Wheel was developed by the Scottish Government to represent Wellbeing in the curriculum. One of the criticisms of this model is the lack of philosophical clarity on wellbeing values (Thorburn 2014). It is comprised of eight

indicators, which should be considered for a child's wellbeing; safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included (Figure 3.7).

The model was developed as part of the *Getting It Right For Every Child* (GIRFEC) policy and is underpinned by a children's rights, strengths based, inclusive agenda with associated values and principles, which were developed with children and young people across Scotland. Like the Bioecological Model, the SHANARRI Wheel places the child and their family at the centre, supporting them to make decisions that affect them and offering choices, where possible. It acknowledges that wellbeing concerns all areas of a child's life and it values the individuality of the child. The model also considers and addresses inequalities and strives for all children to be treated fairly. It aims to provide flexible support for children and their families when they need it, to enable all children to reach their full potential. Peill (2022) applauds this model as it facilitates consistency across practice, allowing early-years practice to measure child wellbeing at set times. However, she also noted that early-years' practitioners often had difficulty identifying characteristics of wellbeing in young children. Hence, she developed her own set of indicators for use in the early-years context (The SERCCH Model).

Figure 3.7 The SHANARRI Wheel (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014)

v. The PERMA Model (Seligman 2011)

The PERMA model (Figure 3.8) was developed by Martin Seligman and therefore is aligned with positive psychology. PERMA stands for Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement/Accomplishments. Seligman (2011) presented this model with the goal of enhancing flourishing by increasing each of the elements, which can in their own right be measured. The model has aspects of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. It has led to a 'positive education' movement. There are critics of the PERMA model, believing that there is too much emphasis on positive emotions. However, Cases and Gonzalez-Carrasco, (2021) highlighted the fact that positive emotions lead to the perception of meaning. Peill (2022) applauded the developmental nature of the PERMA model and denotes parallels with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978), where children progress at the psychological stage, advancing their emotional wellbeing and social development. By contrast, Layard (2011) and Wilson-Strydom and Walker (2015) highlighted issues with the focus on the individual, whereby positive relationships are presented as good for the individual, rather than their possible positive impact on others and, thus, the lack of a collective view.

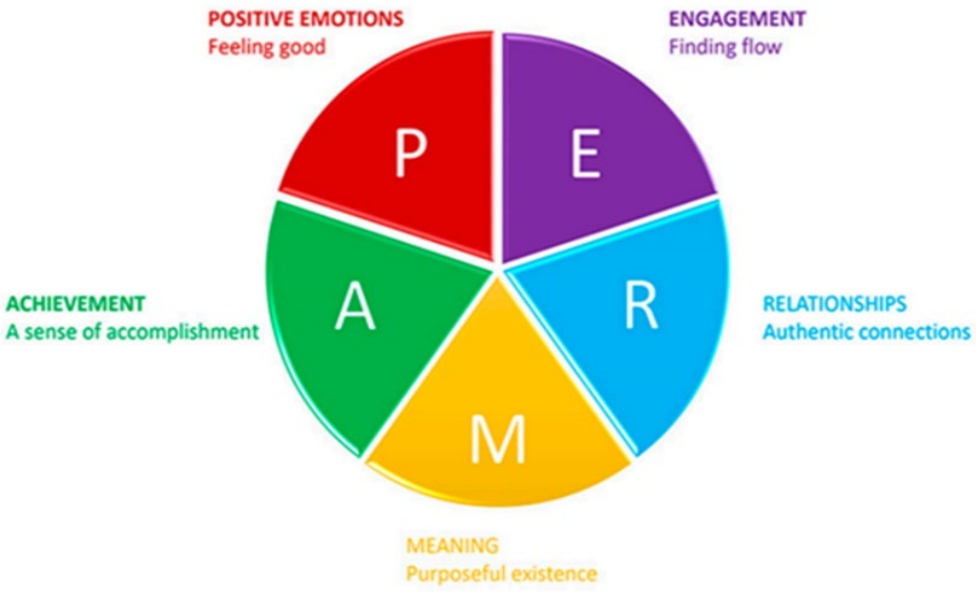


Figure 3.8 PERMA Model (Seligman 2011)

vi. The SERCCH Model (Peill 2022)

The SERCCH model emerged from the SLR, but is not widely referenced. Peill (2022) developed this model as a response to assessing the wellbeing of children in early years settings. Her research established that practitioners and managers in early years settings lacked self-assurance in their

ability to use existing wellbeing tools and models. Some staff felt that they had not had enough experience 'to recognise and identify what good wellbeing looks like' (p.113), which raises issues about the applicability of any model. As a result, Peill (2022) developed a wellbeing tool/model that comprises elements of wellbeing, which can be assessed. These include: Socio-economic factors, Emotional intelligence, Relationships, Communication, Contentment and Happiness, as presented in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9 The SERCCH Model of Wellbeing (Peill 2022)

In line with these elements, Peill developed a range of simple questions, which form the basis for the evaluation of the child's wellbeing. They are provided in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Guidance Sheet for Early-years Practitioners for Assessing Wellbeing (Peill 2022)

Guidance sheet for early-years practitioners	
Socio-economic factors	What contributing factors influence the child's day-to-day life?
Emotional intelligence	Can the child regulate their own emotions? Can the child control their behaviour and with no evidence of emotional outbursts? Can the child follow instructions and simple rules?
Relationships	Does the child form relationships peer to peer and with other adults? Can the child be comforted by a key worker or an adult? Does the child show empathy towards others?
Communication	Does the child play with other children? Does the child speak with others?
Contentment	Is the child content and happy? Does the child show confidence with attempt new challenges? Does the child cope with failure and adversity and show resilience to the situation?
Happiness	Does the child become upset easily and show emotional maturity? Does the child laugh and engage positively with others?

Although there are competing philosophical understandings of wellbeing, they have influenced how wellbeing is perceived in the educational space and how it is conceptualised for use in schools and classrooms. Much of what is proposed philosophically for wellbeing has a strong basis in psychological theory. A number of theories are worth expounding upon to support the basis for the educational approaches. These include the works of Maslow, Dweck, Deci and Ryan, Bowlby and Bandura and are presented Section 3.5.

vii. Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (Helliman 2011)

The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model was developed by Helliman (2011) for use within the field of PE, although it is now used more widely. It supports practitioners to explicitly facilitate positive social and moral behaviour. Its central pedagogical approach is 'transfer of learning'. TPSR has five levels, or goals, for students to experience and, subsequently, to apply within the context of their own lives. The five goals are: Respect, Effort/Participation, Self-direction, Caring for others and Transfer of Learning (to other contexts). The goals relate to values, but also have clear links to social-emotional learning. While this model was only mentioned in PE articles that arose from the SLR, it could be considered within the broader context of Wellbeing.

3.5 Psychological Theories which Impact Wellbeing in Education

(i) Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* (1943; 1987) is often used as an underpinning framework for wellbeing in education. It is essentially a theory of motivation. The model acknowledges that the individual has deficiency needs to be met, which are motivators: physiological, safety, love and belonging and esteem needs, to enable self-actualisation. Maslow's later iteration of his model (1987), which includes growth needs, is often ignored in wellbeing studies, despite it

aligning with the developments in neuroscience and pedagogy, and the attempts made in schools to develop pupils' wellbeing skills of self-regulation, emotional regulation, social skills and resilience. This theory alone does not reflect the dynamic relational aspect of wellbeing in education.

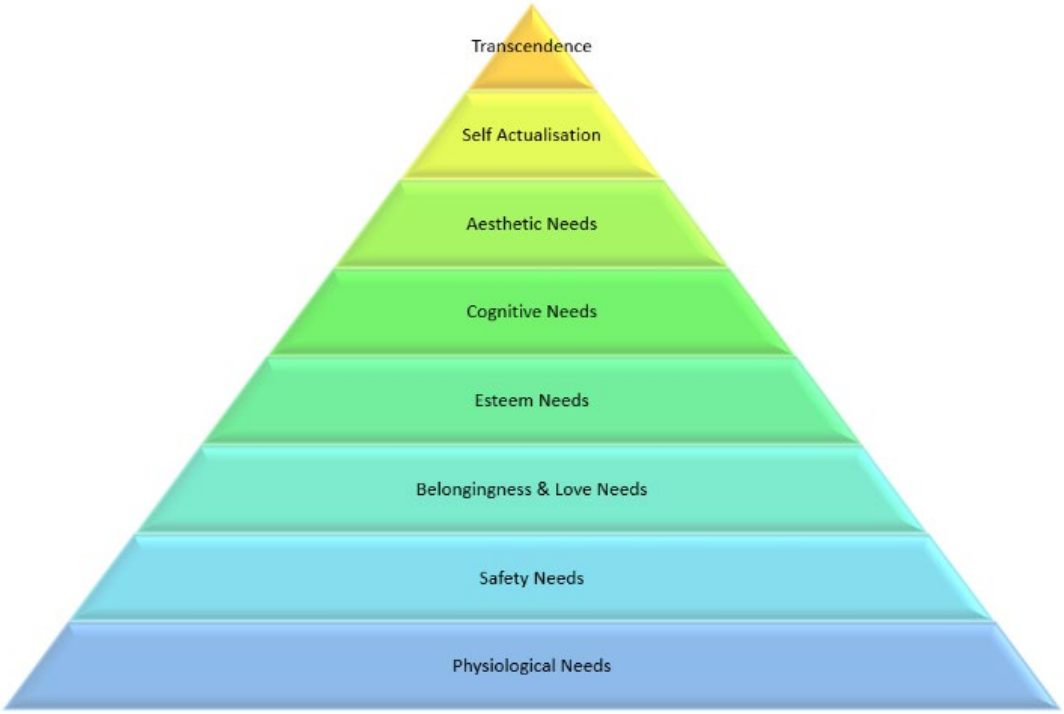


Figure 3.10 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1987)

(ii) Dweck's Growth Mindset is largely concerned with the belief that 'intelligence' is not fixed, rather it is something that can be developed. It rejects a fatalistic attitude that has existed in education whereby a student can believe that they are simply not good at a subject area and accept this belief as true. A growth mindset is about supporting students to develop strategies, practices and an open mindset to boost achievement (Dweck 2015). It includes particular components of wellbeing, such as resilience and grit, where the learner is guided to work, despite the challenge, to get better at something.

(iii) Deci and Ryan's Self-determination Theory (1985) is a theory of motivation and personality, whereby self-determination has three key elements: learners should have some choice in their learning (a sense of autonomy); learners should perceive themselves as competent in (aspects of) learning (competency); learners should be able to relate to their peers and teachers as part of their learning (relatedness). When these three elements are fulfilled, the student can face challenges in their learning.

(iv) Bandura's Theory of Self-efficacy (1978) refers to a sense of one's own abilities. It is concerned with previous experiences of success or failure at a task, the experience of seeing someone else do the task successfully and believing that it can be achieved, verbal persuasion to try it or being told it is possible, and appropriate physiological arousal.

(v) Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1982) is related to the need for animals to bond as infants to their mother (or primary care-giver), and subsequently, to those close to the infant. The bonding to the mother (or primary care-giver) is the child's first experience of relationship, and is therefore very significant for future relationship building. Attachment is a deep form of relationship, which has a lasting psychological connection between the child and the adult.

3.6 The Educational Basis for Wellbeing in the Curriculum

To establish the educational basis for the curriculum area of Wellbeing, and the subject areas of PE and SPHE, it is important to clarify specifically what aspects of learning and development are supported through a sense of wellbeing or through the development of specific wellbeing skills. A brief outline of the educational benefits of Wellbeing, PE and SPHE are presented, but are expressed in greater detail in the following chapters. The main benefits include:

- Higher academic achievement: This was manifested through the development of social skills (Zsolnai and Kasik 2014), emotional skills (Yüksel *et al.* 2019; Cantero *et al.* 2020; Kautz *et al.* 2021; Garnett *et al.* 2022); social-emotional competence (Babalis *et al.* 2013; Mihic *et al.* 2016; Kopelman-Rubin *et al.* 2021; Wikman *et al.* 2022); sense of community/ belonging (Berg and Aber 2015; Ricketts *et al.* 2022) and physical education (Mitevska-Petrusheva *et al.* 2019; Kingston *et al.* 2020);
- Learning skills: Such skill development was linked to the promotion of SEL (Cefai *et al.* 2018; Scrimin *et al.* 2018; Yang *et al.* 2018); mindfulness (Rix and Bernay 2014; Schonert-Reichl *et al.* 2015; Crawford *et al.* 2021; Victorson *et al.* 2022) and sport (Palumbo 2020);
- Positive behaviour: Research correlated this to the promotion of behaviour regulation (Hirvonen *et al.* 2015), SEL (Wong *et al.* 2014; Mihic *et al.* 2016; Green *et al.* 2019; Papieska *et al.* 2019; Carroll *et al.* 2020; Oades-Sese *et al.* 2021;); physical education (Pérez-Ordás *et al.* 2020), sense of belonging (Midgen *et al.* 2019), discrete teaching of skills (Krull *et al.* 2014), and mindfulness (Schonert-Reichl *et al.* 2015);
- Reduced incidences of bullying: Such outcomes were related to the teaching about bullying (Pryce and Fredrickson 2013) and SEL (Cava *et al.* 2021; Forber-Pratt *et al.* 2022), and promoting a sense of belonging (Pryce and Fredrickson 2013; Midgen *et al.* 2019);

- Social-emotional competence: This was achieved through the promotion of SEL (Babalis *et al.* 2013; Housman and Denham 2018; Coskun 2019; Green et al 2019; Papieska *et al.* 2019; Kopelman-Rubin *et al.* 2021; Oades-Sese *et al.* 2021), positive behaviour support (Green *et al.* 2019), resilience (Cefai *et al.* 2018); mindfulness (Rix and Bernay 2014; Schonert-Reichl *et al.* 2015; Graham and Truscott 2020; Crawford *et al.* 2021); sense of belonging (Ricketts *et al.* 2022); mental health promotion (Askell-Williams *et al.* 2013; Kirby *et al.* 2021); communication skills (Cefai and Camilleri 2015); high self-esteem and self-efficacy (Cefai and Camilleri 2015); gratitude (Tian *et al.* 2015); dance (Georgios *et al.* 2018), anti-bullying intervention (Cipra and Hall 2019); drama (Papadopoulos 2020), restorative practice (Garnett *et al.* 2022), and physical education Cipra and Hall 2019);
- Anxiety and mental health issues: These issues were reduced through targeted support for mental-health literacy (Glazzard and Szreter 2020; Hubley *et al.* 2020; Mori *et al.* 2022); mindfulness (Schonert-Reichl *et al.* 2015), sense of belonging (Ricketts *et al.* 2022), physical education (Olive *et al.* 2019; Andrade *et al.* 2020; Shavel *et al.* 2021), and the implementation of SEL (Iizuka *et al.* 2015; Nixon 2016; Stapp and Lambers 2020);
- Physical skills and activity: These were enhanced through PE (Cristian *et al.* 2013; Ilyasova and Erzhanov 2014; Ntovolis *et al.* 2015; Lopes *et al.* 2017; Balci and Yanik 2020; Duncan *et al.* 2020; Vaquero-Solís *et al.* 2021) and dance (Georgios *et al.* 2018);
- Physical wellbeing and health: Such elements were promoted through PE (Leonenko *et al.* 2019; Shavel *et al.* 2021);
- Values development: Values were manifest through the promotion of SEL which included content, skills, values and dispositions (Deans *et al.* 2017); games (Bozkur 2019; Sohrabi 2019; Sujarwo *et al.* 2021), and sport (Viral and Kerbs 2020);
- Support for learners 'at risk' for poor levels of wellbeing (including pupils with SEN, disability and/or learning needs; gifted pupils; those with social, emotional or mental health difficulties; children from minority cultural groups and those from low socio-economic backgrounds): Positive outcomes were achieved through intervention programmes to support academic and behavioural development (McCormick *et al.* 2015; 2019); academic differentiation (Buchanan *et al.* 2021); SEL (Forber-Pratt *et al.* 2022), discrete teaching of skills (Krull et al. 2014), and SEL-based drama (Papadopoulos 2020);
- Other Wellbeing outcomes: These were linked to the teaching of wellbeing skills (Lester and Cross 2015; Jacquez *et al.* 2020); mindfulness (Follari 2022); dance (Georgios *et al.*

2018); health education (Yoon *et al.* 2021); SEL (Moreira *et al.* 2015; Deans *et al.* 2017); gratitude (Brignell and Woodcock 2016; Diebel *et al.* 2016) and PE (Andrade *et al.* 2020).

3.7 Chapter Summary

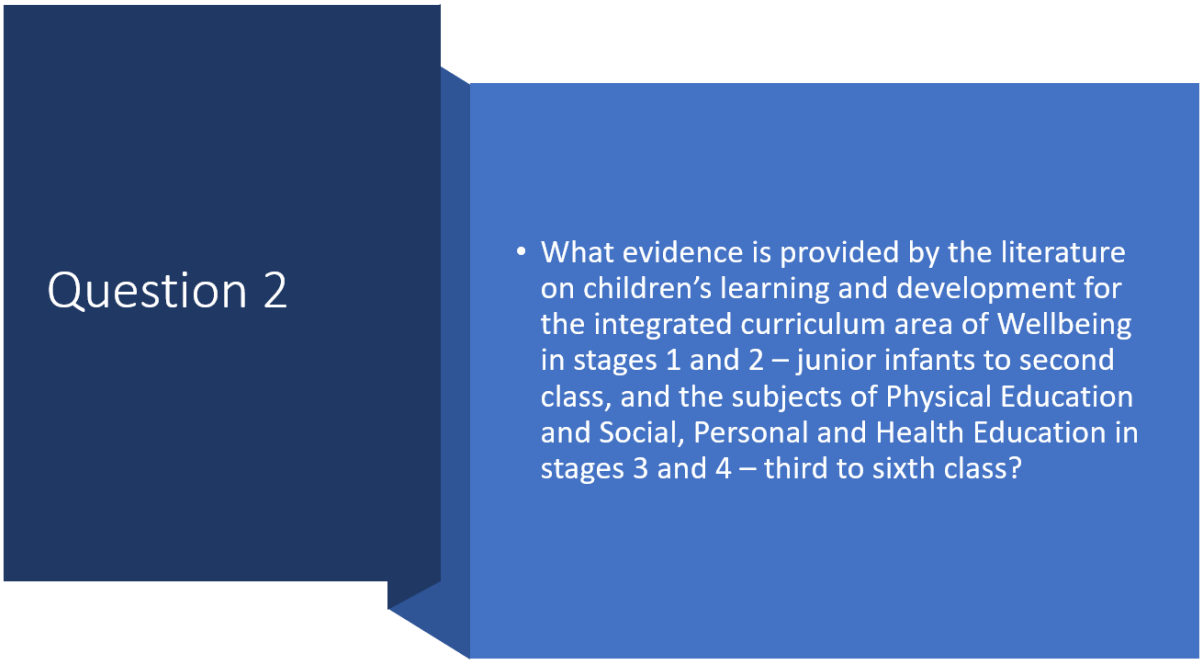
This chapter highlights the complexity of wellbeing as a term, and as a concept. The policy documents and definitions of wellbeing take account of its multi-faceted nature. There is little doubt, following a review of the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of wellbeing in the literature, that wellbeing is central to education. Eudaimonic wellbeing, as defined by Casas and Gonzalez-Carrasco (2021), results in the fulfilment of one's natural potential, which is in line with the *Curriculum Framework*: 'The curriculum places children at the heart of their learning and provides for a holistic approach to children's education (DE 2023, p.3). Wilson-Strydom and Walker (2015) explain the endeavours of humans, the 'being' and 'doing', as 'functionings', while the *Curriculum Framework* recognises children's school experiences as a time of 'being' and 'becoming'. Wellbeing has a strong cultural component (Morrow and Mayall, 2009 cited in Peill, 2022) and pupils' experience of school will support them in understanding and appreciating the diversity of their world. This links with the principle of inclusion and diversity in the *Primary Curriculum Framework*.

The conceptual frameworks outlined in this chapter take account of the child's holistic development, while the vision for the curriculum 'aims to provide a strong foundation for every child to thrive and flourish, supporting them in realising their full potential as individuals, and as members of communities and society' (DE 2023, p 5). School, for all children, should be a place where they feel they belong, and are celebrated and supported, both through the school's culture and climate, and through the relationships they form with their peers, school staff, and the wider school community. Again, this is reflected across the *Curriculum Framework*, but most especially in the 'being well' competency, where self-awareness and self-acceptance are fostered, healthy relationships are encouraged, and the overall school experience enables children to appreciate that life has meaning. Some conceptual models present wellbeing as having a number of subsets or constructs, which link clearly to PE and/or SPHE. Other models present wellbeing as a skill set. Skills are central to both the curriculum design and the subject area of Wellbeing, in tandem with Language, SEE, STEM, and the Arts, as outlined in the *Curriculum Framework*. These curriculum areas will provide opportunities for children to develop a skill set to support their wellbeing.

Finally, the educational benefits of including the curriculum area of Wellbeing and the subject areas of PE and SPHE are outlined as reducing bullying, anxiety and mental health difficulties, and supporting academic achievement; learning skills; behaviour; social-emotional competence; physical skills,

activity, wellbeing and health; values development and pupils ‘at risk’. The next three chapters answer research questions 1-3 and expound on these educational benefits.

Chapter Four: Addressing Question Two



4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) regarding the evidence on children's learning and development for the integrated curriculum area of Wellbeing for stages 1 and 2, and the subject areas of PE and SPHE for stages 3 and 4. It should be noted that the SLR yielded relatively few articles for PE. However, it should not be assumed that literature on the value of PE for children's learning and development does not exist. This will be critically evaluated in Chapter Eight. In this chapter, an overview of the 90 studies related to Research Question 2 is presented before the evidence emerging from this literature is explored.

4.2 Overview of Included Studies

Figure 4.1 illustrates the distribution of countries represented in the 90 articles included within this section. The majority of studies (27%) were conducted in the USA (n=24). Turkey, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand were the locations of 10% (n=9), 9% (n=8), 7% (n=6) and 4% (n=4) of the studies respectively. A further 3% (n=3) of the studies took place in Romania and another 3% in Spain (n=3). The 'other' section illustrated in the graph combines all countries which featured once or twice in the literature and represent 37% (n=33) of the total articles. Canada, Indonesia, Italy, Malta, South Africa and Tanzania were the locations of two studies each and a range of other countries featured once (China, Croatia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary,

Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Taiwan, Vietnam). One study was conducted in Hong Kong and the USA.

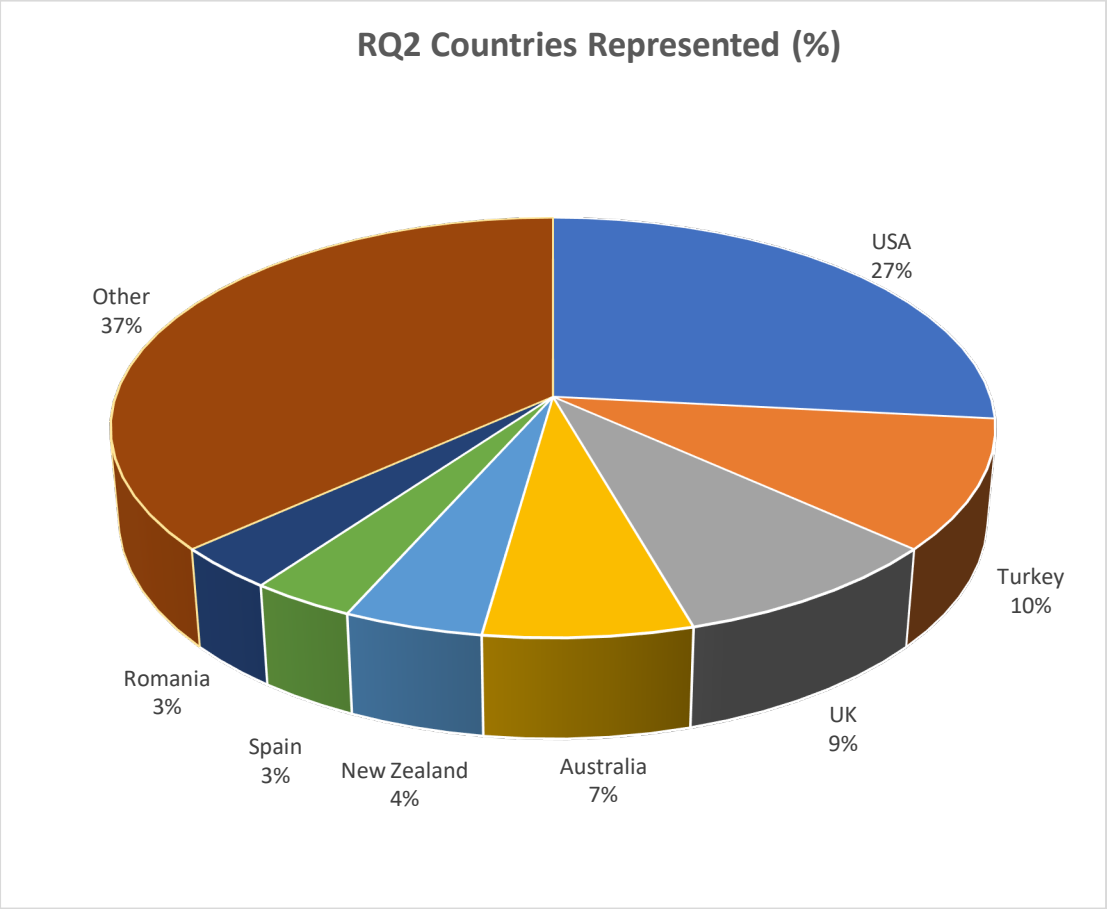


Figure 4.1 Research Question 2: Distribution of Countries Represented in the Literature

Figure 4.2 illustrates the distribution of settings represented in the articles included for this research question. It should be noted that there was a number of considerations for categorising the settings due to the different jurisdictions and their systems of education. The majority (58%) of the 90 studies took place in primary/elementary school settings (n=52), followed by 15% in Early Years settings (preschool, early childhood setting or Kindergarten) (n=14). In addition, 7% (n=6) of the included studies took place in secondary/middle/high schools and 1% (n=1) was conducted in 'other' settings which included special or alternative settings. In this case it referred to a Black supplementary school. A further 18% (n=16) of the studies took place across various combinations of settings such as preschool and primary school, primary and secondary schools or across all three settings.

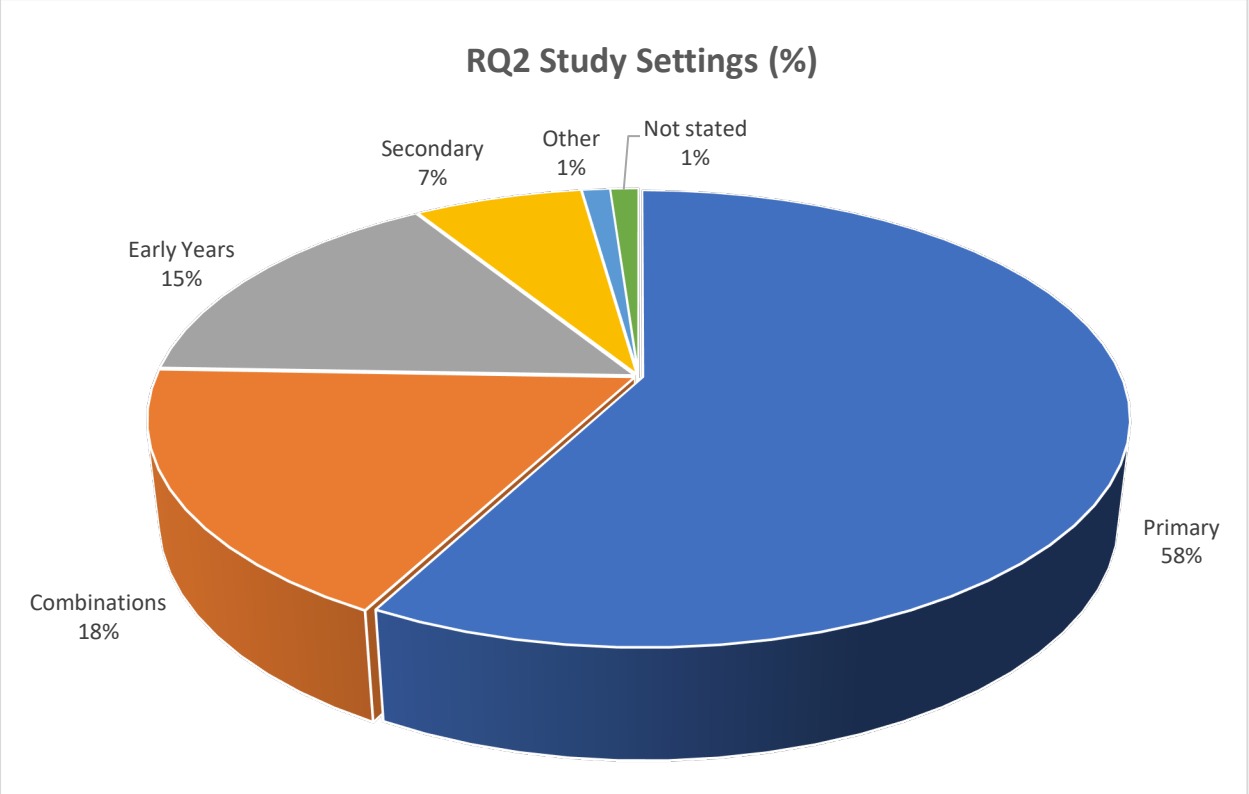


Figure 4.2 Research Question 2: Distribution of Settings Represented in the Literature

The class or grade level of participants was also important to note. This was done in terms of stages of learning, with stages 1 and 2 representing infants to second class in the Irish system and their equivalent in other jurisdictions, and stages 3 and 4 representing third to sixth class and their equivalent. The distribution of the stages represented within the studies is illustrated in Figure 4.3. A total of 38% of the 90 studies were based in stages 3 and 4 (n=34). Stages 1 and 2 were represented in 3% (n=3) of the studies, while 9% (n=8) included stages 1 to 4. A combination of stages across school levels was also noted in 18% of the studies (n=16). This included a combination of stages such as early years and stage 1, stages 2 and 3, or stage 4 and secondary school. In addition, 22% of the studies (n=20) were represented by 'other', which included early years or secondary school stages only, and 9% of studies (n=9) did not state the grade level of the participants.

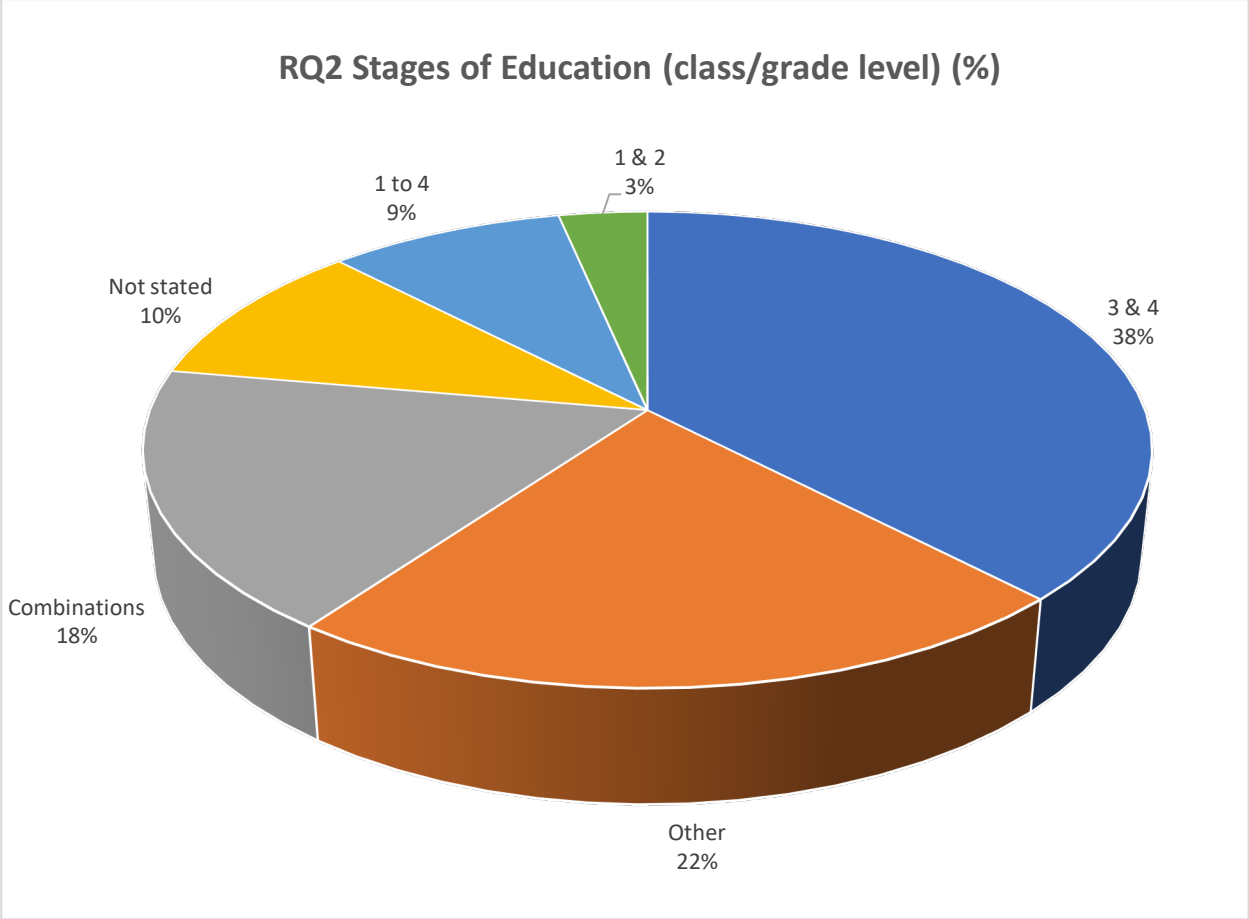


Figure 4.3 Research Question 2: Distribution of Stages Represented in the Literature

In terms of the type of study approaches, which concerned the data collection tool used for each study, questionnaires (33%) were the most common (n=30). followed by mixed methods 12% (n=11). Quasi-experimental approaches and Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) were each used in 9% of studies (n=8 each), followed by case studies in 7% of the studies (n=6), interviews and/or focus groups in 4% (n=4) of the studies, scales or measures in 3% (n=3), and a further 3% combined approaches (n=3). Additionally, 19% of the studies used a range of other data collection techniques (n=17), including observations, narrative enquiry and drawings. The distribution of study approaches is illustrated in Figure 4.4.

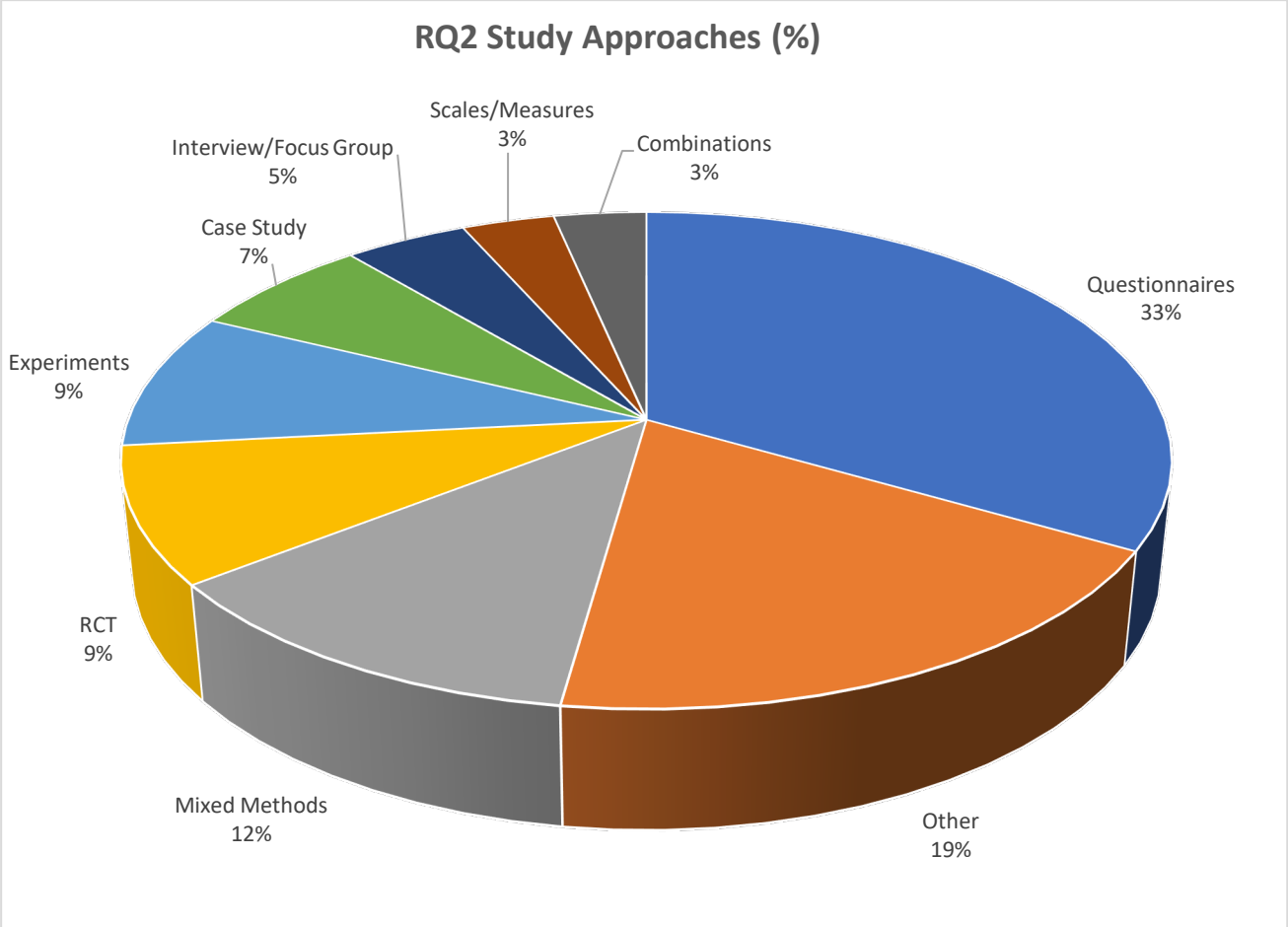


Figure 4.4 Research Question 2: Distribution of Study Approaches Represented in the Literature

Table 4.1 details the 90 included studies, with author, number of participants, mean age and grade level of participants, country of study, study setting, and study type for each.

Table 4.1 Details of Articles Included for Research Question Two

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
1	Abdulla et al. (2022)	725 pupils 30 teachers	Pupils: M=10.5 years	Grade 5	3 & 4	Maldives	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
2	Akyola (2021)	20 pupils	M=5 years	Kindergarten	Other	Turkey	Kindergarten	Early Years	Pre-test, post-test	Other
3	Balbag and Kaya (2019)	93 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Word association test	Scales/ Measures
4	Balci and Yanik (2020)	1138 pupils	12-13 years	Not stated	Other	Turkey	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
5	Balga et al. (2019)	438 pupils	8-13 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Slovakia	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
6	Bateman et al. (2013)	60 pupils	Not stated	Preschool	Other	New Zealand	Preschool	Early Years	Recording of children's play activities	Other
7	Berg and Aber (2015)	4245 pupils 841 teachers	Pupils: M=8.5 years	Grade 3	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire and interview	Mixed Methods
8	Bhatti et al. (2021)	200 pupils	Not stated	8th Class	3 & 4	Pakistan	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
9	Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu (2020)	582 pupils	9-11 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
10	Bozkur (2019)	272 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
11	Cantero et al. (2020)	182 pupils	M=10.32 years	Grade 50	3 & 4	Spain	Elementary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
12	Carroll et al. (2020)	854 pupils	8-12 years M=9.64 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
13	Cassidy et al. (2022)	19 pupils	10-11 years	Grade 6	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Community of Philosophical Inquiry	Other
14	Cefai and Pizzuto (2017)	18 pupils	4-7 years	Kindergarten-Year 3	Combinations	Malta	Nurture class in primary school with Kindergarten classes	Combinations	Group interview	Interview/FG
15	Cefai et al. (2018)	97 pupils	4-5 years	Kindergarten	Other	Malta	Kindergarten	Early Years	Pre- Post-Questionnaire	Questionnaires
16	Chung and Li (2020)	Not stated	Not stated	Elementary	Not stated	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Case study	Case Study
17	Cipra and Hall (2019)	404 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4, 5, 7, and 8	Combinations	USA	Middle school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
18	Cleland et al. (2018)	765 early childhood educators	Not stated	Early childhood	Other	Australia	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Pre- Post test	Other
19	Coskun (2019)	12 pupils	10 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
20	Crawford et al. (2021)	48 pupils 12 teachers	Pupils: 7-11 years	Not stated	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Focus group	Interview/FG

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
21	Cristian et al. (2013)	38 pupils	M=10.75 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Romania	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
22	Dobrescu (2019)	55 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Romania	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
23	Duncan et al. (2020)	124 pupils	6-7 and 10-11 years	Key stage 1 and 2	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Cluster randomised controlled trial	RCT
24	Erasmus et al. (2022)	119 pupils	9-12 years	Grades 4-5	3 & 4	South Africa	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
25	Ericksen and Glassman (2022)	Not stated	Pre-Kindergarten and Grade 4	Pre-Kindergarten and Grade 4	Combinations	USA	Pre-Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Case Study	Case Study
26	Escriva-Boulley et al. (2018)	293 pupils 15 teachers	Pupils 5–11 years M=8.31 years	Not stated	1 to 4	France	Primary school	Primary	Cluster randomised controlled trial	RCT
27	Farmer et al. (2018)	439 pupils	Not stated	Grades 2-5	1 to 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Drawings	Other
28	Fink et al. (2018)	23215 pupils	8-11 years M=9.06 years	Years 4-5	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
29	Flückiger et al. (2018)	200 pupils	3-8 years	Not stated	Combinations	Australia	Kindergarten and Primary school	Combinations	The Mosaic Approach.	Other
30	Follari (2022)	450 pupils 65 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic case study	Case Study

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
31	Forber-Pratt et al. (2022)	17 students with disabilities and/or at risk of disability identification	12-15 years	Grades 6-8	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Narrative enquiry	Other
32	Georgeson et al. (2014)	Not stated	4-5 years	Reception	1 & 2	UK	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: Interviews, focus group, questionnaire	Mixed Methods
33	Georgios et al. (2018)	65 pupils	M=11.49 years	Grades 5-6	3 & 4	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
34	Green et al. (2019)	109 pupils	5-8 years	Kindergarten and Grade 1	Combinations	USA	Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Intervention design	Other
35	Gosset and Silverman (2019)	313 pupils	9-11 years	Upper Elementary	3 & 4	USA	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
36	Hall-López et al. (2017)	1765 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	Mexico	Elementary school	Primary	Physical activity observation (SOFIT)	Other
37	Haruna et al. (2018)	120 students	11-15 years	Not stated	Other	Tanzania	Secondary school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
38	Haruna et al. (2021)	120 students	11-15 years	Not stated	Other	Tanzania	Secondary school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
39	Hirvonen et al. (2015)	377 pupils	Not stated	Pupils followed from Kindergarten to Grade 4 (346)	Combinations	Finland	Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
40	Hubley et al. (2020)	121 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Elementary and Middle school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
41	Iizuka et al. (2015)	160 pupils 23 teachers	Not stated	Grades 6-7	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Pre-test, post-test	Questionnaires
42	Iuga and Turda (2022)	24 pupils	3-5 years	Early childhood	Other	Romania	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Survey	Questionnaires
43	Ilyasova and Erzhanov (2014)	102 pupils	8-9 years	Grades 2-3	3 & 4	Kazakhstan	Primary school	Primary	Experimental	Experiments
44	Jacquez et al. (2020)	111 pupils	M=10.21 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	USA	Montessori Elementary school	Primary	Non-randomised control test	Other
45	Kartowagiran et al. (2021)	654 pupils 100 teachers	Not stated	Grades 5-8	3 & 4	Indonesia	Elementary school	Primary	Scale	Scales/Measures
46	Kautz et al. (2021)	30462 pupils 4273 teachers 12216 parents	Not stated	Grades 3-12	Combinations	USA	Elementary school, Middle school, High school	Combinations	Questionnaire and school administrative records	Combinations
47	Kell and Harney (2019)	98 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4-9	Combinations	USA	Elementary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
48	Kim and Hong (2019)	70 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	Hong Kong/USA	Elementary, Middle and High school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
49	Kopelman-Rubin et al. (2021)	419 pupils	9-10 years M=9.5 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Israel	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire and school records	Combinations

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
50	Lester and Cross (2015)	1800 pupils	11-14 years	Last year of Primary school, first 2 years of Secondary school	Combinations	Australia	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
51	Librianty et al. (2021)	94 children 15 teachers	3-5 years	Early childhood	Other	Indonesia	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
52	Lopes et al. (2017)	60 pupils	9 years	Grades 3-4	3 & 4	Portugal	Primary school	Primary	Pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design	Experiments
53	Lou et al. (2013)	30 pupils	Not stated	Grade 5	3 & 4	Taiwan	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
54	Lunga et al. (2022)	8 early childhood educators	Not stated	Not stated	Other	South Africa	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Participatory action learning and research approach	Other
55	Manzano-Sánchez and Valero-Valenzuela (2019)	272 pupils (45 control and 227 experimental)(207 primary pupils; 65 secondary) 29 teachers (20 primary; 9 secondary)	Pupils 9-14 years M=11.13 years Teachers: 28-49 years	4th year primary- 3rd year Secondary	Combinations	Spain	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Mixed methods: quasi-experimental: questionnaire observation and interview	Mixed Methods
56	McCormick et al. (2019)	1634 child records	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Kindergarten and Primary school	Not stated	School records	Other

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
57	Midgen et al. (2019)	84 pupils (with SEN)	3-16 years	Not stated	Combinations	UK	Nursery-Secondary school	Combinations	Mixed methods: questionnaire, reflection	Mixed Methods
58	Mihic et al. (2016)	164 children	3-6 years	Preschool	Other	Croatia	Preschool	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
59	Mori et al. (2022)	125 students	12-13 years	Grades 7-8	Other	Japan	Junior high school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
60	Morris et al. (2018)	300 child/parent dyads 25 teachers	M=4.7 years	Preschool	Other	Australia	Preschool	Early Years	Mixed methods: assessments, questionnaire	Mixed Methods
61	Nixon (2016)	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods: art activities and reflection	Mixed Methods
62	Oades-Sese et al. (2021)	766 children 157 teachers	35-65 months	Early childhood	Other	USA	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Cluster randomised pre-post-comparison study	RCT
63	Öztürk et al. (2014)	44 pupils	Not stated	Preschool	Other	Turkey	Preschool	Early Years	Intervention case-control study	Other
64	Palomino (2017)	26 pupils (with SEN)	7-12 years	Years 1-3	1 to 4	Spain	Primary school	Primary	Multi-dimensional concept scale	Scales/Measures
65	Palumbo (2020)	281 pupils	6-8 years	Grades 1-2	1 & 2	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
66	Papieska et al. (2019)	339 pupils 16 teachers	8-10 years M=9.30 years	Grade 3	3 & 4	Poland	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
67	Phillips et al. (2019)	146 pupils	9-11 years	Upper Elementary	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods: survey, interview, observation	Mixed Methods
68	Pryce and Fredrickson (2013)	338 pupils	8-11 years	Year 4	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire and focus groups	Mixed Methods
69	Pušnik et al. (2014)	189 pupils	8-9 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Slovenia	Primary school	Primary	Accelero-metery	Other
70	Ricketts et al. (2022)	5 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	UK	Black Supplementary School	Other	Case study: semi-structured interview	Case Study
71	Rickson et al. (2018)	30 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Case study using action research	Case Study
72	Rix and Bernay (2014)	126 pupils 6 teachers	Not stated	Grades 2-6	1 to 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: Reflection and questionnaire	Mixed Methods
73	Rochester et al. (2019)	299 pupils	Not stated	Full-day pre-kindergarten programmes	Other	USA	Pre-kindergarten	Early Years	Observation	Other
74	Sando et al. (2021)	79 pupils	M=4.7 years	Early childhood	Other	Norway	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Video Observations	Other
75	Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015)	99 pupils	9-11 years M=10.24 years	Grades 4-5	3 & 4	USA	Primary school	Primary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
76	Sgro et al. (2019)	100 pupils	10 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
77	Skrzypek et al. (2020)	90 pupils	10-13 years	Grades 5 and 8	Combinations	USA	Middle school	Combinations	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
78	Sotardi (2017)	16 pupils	Not stated	Grade 3	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
79	Steed et al. (2022)	805 lead early childhood teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Other	USA	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
80	Tian et al. (2015)	706 pupils	M=11.07 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	China	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire and Scales	Combinations
81	Twyford (2012)	46 pupils 14 teachers/ teacher aides	5-10 years	Not stated	1 to 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
82	Varol (2018)	590 pupils	M=11.46 years	Not stated	Not stated	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
83	Victorson et al. (2022)	Not stated	Not stated	Kindergarten-Grade 12	Combinations	USA	Elementary school and High school	Combinations	Reflection	Other
84	Wikman et al. (2022)	143 pupils	M=8.33 years	Grade 2	3 & 4	Sweden	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
85	Wilson et al. (2012)	577 pupils	11 years	Upper elementary	3 & 4	Canada	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/ Class Level	Grade Class Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Study Setting Category (in line with Irish educational system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
86	Yanko and Yap (2020)	Not stated	Not stated	Grade 1	1 & 2	Canada	Primary school	Primary	Autoethnographic storying approach (Case Study)	Case Study
87	Yang et al. (2018)	9659 pupils (Elementary) 9535 students (Middle school) 6702 students (High school)	Not stated	Grades 4-12	Combinations	USA	Elementary, Middle and High school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
88	Yoon et al. (2021)	6477 students	11-14 years	Grades 6-9	Other	Vietnam	Lower Secondary school	Secondary	Cluster randomised controlled trial	RCT
89	Yüksel et al. (2019)	281 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
90	Zsolnai and Kasik (2014)	1398 pupils 1398 parents 62 teachers	Pupils: 7, 9 and 11 years	Not stated	1 to 4	Hungary	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

4.3 Outcomes from Studies

A range of wellbeing outcomes was evaluated in the literature. Those cited most frequently included social-emotional, academic, classroom/school climate, subjective wellbeing, moral/values development, self-esteem/self-efficacy, mental health, behaviour, and teacher-pupil relationships. The findings from the literature, in relation to these outcomes, form the basis of this chapter. They provide the evidence on children's learning and development for the integrated curriculum area of Wellbeing/PE/SPHE for the redeveloped curriculum.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Social and Emotional Learning and Development

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and development was the most prominent theme emerging from the literature. In their cross-sectional study, Zsolnai and Kasik (2014) examined the social skills that affect children's social behaviour from middle to early adolescence in the school context in Hungary. The sample included 7, 9 and 11-year-old pupils (n=1398), their parents (n=1398), and teachers (n=62). The results indicated that the acquisition of social skills had not been completed by a substantial percentage of the 11-year-olds. The authors also reported that there was a medium-strength correlation between pupils' social skills and their academic performance. Girls' social skills were reported to be slightly more developed than those of boys. This study highlights the need to foster SEL skills at the initial stages of school and that this should be taught through formal lessons.

The literature suggested that pupils who experienced discrete lessons or programmes to develop SEL skills managed their behaviour more effectively, and performed better academically, than those who did not receive these opportunities. Various teacher-led programmes, which included the teaching of discrete SEL lessons, emerged from the literature search. The findings from these studies noted the possible benefits of different programmes.

An evaluation of the Australian teacher-led SEL programme '*KooLKIDS*' (Carroll *et al.* 2020), which included 854 pupils, aged 8-12 years in Grades 4-6, confirmed its potential for developing children's SEL. '*KooLKIDS*' is a structured classroom-based programme, aligned with the personal and social components of the Australian curriculum. It was designed to support children's emotion regulation capacities, social and friendship skills, empathy and compassion for others, and self-esteem, through interactive multimedia activities (for example, the use of sequential visual social stories). The programme involved an animated character and recommended role-playing within stories. Teachers were trained to facilitate the programme and were encouraged to adapt the programme to suit the

needs of their pupils. The study reported that this approach to teaching SEL led to statistically significant improvements in all aspects of social and emotional competencies measured in the sample, for example, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and decision-making. Reductions in emotional and behavioural problems were also identified.

Iizuka *et al.* (2015) reported preliminary findings from an evaluation of the '*Friends for Life'* programme on pupils' emotional outcomes. This study was conducted with 160 primary school pupils (Grades 6-7), and their teachers (n=23) in Australia. The '*Friends for Life'* programme is a 10-week sequential prevention programme based on cognitive-behavioural therapy to promote social and emotional skills and develop resilience for children aged 7-12 years. Within the programme, pupils were taught problem-solving skills and coping techniques. Teachers received professional development and in-class coaching and modelling, to support the programme's implementation. Results of the study concluded that, while all pupils benefitted from the whole-class programme, pupils who were identified as 'at-risk' were associated with the most significant reduction in anxiety levels, particularly separation anxiety, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, and physical anxiety. These findings suggest that a universal approach (one delivered at whole-class level) to SEL benefits many pupils, while providing an inclusive approach to supporting those most 'at risk'. The programme also enhanced teacher resilience and it was well-accepted by pupils and teachers.

Similar to the previously mentioned programmes, Coskun (2019) evaluated an intervention programme called '*SEL Activities'* in Turkey to promote pupils' self-regulation skills. A total of 24 teacher-led intervention lessons were conducted within a month. The 12 participating pupils were introduced to particular instructional scenarios to respond to (for example, criticism, a sense of being defeated, a sense of being ignored, anger and excitement). To conclude each lesson, pupils' responses were discussed in the context of self-regulation and each child received personal feedback. Findings established that the teacher-led instructional approaches and activities enabled the participating pupils to establish a connection between their emotions and behaviours, and to develop self-regulation strategies. Coskun (2019) noted that pupil experiences of SEL became more tangible and helped them to better recognise and label their emotions.

Similarly, in Poland Papieska *et al.* (2019) evaluated the effects of a brief, teacher-led intervention '*EMOscope*', developed to promote pupils' socio-emotional competence. While the content of the intervention was not outlined in the paper, results indicated that pupils in the experimental group (n=180, Grade 3) improved significantly in emotional self-awareness, awareness of others, and social understanding. Moreover, there was a decrease in teacher-rated hyperactivity, conduct problems,

and total difficulties. No effects were found, however, on teacher-rated pro-social behaviour, emotional problems, peer problems, and peer-rated cooperative behaviour.

The findings regarding the benefits of teaching pupils' self-regulation skills, reported in these studies, were echoed in other studies. For example, Hirvonen *et al.* (2015) identified the development of impulsive behaviour from kindergarten to Grade 4. Based on a sample of 1880 pupils from four Finnish municipalities (one urban, one rural, and two urban/semi-rural), the children were followed from kindergarten to Grade 4. In this study, pupils' development during kindergarten and elementary school, in the family and school context, was considered to identify the developmental paths of impulsive behaviour. In addition to rating children's impulsivity, the analyses also included measures of motivation, cognitive skills, socio-emotional adjustment, and teacher-pupil relationship. The findings underscore the importance of behavioural regulation skills in the classroom and the importance of teaching for self-regulation.

Similarly, the implementation of the *'I Can Succeed'* SEL programme enhanced the assertiveness of Grade 4 students (n=419) in Israel, reduced their internalising symptoms, and contributed to their interpersonal, social, emotional, and academic functioning (Kopelman-Rubin *et al.* 2021). Likewise, Tian *et al.* (2015) evaluated the mediating role of pro-social behaviour on the relationship between gratitude and the subjective wellbeing of 706 pupils in stage 3 in China. The study reported that gratitude was strongly related to subjective wellbeing, and that boys demonstrated greater benefits of gratitude. This study highlights the importance of teaching pro-social behaviours to contribute to the enhancement of the subjective wellbeing of pupils, particularly boys.

Mori *et al.* (2022) used a randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of a teacher-led mental health literacy programme '*Sanita'* (implemented through 3 x 50-minute classes) on students' mental health literacy in Japan. The intervention was effective in improving the 125 students' immediate and long-term knowledge of mental health illness, but there were no significant improvements in students' help-seeking behaviours or attitudes. The authors suggested that the lack of effect on help-seeking behaviours may be due to most participants being healthy and, therefore, not in need of help-seeking behaviours at the time of follow-up. The authors did, however, highlight that, if significant changes in students' attitudes towards those with mental health illnesses are to be realised, pre-programme training for teachers would be necessary.

In an American study involving 109 kindergarten and first grade students, aged 5-8 years, in elementary schools in semi-rural districts, Green *et al.* (2019) examined the effectiveness of an adapted implementation of the *'Incredible Years Dina Dinosaur School'* small group curriculum

conducted in a school setting. Specifically, analyses examined (a) teacher-reported changes on intensity and frequency of behaviour problems, before and after the intervention, for individual pupils and (b) teachers' impressions of behaviour and skill improvement made by their pupils. Based on an adapted model of an evidence-based SEL small group curriculum, the '*Incredible Years Children's Small Group Training Series*' (Webster-Stratton 2004), was implemented and evaluated. Results of the study demonstrated statistically significant decreases in problem behaviours and intensity of problem behaviours, as rated by teachers. Teachers also reported improvements in classroom behaviour, emotion regulation, problem-solving, and friendship skills. They expressed a high overall level of satisfaction with the intervention.

Similar findings emerged in studies with early years children. Cefai *et al.* (2018) evaluated the effects of the '*RESCUR Surfing the Waves'* resilience programme (*RESCUR*) on young children's behaviour and learning (n=97, aged 4-5 years) in Malta. This curriculum was developmentally designed for 4-12-year-olds and focused on building resilience, developing a growth mindset, making use of one's strengths, self-determination, effective communication skills, healthy relationships, and overcoming challenges and obstacles. The activities follow the SAFE approach (i.e., Sequential, Active learning, Focus on skill development and Explicit learning goals). The programme incorporated mindfulness activities, storytelling and processing, practical activities and homework. Teachers were trained and provided with guidelines and resources to teach the lessons. The authors reported that this resilience programme resulted in improvements in the pupils' resilience skills, self-determination, communication, pro-social behaviour and learning engagement. Similarly, Mihic *et al.* (2016) evaluated the effects of the '*Preschool PATHS'* (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies) programme on the social and emotional skill development and pro-social behaviours of 164 children, aged 3-6 years in Croatia. Teachers in this study were trained to teach discrete lessons and integrate opportunities for skill practice throughout the preschool day. Results indicated that teaching and practising social and emotional skills positively affected the children's pro-social behaviour, emotion regulation, emotional symptoms, peer problems, aggression, conduct problems, and hyperactive-impulsive behaviours, which influence children's wellbeing and impact their academic achievement.

On evaluating teachers' perceptions of their primary schools' approach to SEL, Steed *et al.* (2022) reported that early childhood teachers in the USA would like to use comprehensive SEL programmes that address not only social skills, but also understanding of emotions, emotional regulation and problem-solving.

In relation to integrating language, literacy, Arts and SEL, a study in South Korea involving 70 teachers across elementary, middle and high schools (Kim and Hong 2019) reported how teachers valued the

integration of SEL approaches in language, arts and literacy. Based on these findings, there may be potential to teach SEL and other issues related to SPHE in an integrated way.

Oades-Sese *et al.* (2021) investigated the effectiveness of a specific preschool programme, the '*Sesame Workshop's Little Children, Big Challenges (LCBC)'* programme in the USA. The study involved 157 preschool teachers and 766 preschool children from 159 preschool classrooms in 38 Head Start centres, 7 Military Child Development Centres, 2 community-based preschool agencies, and a public-school district. This was a digital media SEL intervention over a 12-week period. The results indicated that LCBC increased emotion vocabulary, attachment, initiative, self-control, emotion regulation, and adaptability. The LCBC intervention also significantly reduced teacher conflict, attention problems, and emotion control problems.

McCormick *et al.* (2019) adopted a desk-based methodology involving the use of school records of pupils in kindergarten and first grade in primary schools in the USA to whom the '*INSIGHT SEL'* programme was taught. The authors noted that, while meta-analytic research has established that SEL programmes can improve academic and behavioural outcomes in the short term, the aim of their study was to examine the programme effects on receipt of special education services and grade retention in the longer term. The findings revealed no difference between treatment and control group pupils in terms of grade retention. However, the intervention group pupils were less likely to ever receive special education services by the end of fifth grade, with low-income pupils appearing to drive this effect.

Overall, these studies highlight the positive effects of classroom-based, teacher-led, structured programmes for enhancing children's SEL. The need for discrete SEL lessons and teacher professional development prior to the implementation of new programmes to support the children's learning and development in this area is illuminated.

4.3.1.1 Approaches and Initiatives for SEL Development

Five studies included in the literature reported on particular approaches to enhance pupils' SEL development. The effects of a 10-week intervention, in which 30 pupils in Grade 5 in Taiwan developed an e-portfolio through blogs focused on life values, were evaluated by Lou *et al.* (2013). Within this programme pupils engaged with the material in multiple formats including videos, experiential activities, question and discussion sessions, followed by blog learning. The pupils posted their thoughts on blogs to share them with others and created e-portfolios to document their engagements, teacher feedback, and artefacts to demonstrate their learning. E-portfolio blogging was observed to be effective in developing pupils' knowledge, values, and attitudes in relation to life

education. In addition to learning the content, pupils appreciated the value of collaborative learning. They demonstrated respect for their peers, developed problem-solving, communication and social skills, and built harmonious interpersonal relationships with their peers. This study indicates the potential of using blogs to teach the content, as well as providing opportunities to develop social and emotional skills in SPHE.

In the USA, Jacquez *et al.* (2020) examined the effectiveness of an optimistic thinking tool, '*Dream It! A Playbook to Spark Your Awesomeness*' with 111 pupils in Grades 4-6. The programme was designed to teach pupils how to dream about their life goals through the themes of hope, goal setting and optimism. The intervention group (n=61) engaged with illustrated concepts and interactive games. Results indicated that the intervention had a medium to large effect on pupils' grit, optimistic thinking, and ability to dream about their futures. This study highlights the importance of teaching pupils optimistic thinking, goal setting and resilience skills within SPHE, as they have the potential to improve key SEL outcomes for pupils.

Cassidy *et al.* (2022) explored how '*Philosophy for Children'* could be used to create classroom environments that nurture pupils' wellbeing in the UK. This approach, used with 19 pupils, involved prompt questions and stimuli to generate class discussions on different philosophical themes, related to pupils' lives. Findings indicated that pupils were happy to listen to, but did not always contribute to, the discussions. The discussions were positive in fostering a sense of community among the pupils, and there was some evidence of enhanced wellbeing during the process. This study illustrates that to enhance pupils' wellbeing, an environment where they are confident to express their views, and where these views are listened to, must be created.

Forber-Pratt *et al.* (2022) evaluated an intervention for SEL to increase students' social conflict management and leadership skills through self-awareness and self-discovery. This study was conducted with 17 middle-school students in Grades 6-8 with disabilities and/or at risk for disability identification. Motivational interviewing was implemented to promote positive behaviour change to enable students to deal with bullying issues in ways that demonstrate enhanced social-emotional skills. The intervention integrated experiential activities and positive psychology strategies with motivational interviewing to enhance SEL skills. Students' thoughts, emotions and behaviours were processed through open-ended questioning, empathy, coping skills and resilience building. The results of this study indicate that motivational interviewing and drama are promising approaches for assisting students with disabilities to develop SEL competencies and to enable them to transfer skills to practice and proactively manage challenging situations.

In the USA, Ericksen and Glassman (2022) evaluated a case of cross-grade collaboration between preschool and Grade 4 pupils who engaged in a STEAM activity to construct a house from a variety of materials. The authors reported a positive impact on the SEL of all pupils involved in the project. The younger children developed their language and social skills, and were motivated by the older pupils. Older pupils gained self-confidence and enhanced their communication, social interactions and problem-solving skills as time progressed.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Mindfulness

Several studies evaluated the effectiveness of mindfulness on pupils' social and emotional development. Rix and Bernay (2014) investigated the effects of mindfulness involving 5 primary schools in New Zealand. The study involved 126 children and 6 teachers who engaged in an 8-week mindfulness programme. The study observed that mindfulness increased calm, reduced stress, and improved focus and attention, along with enhancing self-awareness and the development of positive relationships. According to the authors, 'Improved focus and attention are important for thinking, the ability to self-calm is important for managing self, effective conflict resolution skills contribute to 'relating to others'' (p.213). Mindfulness may be linked to key competencies in health and physical education, for example, through contributing to personal growth and development; and supporting students to develop their personal identity through exploring feelings, beliefs and actions.

Schonert-Reichl *et al.* (2015) conducted a randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effects of a mindfulness-based programme on 99 fourth and fifth grade pupils' social and emotional development in the USA. The authors indicated that pupils in the intervention group improved more in their cognitive control and stress physiology, and reported greater empathy, perspective-taking, emotional control, optimism, school self-concept, and mindfulness than the control group. The intervention group also demonstrated greater decreases in self-reported symptoms of depression and peer-rated aggression. The pupils in the intervention group were rated as more pro-social by peers, and they increased in peer popularity. These findings demonstrate that teaching mindfulness to pupils, in combination with opportunities to practice optimism, gratitude, perspective-taking, and kindness to others can not only improve cognitive skills, but also lead to significant increases in social and emotional competence and wellbeing in the regular elementary classrooms.

Crawford *et al.* (2021) also reported positive effects of mindfulness on pupils' attention, ability to focus, emotional regulation, and reduction in stress in the UK (n=48). Similarly, Palomino (2017) concluded that pupils with compensatory education needs (n=26) in Spain had enhanced perceptions of self-concept after participating in a mindfulness programme. However, despite the positive social

and emotional outcomes reported, the approach to mindfulness was important. Palomino (2017) advocated for the development of mindfulness programmes based on the needs of the target group, and developed in tandem with the pupils. However, Crawford *et al.* (2021) claimed that mindfulness programmes must be transparent in their intentions, particularly as the focus is often on improving attention and behaviour. They stated that practitioners must consider the aims of mindfulness-based interventions in relation to their holistic possibilities and processes of 'schoolification' (for example, being quiet and still). Crawford *et al.* (2021) argued that mindfulness-based interventions have the potential to devalue the concept of mindfulness as the interpretation of mindfulness in school is fundamentally different from the Buddhist interpretation of the term. They asserted that education should either deepen its engagement with mindfulness and implement it as originally intended or abandon it altogether.

Kell and Harney (2019) evaluated American primary school pupils' (n=98, Grades 4-9) perceptions of outdoor solo reflection time, 'unplugged', which took place for 20 minutes 3 times per month from January to May during PE classes. Solo time took place outside and pupils were not assigned any task, but to 'be in the moment,' rest and relax. The study reported that overall '*solo time'* was a positive experience for pupils, however, it was noted that children in younger classes should be assigned a task, such as journaling, drawing, or walking. Spending time alone was observed to be beneficial for pupils' relaxation, thinking, unplugging, and clearing their heads. Spending time in an outdoor setting and being 'unplugged' were reported to be the most popular criteria for pupils' enjoyment of the initiative. The authors recommended that to implement '*solo time'*, it is best to begin with a shorter duration of time and provide short reflective tasks that allow the pupils to learn and practice the skill. Although it is stated that pupils could reflect on their physical or health education goals, it is not clear why *'solo time'* took place during PE classes. Since social interaction and physical activity are key components of PE within the Irish PE curriculum, this approach would not align with the current conceptualisation of PE in Ireland.

Victorson *et al.* (2022) reported practical ideas for teachers to develop SEL through dance in PE lessons in the USA. Contrary to the idea of '*solo time'*, the authors of this article recommended that children work together in pairs to ensure that they engage in social interaction during PE. They highlighted the benefits of approaches such as mindful movements in which breathing and guided meditative activities were integrated with dance. This approach was reported to increase pupils' body awareness, as well as their mental awareness. The authors also reported that social and emotional development was enhanced by embedding strong routines within the lessons. They

concluded that enhanced pupil engagement, motivation, confidence, teamwork, problem-solving and risk-taking skills were developed as a result of incorporating SEL into dance lessons.

4.3.3 Theme 4: Health Education

Cleland *et al.* (2018) evaluated the '*LEAPS'* programme (Learning, Eating, Active play, Sleep) for professional development. Based in Australia, the study involved 765 Early Childhood educators. Through the evaluation of this professional development programme, it was evident that educators increased their knowledge of nutrition and physical activity guidelines and were more focused on integrating core health concepts throughout the preschool day, and not just through designated lesson times.

Within the literature only one study evaluated Health Education as a subject area. Yoon *et al.* (2021) used a randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effects of a 5-month health education programme on young adolescents' non-cognitive skills, life satisfaction and aspirations, and health-related quality of life in Vietnam. A total of 140 lower secondary schools participated in the study with a total of 6477 students. Results indicated that school-based health education enhanced students' self-efficacy, life satisfaction and quality of life, but had limited effects on reducing risky health behaviours. Since health education was noted to have positive effects on the students' psychological health factors, it could be considered a beneficial component within the curriculum. However, this study also highlighted the need for additional approaches to address risky behaviours.

4.3.4 Theme 5: Bullying

Studies which addressed bullying behaviour (Pryce and Fredrickson 2013; Fink *et al.* 2018; Cipra and Hall 2019) highlighted the importance of positive school and classroom climates, and positive relationships. Findings from Pryce and Fredrickson (2013) about bullying in the UK reported that changes in bullying behaviour are associated with pupils' intentions and perceived control regarding engagement in bullying behaviour (n=338). Decreases in bullying and victimisation were associated with positive changes in the pupils' sense of belonging in school and in the promotion of positive classroom environments (Pryce and Fredrickson 2013, Fink *et al.* 2018, Midgen *et al.* 2019). A positive sense of school belonging has also been observed to reduce levels of aggression and bullying in 84 pupils with SEN and disabilities in the UK (Midgen *et al.* 2019). Therefore, increasing feelings of belonging could be used as an effective approach to target aggressive and unsafe behaviours.

In another UK study, involving 23215 pupils, Fink *et al.* (2018) concluded that schools with a poor school climate were at greater risk of bullying behaviours. Cipra and Hall (2019) implemented a

bullying intervention pilot study in an American school designed to reduce bullying behaviour, foster a sense of community cohesion and trust in the school, improve school climate, and increase pupil self-esteem. The researchers reported that the 404 students in the intervention group scored higher in measures of self-esteem, and rated their schools more positively on measures of cohesion, trust, and climate. The literature highlights that positive school climates promoted through universal, whole-school approaches may be preventative regarding bullying behaviour.

The importance of establishing positive peer connections as part of a positive school climate was reiterated in the literature, which examined students' mental and emotional wellbeing over the transition from primary to secondary school (Lester and Cross 2015). The study involved 1800 students in Australia and reported that peer support was the strongest predictor of wellbeing in sixth class. The authors highlighted that primary school is a critical time to establish quality connections among peers who have a powerful role in supporting each other prior to second level. Protecting the mental and emotional wellbeing of students in sixth class through the development of a positive classroom climate was deemed essential to enable them to support one another as they transition into secondary school.

4.3.5 Theme 6: Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes

Seven studies reported on wellbeing and academic outcomes. These can be subdivided into two categories: Effect of SEL on Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes and Effect of School Climate on Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes. Effect of School Climate on Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes

4.3.5.1 Effect of SEL on Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes

Five studies evaluated the relationship between SEL and academic outcomes (Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu 2020, Kautz *et al.* 2021, Cantero *et al.* 2020, Wikman *et al.* 2022, Yüksel *et al.* 2019). Overall findings from these studies indicated that pupils' social and emotional competencies influence their academic performance and their sense of wellbeing, and that there is a correlation between these variables. An American longitudinal study (Kautz *et al.* 2021), conducted over 3-years, examined the SEL and academic outcomes of 30462 pupils. The authors reported that SEL competencies and school experiences were related to pupils' future outcomes, but there was variance in how much they influenced future academic measures. Self-management, i.e., how well pupils control their emotions, was reported to be most strongly related to the pupils' future academic outcomes. Similarly, Cantero *et al.* (2020) evaluated the long-term effectiveness of an emotional intelligence intervention on 182 pupils' academic performance in Spain. The findings of

this study reported that the two-year intervention had a positive influence on academic performance, particularly pupils' Maths and language performance. Both longitudinal studies (Cantero *et al.* 2020 and Kautz *et al.* 2021) reported the positive long-term effects of SEL on pupils' health and wellbeing. Kautz *et al.* (2021) noted that SEL and school experiences support pupils' feelings of being loved, challenged, and prepared, while Cantero *et al.* (2020) highlighted that long-term work on emotional intelligence in stages 3 and 4 is necessary to allow adequate socio-emotional development for a smoother transition to adolescence, promoting better wellbeing and health.

The correlation between academic skills and pro-social behaviour, self-efficacy, and wellbeing was echoed across the studies that evaluated the relationship between SEL and academic achievement (Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu 2020; Kautz *et al.* 2021; Cantero *et al.* 2020; Wikman *et al.* 2022; Yüksel *et al.* 2019). In their evaluation of variables that affect the social-emotional development, academic grit, and subjective wellbeing of Grade 4 Turkish pupils (n=582), Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu (2020) indicated that girls, students who received preschool education, students with a high frequency of daily book reading, and students with a combination of these variables performed significantly better for each of these variables than their counterparts. Another Turkish study, by Yüksel *et al.* (2019), identified a significant correlation between the primary mental abilities (PMA) of 281 primary pupils and their levels of self-efficacy, emotional learning, and hope. The authors reported that as PMA scores rise, hope and self-efficacy increase, and correspondingly SEL increases (Yüksel *et al.* 2019). Consistent with Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu (2020), the gender differences in favour of girls were also identified (Yüksel *et al.* 2019, Kautz *et al.* 2021) for self-efficacy, emotional learning, hope (Yüksel *et al.* 2019), self-management and social awareness (Kautz *et al.* 2021). The correlation of SEL variables and academic outcomes identified across these studies highlights that the development of social-emotional competencies to enhance academic outcomes and support pupil learning to improve their subjective wellbeing should be considered. These are important targets for academic support interventions (Wikman *et al.* 2022), and particular attention needs to be focused on supporting boys and those most 'at risk'.

4.3.5.2 Effect of School Climate on Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes

The importance of positive relationships between pupils and teachers and among the pupils is emphasised throughout the literature as a measure to support learning and development.

In addition to the variables already identified, pupils' sense of belonging and the interpersonal school climate have also been observed to affect pupils' academic outcomes. Using a sample of 4245 pupils, Berg and Aber (2015) evaluated the impact of a Social And Character Development (SACD)

programme to better understand the contribution of school interpersonal climate to children's academic outcomes, and to evaluate if the impact of the whole-school implementation of SACD is moderated by interpersonal climate. The findings of this American study suggested that children who experienced a lack of community were less engaged and had more academic difficulties. Participant teachers (n=841) also reported that support and safety at school were related to academic outcomes. Similarly, the *Black Boys Matter* case study from the UK (Ricketts *et al.* 2022) claimed that social, emotional, mental health, and academic progress were enhanced by a strong sense of belonging, which in turn promoted self-awareness and pupil empowerment. The results of this case study revealed that the sense of belonging of the five pupils was developed through their engagement in various activities and experiences in school. In addition, this case study reported that pupils performed better when parents were supported.

Based on their study of students across elementary (n=9659), middle (n=9535), and high school (n=6702) in the USA, Yang *et al.* (2018) examined associations between students' perceptions of cognitive-behavioural and emotional engagement in schools with three factors, which aligned with the aims of school-wide SEL approaches. These included teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, and teaching of social and emotional competencies. All of these factors were significantly associated with emotional engagement, with teacher-student relationships having the strongest association. They also observed significant associations with all three factors and cognitive-behavioural engagement at the student level, however, only the teaching of social and emotional competencies was associated significantly with cognitive-behavioural engagement at the school level. Based on these findings, the authors recommended two strategies for a school-wide SEL approach in promoting student engagement, which are: 1) the systematic and quality instruction of SEL skills and 2) the establishment of a caring, safe, and cooperative school-wide environment.

4.3.6 Theme 7: Establishing a Positive Classroom Climate

Positive classroom climates have been observed to have beneficial effects on behavioural and academic outcomes and are essential for the development of pupil wellbeing. In the current section, evidence from the literature is presented on how such positive classroom climates can be established.

Collaboration and group work have been identified as factors which contribute to the development of positive relationships, the establishment of positive classroom climates, and the promotion of academic achievement (Farmer *et al.* 2018; Midgen *et al.* 2019; Erasmus *et al.* 2022). Children's drawings were used by Farmer *et al.* (2018) to examine the perceptions of classroom climate by 439

pupils in the USA. The results indicated that pupils identified caring behaviour when peers supported each other and in the routine practices of school personnel. The participating pupils were also able to distinguish non-caring behaviour. The authors reported how classroom culture influenced the pupils as they learned about values outside of formal learning, such as when they were outdoors, in learning areas, and during transition times. Erasmus *et al.* (2022) identified the factors that promote and inhibit the development of emotional intelligence levels in 119 South African primary school pupils. Results indicated a significant correlation between classroom climate and emotional intelligence, which in turn was noted to contribute to positive relationships, interpersonal skills, and academic success. The findings suggested that pupils are more engaged in classrooms that are characterised by feelings of enjoyment, connectedness, and respect. Similar to Farmer *et al.* (2018), cooperation rather than competition was reported by Erasmus *et al.* (2022) as being more effective in promoting academic achievement and positive relationships between pupils.

Based on 450 children and 65 staff in one American school, Follari (2022) conducted a two-year ethnographic case study including interviews, observations, samples of children's work and a pupil self-report survey. This study considered how school staff perceived connections between the school's vision of '*Our Whole Children'* and individual and school actions to implement this vision. The study also investigated what intentional action and impact of the school commitment to educating the whole child was evident across all school settings and activities, and the impacts of the research-based SEL curricular initiatives on pupils' SEL and self-regulation. A significant difference in 1st graders' happiness was noted following the '*Mindful Schools'* programme. The study also reported that administrative leadership, intentional hiring and training, curricular investments, time and effort dedicated to relationships, and unique wellness activities all contributed to positive school outcomes in pupils. School initiatives linked to recreational time and school climate were highlighted, such as an indoor garden, sensory garden, Fitness Fridays, and wellness activities.

Rochester *et al.* (2019) explored the associations between school climate, classroom quality, and children's gains in receptive vocabulary and executive function in pre-kindergarten. Based in the USA, this study involved 299 children attending full-day pre-kindergarten programmes across 61 classrooms in 35 elementary schools. To evaluate outcomes, the researchers used the emotional support, classroom organisation, and instructional quality domain scores of the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System* (CLASS) (Pianta *et al.* 2008). Findings indicated that school emotional climate had a small, but positive, association with pre-kindergarten classroom emotional support. School-level measures of teacher effectiveness also had positive associations with pre-kindergarten classroom levels of emotional support and classroom organisation. However, a significant association

was not observed between school climate dimensions and children's receptive vocabulary and executive function gains across the pre-kindergarten year. Interestingly, when discussing this lack of cognitive gain, the authors argued that pre-kindergarten children spend less time outside of their classrooms than older children and therefore, are less likely to be directly affected by their school's broader climate.

Restorative practice emerged as an effective approach to developing relationships in stages 3 and 4. In the USA, Skrzypek *et al.* (2020) evaluated 10-13-year old pupils' perspectives of using restorative practice daily, for 30 minutes, across a 7-month period. While this study reported the effectiveness of the approach in developing relationships in stages 3 and 4, the authors emphasised the importance of including pupils' perspectives when teaching restorative practice.

In addition to the establishment of positive relationships through cooperation and communication, Erasmus *et al.* (2022) identified the factors needed to bring about these positive classroom climates and experiences. They included providing a level of challenge for the learners. This was also noted by Sotardi (2017) in the USA, who set out to understand pupils' stress-related interpretations, experiences, and coping strategies at school. This study reported that interpretations of 'stress' by the participating 16 pupils seemed inextricably linked to their learning and social obstacles at school. This indicates a need for differentiation for some pupils.

It has been reported in the literature that classroom climate also influences the development of pupils' moral values. Bhatti *et al.* (2021) evaluated the state of moral development of 200 primary-school pupils in Pakistan, and reported that classrooms that were free of prejudices, discrimination and injustice provided pupils with an environment conducive to, and supportive of, moral values development.

The studies referred to in this section highlight that, in addition to the academic objectives, teaching and learning in schools have social and emotional components, and for academic objectives to be met, teachers need to create classroom environments that are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy (Erasmus *et al.* 2022).

4.3.7 Theme 8: Integration of Arts Education to Support Wellbeing Outcomes

Arts Education has been identified in the literature as a means to, and a means through, which wellbeing can be enhanced. Within the literature identified for stages 1 and 2, the importance of integrating wellbeing through the Arts was highlighted, including through music, languages and the

Arts, mindfulness and the Arts, drama, movement and dance, and integrating Visual Arts with SPHE and SEL, and dance in PE.

Two studies investigated the effects of music in supporting the development of pupils' wellbeing (Rickson *et al.* 2018, Twyford 2012). Based on a case study with 30 pupils in an elementary school in New Zealand, Rickson *et al.* (2018) reported on the findings of a 2-year action research project, investigating a '*Singing for Wellbeing'* programme. This programme involved daily singing in a school severely affected by earthquakes, with the aim to explore the potential to contribute to both wellbeing and music education agendas. Although teachers were very positive towards the integrated approach, they raised concerns about not meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of both subject areas. The authors acknowledged that for some, there was a tension between singing for pleasure (wellbeing) and singing as a learning process within music. Another study from New Zealand explored peer and staff perceptions of involvement in inclusive music therapy with 46 pupils with SEN across 8 mainstream school settings (Twyford 2012). The study examined the impact of a music therapist and observed that inclusive approaches were beneficial to pupils, peers and adults. There may be some potential to use music to support pupil wellbeing, however, the authors also noted that if the intervention is to be sustainable, additional supports would be needed by teachers.

The findings of these studies suggest that using singing and music for wellbeing has positive effects. In the same way, Visual Arts have been identified in the literature as an area to explore SEL. The social issue of homelessness was used as a stimulus for a series of art lessons with primary school pupils in the USA (Chung and Li 2020). A problem-based learning approach, with small group discussion, was noted to be effective in the art education context to explore the social justice issue. Similarly, Nixon (2016) evaluated the effectiveness of the Visual Arts programme '*Knowing Me Knowing You'* on the enhancement of children's emotional literacy in the USA. The study reported that emotional learning through Visual Arts can be a powerful tool to strengthen mental health. These studies illustrated the potential for teaching social justice and emotional issues in areas other than PE or SPHE and the potential to integrate art approaches into SPHE to support children's wellbeing. However, for integrated approaches to be sustainable, the studies emphasise the need for additional support and training to be provided to teachers (Rickson *et al.* 2018, Twyford 2012).

In relation to integrating wellbeing and drama, Hubley *et al.* (2020) examined the impact of '*Entertainment Education'* (EE) for SEL in elementary and middle schools. Within this study with 121 pupils in the USA, EE involved a short play performed by two actors. The authors maintained that using EE may be useful as a way to reduce mental illness stigma and foster SEL. This study highlighted the potential capacity to consider novel ways of exploring key aspects of SPHE through drama.

In a small-scale study in a preschool in Romania, Iuga and Turda (2022) investigated the impact of puppetry and puppet theatre on children's socio-emotional development and abilities. Conducting pre- and post-intervention testing, the authors maintained that the use of puppets had a positive impact on children's socio-emotional development. Although this study involved only 24 children, it provided some evidence to support the use of puppets as a teaching approach with young children, and the potential to integrate drama with SPHE more broadly.

In their study, Yanko and Yap (2020, p.249) observed a 'symbiotic Link Between Music, Movement, the Performing Arts, Social Emotional Learning and mindful learning'. Based on an autoethnographic storytelling approach in Canada, the teachers involved considered how the use of movement and music in the outdoors could be used to develop social and emotional skills. The teachers produced autoethnographic vignettes depicting the journey of Grade 1 pupils as they explored, investigated and connected with a local stream's ecosystem. According to Yanko and Yap (2020), they were able to weave these qualitative vignettes together as a narrative, illustrating the pupils' meaning-making through music and movement. The authors asserted that engagement with the Performing Arts in this context can support mindfulness and the development of social and emotional skills. Through a co-constructivist approach, allowing for opportunities for learning through reflective listening, choice, intentional focus and feedback, the authors concluded that this supports the development of behavioural and emotional abilities.

4.3.8 Theme 9: Values Education

The literature discussing Values Education highlighted that, if moral development is to be promoted effectively, values must be explicitly taught in the initial stages of schooling, and in ways that allow pupils to internalise the values.

In a study with 44 pre-school children based in Turkey, Öztürk *et al.* (2014) adopted a case control design whereby some of the children were exposed to a Values Education programme as an intervention, while other pupils were the control group. The programme aimed to develop the values of peace, responsibility, sharing and cooperation with the pupils. The intervention included developmentally appropriate approaches, including stories and puppetry. Key messages were reinforced using drama, games and songs. Pupils' SEL was measured using the '*Preschool Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale*' (PreBERS), with a focus on the following SEL categories: emotional regulation, school readiness, social confidence, family involvement, and total social-emotional development. The authors observed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the intervention group in terms of school readiness, social confidence, family involvement, and

total social emotional development. The authors also noted that family involvement and reinforcement of the subjects with repetition, freedom of self-expression, and giving responsibilities to each pupil in the class were other contributing factors to the success of the programme.

Bhatti *et al.* (2021) evaluated the impact of Values Education in the promotion of moral character with 200 pupils in Pakistan. The authors argued the need to teach moral values early. They stated that it is the 'sole responsibility of elementary schools to assist students to identify the difference between right and wrong' (p.2079), and that teachers should encourage pupils to ask difficult moral questions of their interest. The importance of Values Education was also emphasised by Kartowagiran *et al.* (2021). Kartowagiran *et al.* (2021) focused on character values for the 21st century for pupils in Pakistan, such as mindfulness, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, and leadership. Both studies identified community, classroom, and school climate as the foundations for developing character values. Bhatti *et al.* (2021) highlighted the importance of establishing school and classroom climates, and curricula that are prejudice-free, to support the development of moral values. The authors recommended that schools should consider organising activities and festivals that create awareness about social norms and traditions (Bhatti *et al.* 2021). Similarly, Kartowagiran *et al.* (2021) concluded that character values are not just inculcated, rather character education needs to be developed and implemented by linking and integrating multiple components of education for pupils.

It has also emerged from the literature that certain values receive more focus than others, at home and in education, and some are understood better by students. Balbag and Kaya (2019) conducted a quantitative 'Word Association Test' to reveal 4th grade pupils' cognitive structures regarding the values in a social studies curriculum in Turkey. In the study, 93 pupils were given seven values, namely respect, tolerance, love, responsibility, solidarity, benevolence, and patriotism. The results revealed that the pupils produced the most words for the value of tolerance and the least for the value of solidarity. In addition, it was evident that the pupils associated the values of respect, love, and tolerance with each other and associated the words family, goodness, friendship, and happiness with these values. Pupils associated the value of responsibility with homework and duty. This study revealed that the values most taught by parents and teachers are love, respect and tolerance and that the pupils had more abstract views about the other values. The authors emphasised that Values Education needs to be taught in a way that enables pupils to overcome misconceptions in their understanding of values, makes them more concrete, and allows the values to be internalised.

Teaching personal and social responsibility using a model-based approach was one such approach observed to be effective in improving pupils' values and behaviours in Spain. In their study, Manzano-Sánchez and Valero-Valenzuela (2019) adapted Hellison's '*Teaching Personal and Social*

Responsibility' (TPSR) model, traditionally used in PE, for implementation in all classroom lessons by teachers. The model is based on building relationships, presenting academic and value goals for each lesson, including responsibility strategies in practical tasks, and concluding lessons by sharing group- and self-assessments. The intervention programme was applied in 2 primary schools and 1 secondary school, for 7 months during 1 academic year with 272 students. The effects of this TPSR model-based programme on pupils' motivation, pro-social behaviours, violence, and classroom climate were evaluated. Results of the study indicated improvements for the experimental group in all areas and demonstrated that Hellison's model can be an appropriate methodology to be implemented in different curriculum subjects to improve pupils' basic psychological needs, satisfaction, motivation, pro-social behaviours, and classroom climate. However, the study emphasised the importance of sustained TPSR implementation and that professional development for teachers is essential to achieve the expected results.

4.3.9 Theme 10: Physical Education

4.3.9.1 Personal and Social Development through Physical Education (PE)

PE and sports have been identified in the literature as an important opportunity for pupils to learn, develop, internalise and practice social and moral values. Balci and Yanik (2020) examined the level of values related to PE and the sports of 1138 students, aged 12-13 years, in secondary schools in Turkey. Students' self-reported personal and social responsibility behaviours and the relationship between these behaviours and their values related to PE and sports were evaluated. The findings showed that PE and sports lessons present important opportunities for the socio-moral development of students. Based on these findings, the authors claimed that PE and sports lessons are the most significant physical activity environment for the development of students' moral character. The results highlighted that students' values related to the subject of PE and sport, and their self-reported personal and social responsibility behaviours were generally at a high level. The values considered most important to the students were awareness, respect, solidarity, healthy lifestyle and nutrition, sports culture, and national culture and unity, respectively. These results indicate that the students believed in the importance of protecting nature and the environment in sporting activities. This study highlights that, based on student's self-reporting, values may be taught through PE and sports and indicates the potential for possible integration.

4.3.9.2 Dance

One study (Georgios *et al.* 2018) investigated whether there were differences in the way health-related quality of life was perceived by 65 Greek primary school children in two programmes; Greek traditional dance within PE, and a regular PE programme, across a 5-month period. Greek traditional dance was associated with increased wellbeing, and was reported to have multiple benefits for the pupils in terms of their quality of life. The traditional dance programme within PE resulted in higher pupil interest, more active participation, and improved fitness, self-esteem, socialisation and wellbeing when compared to the regular PE programme. The findings from this study highlight the benefits of dance within a PE programme and the positive effects of dance on pupil wellbeing.

4.3.9.3 Fundamental Movement Skills

The development and integration of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) have been identified in the literature as a core component of PE. Sgro *et al.* (2019) evaluated the impact of a games approach on the motor competence of 10-year-old primary school pupils (n=100) in Italy. The study highlighted the low level of FMS in pupils as a critical issue to be addressed. A games-based approach resulted in a significant improvement in the movement and gross-motor skill development of previously low-active males and in the locomotion skills of high-active females. The authors claimed that the aims of the PE curriculum can be reached if they are supported by effective teaching and learning strategies, such as game-centred and tactical approaches.

Cristian *et al.* (2013) evaluated the effect of motion gaming (active participation in class relays and games focused on specific movements) in PE lessons on the physical skill development of children in fourth class in a school in Romania (experimental group n=19, control group n=19). Results indicated that after 6 months of engaging in the programme, there were significant improvements in the skills of the experimental group in comparison to the control group. The authors claimed that active participation in relays and practising specific skills during PE classes resulted in significant positive skill development in children with an average age of 10-11 years. Similarly, Dobrescu (2019) evaluated the influences of dynamic games in PE on the motor behaviour of 55 primary school pupils, Romania, over the course of one academic year. The results of this research confirmed the positive effects of dynamic games in PE on children's psycho-motor development. The author suggested that to enhance skill development, PE lessons should include a variety of games incorporating skill content from various sports (for example, hand-ball, basketball etc.), and the movement games must be carefully selected based on the psycho-motor objectives of the lesson.

Duncan *et al.* (2020) evaluated the effects of the '*Badminton World Federation (BWF) Shuttle Time*' programme on children's FMS. A total of 124 children aged 6-7 and 10-11 years in a primary school in the UK participated in the study (intervention n=63, control n=61). The results of this study illustrated that the quality and outcome of FMS scores improved in the intervention group as a result of the 6-week programme. The improvements were more prominent in the younger children (6–7 years old) compared to older (10–11 years old) children. Improvements in FMS were retained at 10-weeks follow-up. This study concluded that the badminton intervention programme is effective in enhancing children's FMS and it was more beneficial for younger children.

Ilyasova and Erzhanov (2014) conducted an experiment with 102 boys, aged 8-9-years in second and third grade in Kazakhstan to identify the optimal conditions for developing technical movement skills and physical fitness in PE lessons. Students were divided into three experimental groups and a control group. Each of the experimental groups devoted 75%, 50% and 25% respectively of PE class time to teaching technical skills of football and the remaining time to developing physical fitness. The results of the study indicated that the optimal conditions for developing technical movement skills and fitness for primary school boys were to spend 75% of the PE lesson developing physical fitness and 25% developing technical skills. The study also highlighted that the movement skills of 8–9-year-old boys are enhanced when time is devoted to teaching skills during PE lessons. Lopes *et al.* (2017) also concluded that PE was important for the development of motor skills, in all sports except track and field, for Grade 3-4 pupils in Portugal. Even two lessons per week led to an improvement in motor skill competence, especially in gymnastic and basketball. However, two lessons per week were not enough to improve physical fitness or body composition. Taken together, these studies illustrate the potential for learning of skills in primary PE, conditional on the use of appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

Hall-López *et al.* (2017) conducted an observational study to compare moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) levels of pupils during PE lessons and during recess. This study included 1765, fourth to sixth grade children in 23 primary schools in Mexico. Pupils were noted as spending an average of 41% of PE class time in MVPA and an average of 50% of break time in MVPA. This study concluded that pupils' MVPA levels were higher when they were not under the instruction of teachers. Pušnik *et al.* (2014) used accelerometry to evaluate the quality and intensity of physical activity during PE lessons in 189, third grade, primary school children (aged 8-9 years) in Slovenia. This study reported that pupils achieved approximately 13 minutes of MPVA during 36 minutes of PE (36%). The authors reported that there was no difference in the accumulation of MVPA regardless of whether the teacher was a PE specialist or a generalist class teacher. These studies suggest that it is essential that

teachers develop strategies for engaging pupils in MPVA during PE lessons. This is the level required for health gains as established by the World Health Organization (2010) and there may be further opportunities for children to accumulate MVPA throughout the school day.

In a study based on 281 children, aged 6-8 in first and second year of primary school in Italy, Palumbo (2020) used the APCM (Abilità Prassiche e della Coordinazione Motoria) protocol to evaluate the psychomotor development and cognitive-adaptive functions of the pupils in relation to sport activity. The author reported a strong relationship between sport practice and psychomotor and cognitive development suggesting that introducing sport has greater benefits on pupils who have psychomotor difficulties. For children who played sports, there was a marked improvement in cognitive and psychomotor development between the first and second years of primary school. The study concluded that sport practice is a key element in the early years of primary school whereby young children experience the world through their senses and the body, however, it must be noted that this was a small-scale study, and the findings may not be generalisable.

4.3.9.4 Pupil Attitudes

Pupil attitudes towards PE have been observed to influence their engagement in PE lessons, their learning and development in PE, and ultimately their attitudes towards, and engagement in, physical activity outside of school. Key features identified as influencing these attitudes towards PE included pupils' level of fun and enjoyment in PE lessons. Teachers' approaches to PE and their behaviours have also been identified as pivotal in influencing pupils' attitudes.

In their study examining the attitudes of 438 primary pupils towards PE in Slovakia, Balga *et al.* (2019) determined that most pupils displayed predominately positive attitudes towards PE. The authors reported that there was no significant difference in attitudes towards PE in terms of gender, however, attitudes were significantly differentiated in terms of age, physical activity, and sport engagement. Pupils who attended sports clubs displayed more positive attitudes to PE, while inactive students displayed more negative attitudes. Similarly, the youngest age group (age 8-9 years) expressed the most positive attitudes, but positive attitudes declined and negative attitudes inclined with age as seen with the 10-11-year-olds and the 12-13-year-olds.

Phillips *et al.* (2019) evaluated pupil attitudes towards PE. This study included 146, 9-11-year-old pupils in a suburban school in the USA. Fun was noted to influence pupil perceptions towards PE and it was important for the children to experience fun in PE lessons. They identified that the teacher influences their enjoyment. By creating a fun atmosphere and engaging in the learning process the teacher can enhance student enjoyment. The pupils also expressed that class activities were

important to them and influenced their experience of PE. They enjoyed team problem-solving tasks, which incorporated physical activity with cooperative challenges. However, the pupils had differing opinions related to fitness-related activities. Those with the most positive attitudes toward PE enjoyed them, while those with moderately positive attitudes didn't speak much about fitness-related activities. The pupils seemed to enjoy the activities for which they were prepared and in which they experienced success. All pupils expressed negative attitudes towards fitness testing. This study concluded that fitness testing can be detrimental to students' attitudes to, and engagement in, physical activity.

In their study, which evaluated student perceptions of PE in skill-themes approaches and multiactivity approaches, Gosset and Silverman (2019) reported that pupils in the USA (n=313, fourth and fifth grade) had positive attitudes towards PE and thought that it is important regardless of which approach was used. Teachers were identified as potentially influencing pupil attitudes. Similar findings were reported by Varol (2018), whose study included 590 primary school children in Turkey (mean age 11.46 years). The study indicated that the children had positive attitudes towards PE.

4.3.9.5 Professional Development for Teachers: Transformational Teaching

Professional development has been identified in the literature as a key component to enhance pupil learning, development, and engagement in PE. In Canada, Wilson *et al.* (2012) evaluated the effect of transformational teaching on child psychological needs satisfaction, motivation, and engagement in primary school PE. Transformational teaching is concerned with teachers' optimism and enthusiasm, role-modelling positive values and beliefs, facilitating intellectual challenges, and paying attention to individual needs in PE. A total of 577 children (mean age=11.18 years) completed questionnaires, which revealed that pupils' perceptions of their teachers' transformational teaching behaviours predicted their motivation and engagement in PE. This study suggests that transformational teaching can represent an important predictor of health-enhancing cognitions and behaviours among primary-school children. Therefore, is essential for teachers to be trained on this teaching approach if such changes are to be actualised.

Abdulla *et al.* (2022) evaluated the effects of an eight-hour professional learning programme, which enabled teachers to apply self-determination theory to improve pupils' motivation, engagement and MVPA in PE lessons. Thirty teachers (n=15 intervention; n=15 control) and their 725 pupils (intervention n=354; control n=371) in 5th grade (aged 9-11 years) across 4 primary schools in the Maldives participated in the study. Pupils completed questionnaires to evaluate the degree to which they perceived their teachers to be meeting their needs. Teachers' autonomy support (for example,

choices), competence support (for example, clear instructions and rules), and relatedness support (for example, caring and friendly) were evaluated. Pupils' basic psychological needs satisfaction, their motivation, self-efficacy, enjoyment and engagement in PE were also evaluated. The results reported that when teachers applied self-determination theory in PE lessons, pupils' need frustration for autonomy, competence, and relatedness was reduced. Pupils in the intervention group also experienced higher levels of self-efficacy, enjoyment and engagement than the control group.

Similarly, Escriva-Boulley *et al.* (2018) used a cluster randomised control test to evaluate the effectiveness of a twelve-hour (4 x 3 hours) need-supportive professional development programme, grounded on self-determination theory, on teachers' motivating style and consequently their pupils' physical activity during PE lessons. This study took place across 13 primary schools in France and included 15 teachers and their 293 students. Teaching observations and accelerometers worn by pupils were used to evaluate the outcomes. The results of this study concluded that teachers in the intervention group enhanced support of their pupils' psychological needs across the school year, although a slight decrease was identified at follow-up. Pupils in the intervention group increased their time spent in MVPA.

These studies demonstrate the potential of professional development programmes grounded in self-determination theory to improve teachers' motivating style, and promote pupils' psychological need satisfaction within PE, which results in reduced disengaged behaviours, increased intrinsic motivation and consequently greater enjoyment, engagement and MVPA levels in PE lessons.

4.3.10 Theme 11: SEN and Sense of Belonging

The need to belong has been identified as supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Midgen *et al.* (2019) explored the sense of belonging and factors that influenced this among 84 children and young people with a range of SEN and disabilities across nursery, mainstream primary and secondary schools in the UK. The majority of participants reported a sense of belonging and school connectedness. Four key themes were identified as important in supporting children's sense of belonging in school. These were; 1. Relationships: friendships, peers, staff, community, family, and acceptance. In addition, positive relationships were identified through school sports, trips and activities; 2. School Environment: physical, familiarity, safety, school identification and equipment; 3. Teaching and Learning: tailored support, group work, rules and routines, recognition, rewards, and curriculum/teaching approach; 4. Extra-curricular activities: sport/clubs, trips and play.

4.3.11 Theme 12: Choice, Agency and Active Learning

In addition to specific methodologies, choice, agency, and active learning were specifically identified in the literature, which focused on stage 1 and 2. Three studies reported barriers and facilitators to young children's motivation and learning. In their study, which consulted young children aged 4-5 years in the UK about their learning, Georgeson *et al.* (2014) identified the importance of carefully selecting teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of the pupils, particularly those with communication difficulties and/or low self-confidence.

Another study involving 200 children, aged 3-8 years old, across kindergarten and primary school in Australia, reported that kindergarten children expressed a real sense of agency and self-efficacy in their learning, while school-aged children expressed a strong desire for opportunities to be more actively engaged and have some control over their learning. This study by Flückiger *et al.* (2018) reported that positive dispositions towards learning appeared to decrease when children transitioned to school from kindergarten. These results indicate the need to facilitate pupils with more opportunities for choice and decision-making regarding their own learning, in primary school.

Learning materials and choice were also identified by Akyola (2021) as influencing the engagement of 5-year-olds (n=20) in classroom activities in Turkey. When visual materials were used, the pupils became active participants in learning activities. They began taking an active role in the decision-making and in expressing their views on the planning of programme activities. They expressed their satisfaction with visual resources, learning materials and active methodologies.

4.3.12 Theme 13: The Role of Play

The importance of play (active play, risky play and learning through play) for wellbeing was also identified in the literature for stage 1 and 2.

Bozkur (2019) evaluated 272 teachers' perceptions of teaching values through games in Turkish schools. The participating teachers reported that children's games were one of the most important tools in developing children's values and in teaching them responsibility. Game-based learning and gamification were also identified in the literature as effective in teaching and motivating post-primary students to learn in sexual health education programmes in Australia (Haruna *et al.* 2018; Haruna *et al.* 2021). These studies suggest that games and play have an essential role in Values Education and have the potential to be integrated into all subject areas.

In their small-scale study in South Africa, involving 8 early childhood teachers, Lunga *et al.* (2022) explored the role of play-based pedagogy to promote the holistic development of young children. This research used Participatory Action Learning and Research Approach (PALAR), with four sessions per cycle. The authors reported that a play-based approach, both indoors and outdoors, was very useful to support children's holistic development and the use of play-based approaches in social and learning environments should be encouraged. Cefai and Pizzuto (2017), in a small-scale study within a primary school in Malta explored the views of 4-7-year-old children (n=18) on what it means to be a pupil in a nurture group. In this qualitative study, thematic analysis of children's voices during group interviews was conducted, together with collaborative mapping, poster design and semi-structured focus groups with 5 tasks held with each group. The findings highlighted the need for more active participation by pupils in their education, stressing the importance of hands-on, play-based learning, and the relational and emotional dimensions of learning for pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It also emphasised the importance of pupil voice.

In the study conducted by Librianty *et al.* (2021) in Indonesia, set across 5 early childhood settings involving 94 children and 15 teachers, teacher involvement in active play and its effect on children's physical literacy was examined. Using questionnaires and physical literacy instruments, the authors reported that physical literacy achievements of children with high teacher involvement were better than those in the low teacher involvement group. This study highlights the role of active play as contributing to children's physical literacy and the potential of playful pedagogy to promote physical literacy.

Morris *et al.* (2018) evaluated the impact of teacher-designed wellbeing and sustainability play-based learning experiences on young children's knowledge connections. Based in Australia, the study included 300 preschool children-parent dyads and 25 teachers. Throughout the findings, the authors highlighted the need to train early childhood teachers about play-based learning towards knowledge on wellbeing and sustainability. The study concluded that play-based learning was a more useful way to build children's knowledge on wellbeing, than obesity education and prevention.

Following earthquakes in New Zealand, Bateman *et al.* (2013) considered how young children's wellbeing could be supported by playing out their earthquake experiences. This study involved 60 children in preschool and gathered data using audio and video recording of children's play activities. Based on the footage gathered, the study concluded that play was a useful tool for children to work through traumatic experiences. The authors also highlighted the importance of listening to children's play stories to support their wellbeing.

A Norwegian study by Sando *et al.* (2021) based on 79 children across 8 early childhood settings (mean age of 4.7 years) explored the impact of risky play on children's wellbeing, involvement, and physical activity. A variety of methods in this three-year study were used, including; video observations of children; the Leuven wellbeing scale for children; the Leuven involvement scale, and an observational system for recording physical activity. The researchers reported that engagement with risky play was positively associated with children's wellbeing, involvement and physical activity. They highlighted the importance of a focus on play more generally than subject specific Wellbeing/PE/SPHE. They also underscored the positive role of risky play for young pupils, leading to increases in physical activity levels and improved health and wellbeing.

4.4 Chapter Summary

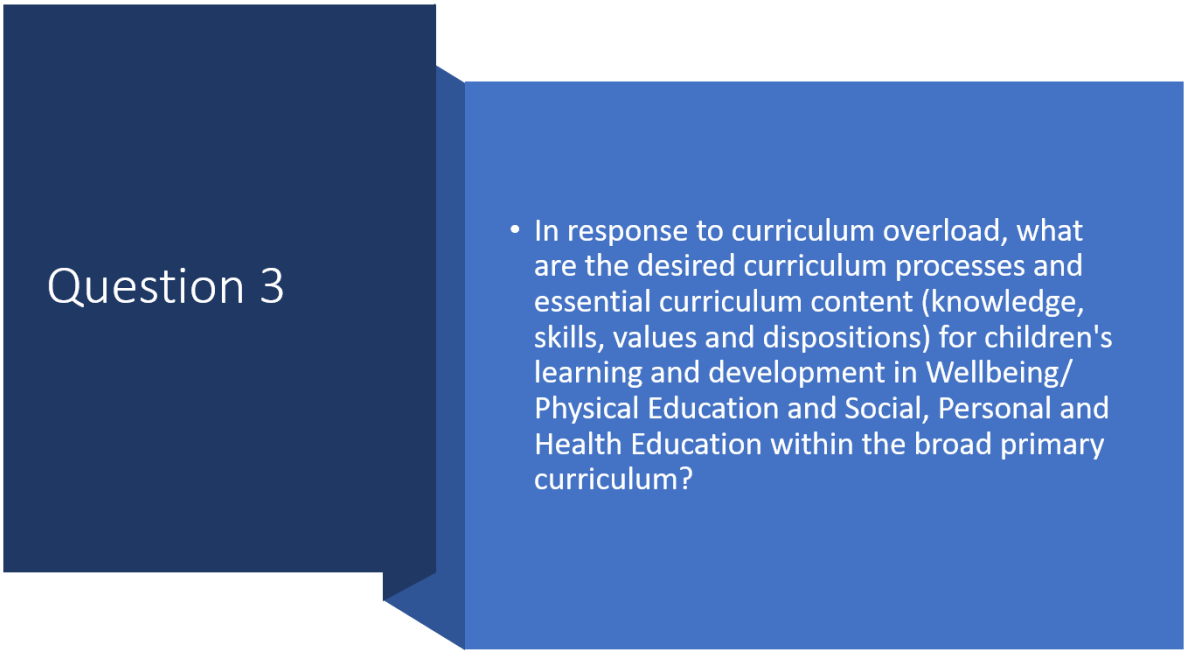
Taken together, the findings from the literature reviewed in this chapter provide evidence that a diverse range of approaches are used in the classroom to promote Wellbeing in an integrated manner in stages 1 and 2, and through the subjects of Physical Education (PE) and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in stages 3 and 4. Many of these approaches are associated with benefits for pupils' wellbeing and academic achievement.

There is evidence to support the effectiveness of approaches, which target wellbeing in the classroom through more discrete teaching. However, the literature reviewed for stage 1 and 2 clearly demonstrates the potential of more holistic and integrated interventions, which incorporate activities that are meaningful and relevant to pupils. Studies reported in this chapter illustrate the value of dialogue, digital technologies, play, drama, puppetry, games, music, dance and various visual media. Approaches which promote child voice, agency, and more active modes of engagement are also noted as important in stage 1 and 2. Through stage 3 and 4, the literature reviewed supports the inclusion of the subjects of PE and SPHE in the curriculum. It is clear that discrete teaching in the areas of SEL, health education, Values Education, and PE supports positive pupil outcomes. Similar to findings in the literature relating to stage 1 and 2, however, in stage 3 and 4 wellbeing is enhanced when PE and SPHE are integrated with other subject areas including Visual Arts, Drama and Music.

The literature reviewed also highlights the importance of overall school and classroom climate for wellbeing. Moreover, generic pedagogical practices, such as the provision of appropriate levels of cognitive challenge have emerged as important for promoting wellbeing across the curriculum. While all pupils clearly benefit from approaches which implicitly or explicitly target wellbeing, there is evidence to suggest that the effects are particularly powerful for pupils considered 'at risk' of not reaching their learning potential, including those with special educational needs.

It is clear that tailored continual professional learning opportunities for teachers and the provision of adequate resources are critical to the success of curriculum innovations targeting wellbeing in schools.

Chapter Five: Addressing Question Three



5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the question about the desired curriculum processes and content for children's learning and development in Wellbeing/PE/SPHE in an overloaded curriculum. As with Chapter Three and Chapter Four, the systematic review of the literature yielded a number of research studies. However, there were very few studies which answered this question directly. There were tenuous links, at best, in the majority of the studies. Only one article of the 112 articles specifically dealt with the issue of curriculum overload and highlighted how aspects of wellbeing could be integrated in other ways. It was therefore necessary to reflect on the findings from each article to ascertain how they linked to Wellbeing/PE/SPHE. Once again, it must be stated that there was an overall gap in the literature regarding PE, another significant gap regarding studies based on the Irish context and a concern over the generalisability of numerous studies due to small samples sizes. To overcome some of these difficulties, the reader is invited to examine the data on each study and to use this information when reading about specific findings from individual studies.

5.2 Overview of Included Studies

Figure 5.1 illustrates the distribution of countries represented in the 112 articles included within this section. The majority of studies (18%) were located in the USA (n=20). Australia (n=17) and the UK

(n=15) were the locations of 15% and 13% of the studies respectively. Spain and Turkey (n=7 each) were the locations of 6% of studies each. Italy (n=5) was represented by 4% of the studies. The category of 'other' comprised 37% of the total studies (n=41). This included countries from which one or two studies emerged. China, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Israel, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Portugal, and Sweden were the locations of two studies each. A variety of other countries were represented once (Austria, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Fiji, Finland, Ireland, Japan, Maldives, Norway, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe). One study took place across Hong Kong and the USA.

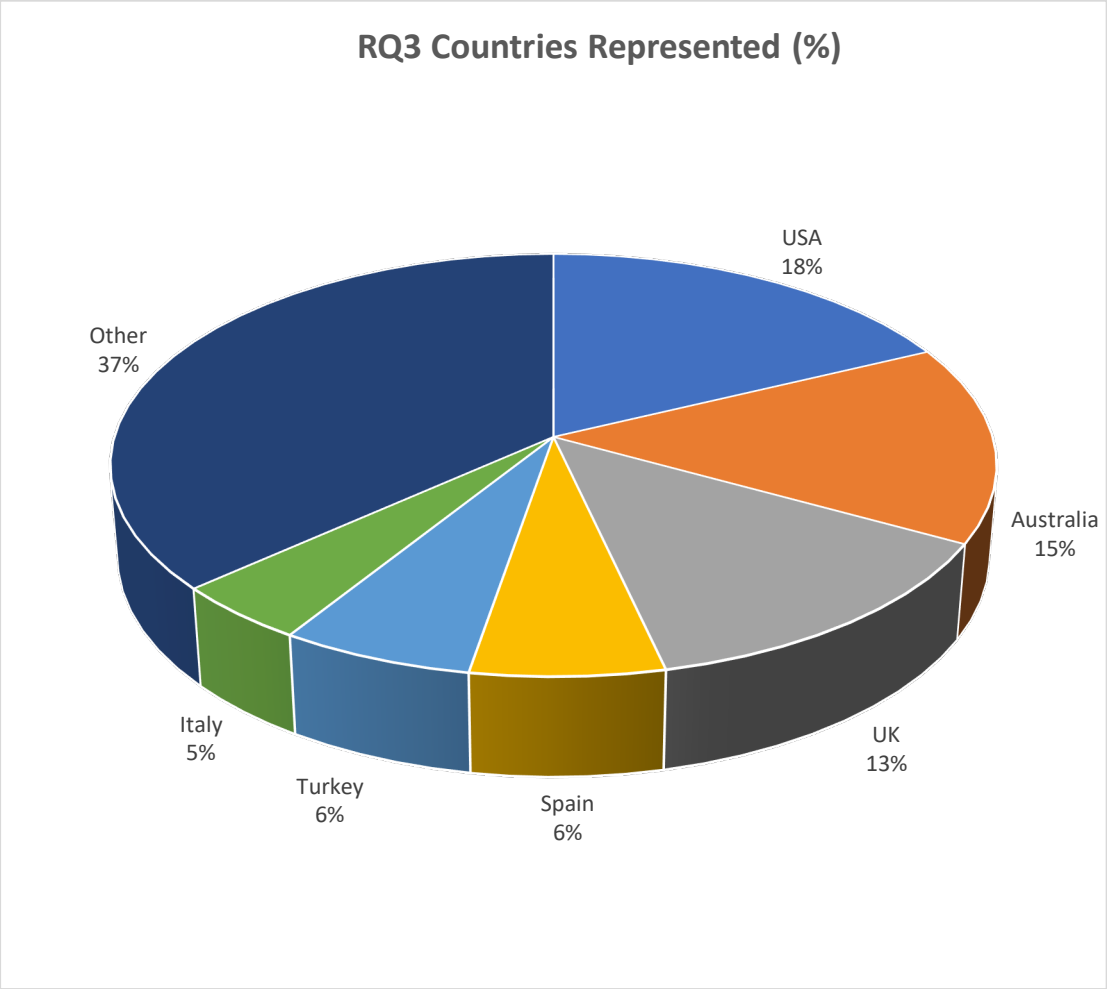


Figure 5.1 Research Question 3: Distribution of Countries Represented in the Literature

Sample sizes ranged from five pupils (Ricketts *et al.* 2022) to 30,462 pupils (Kautz *et al.* 2021). One study did not specify the participant numbers beyond stating that it was pupils from one Grade One class (Yanko and Yap 2020). The majority (52%) of the 112 studies included within this section were conducted in primary/elementary schools (n=58). Secondary schools (including middle and high

schools) (n=15) and early years (including kindergarten and preschool) (n=12) were settings for 13% and 11% respectively. A further 21% of studies (n=24) included various combinations of settings such as early years and primary school, primary and secondary school, or all three settings. Special or alternative schools were the settings for 3% of studies (n=3) which are represented under the category 'other'. They included a Black supplementary school, a professional development setting (schools and university clinical setting), and a church and primary school. The distribution of settings is illustrated in Figure 5.2.

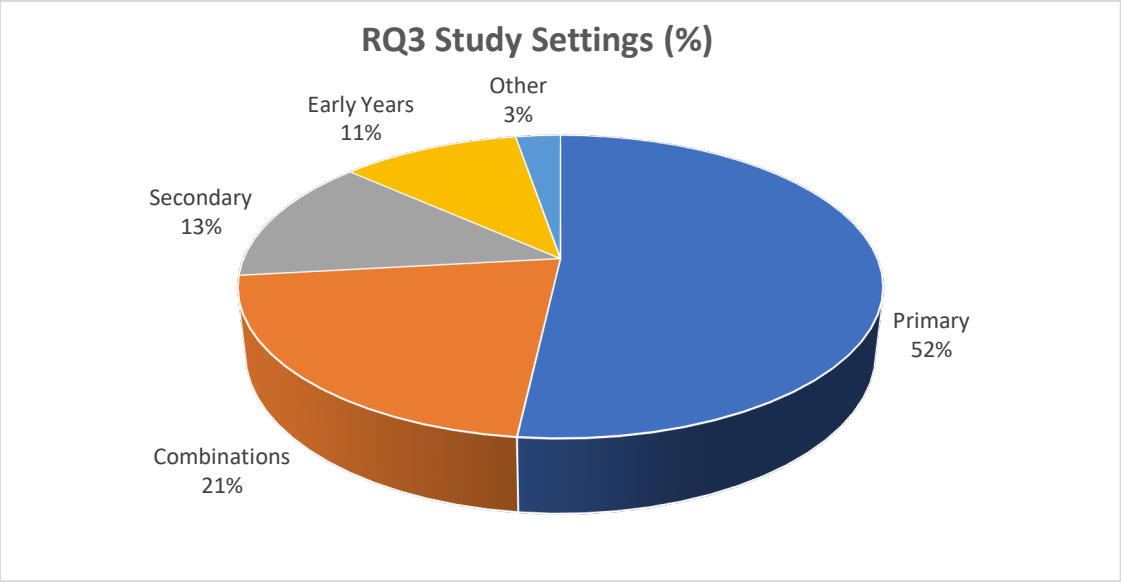


Figure 5.2 Research Question 3: Distribution of Settings Represented in the Literature

Figure 5.3 illustrates the distribution of stages included within this section. Pupils in stages 1 and 2 (the equivalent of infants to 2nd class) were represented in only 5% (n=6) of the studies, while pupils in stages 3 and 4 (the equivalent of 3rd to 6th class) were represented in 36% (n=40) of the studies. A further 7% (n=8) of the studies included pupils in stages 1 to 4, while 22% (n=25) included children in a combination of stages such as early years and stages 1, or stages 3 and 4 and secondary school. Participants in other stages, namely secondary or preschool stages only were included in 24% (n=27) of the studies, while 5% (n=6) did not state the specific grade level of the participants.

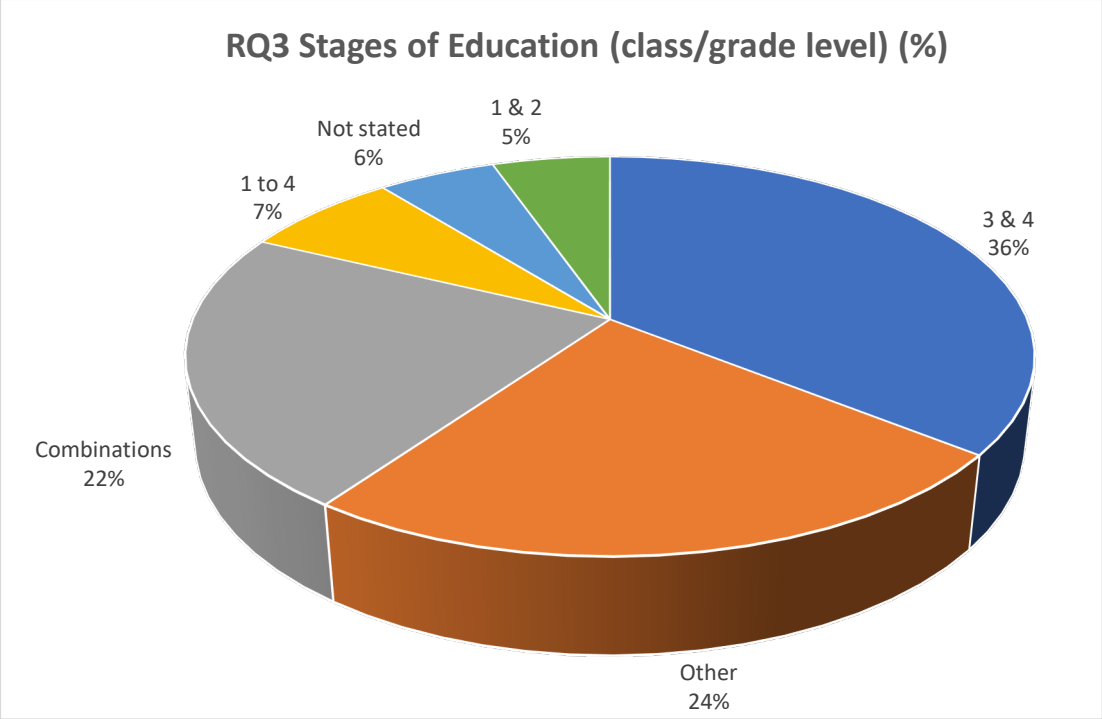


Figure 5.3 Research Question 3: Distribution of Stages Represented in the Literature

Figure 5.4 illustrates the distribution of data collection techniques used within the 112 studies. Questionnaires were used in 29% (n=32) of the studies, which was the most commonly used approach. Mixed methods were used in 13% (n=14) of the studies, and interviews and/or focus groups were the chosen approach in 12% (n=13) of the articles. Experiments, case studies and scales/measures were conducted in 7% (n=8), 6% (n=7) and 5% (n=6) of the studies respectively. A further 3% of studies (n=3) carried out Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs). Of the 112 studies, 17% (n=19) used 'other' data collection strategies, which included observations, photovoice and reflections and 9% (n=10) used a combination of approaches such as questionnaires and measures.

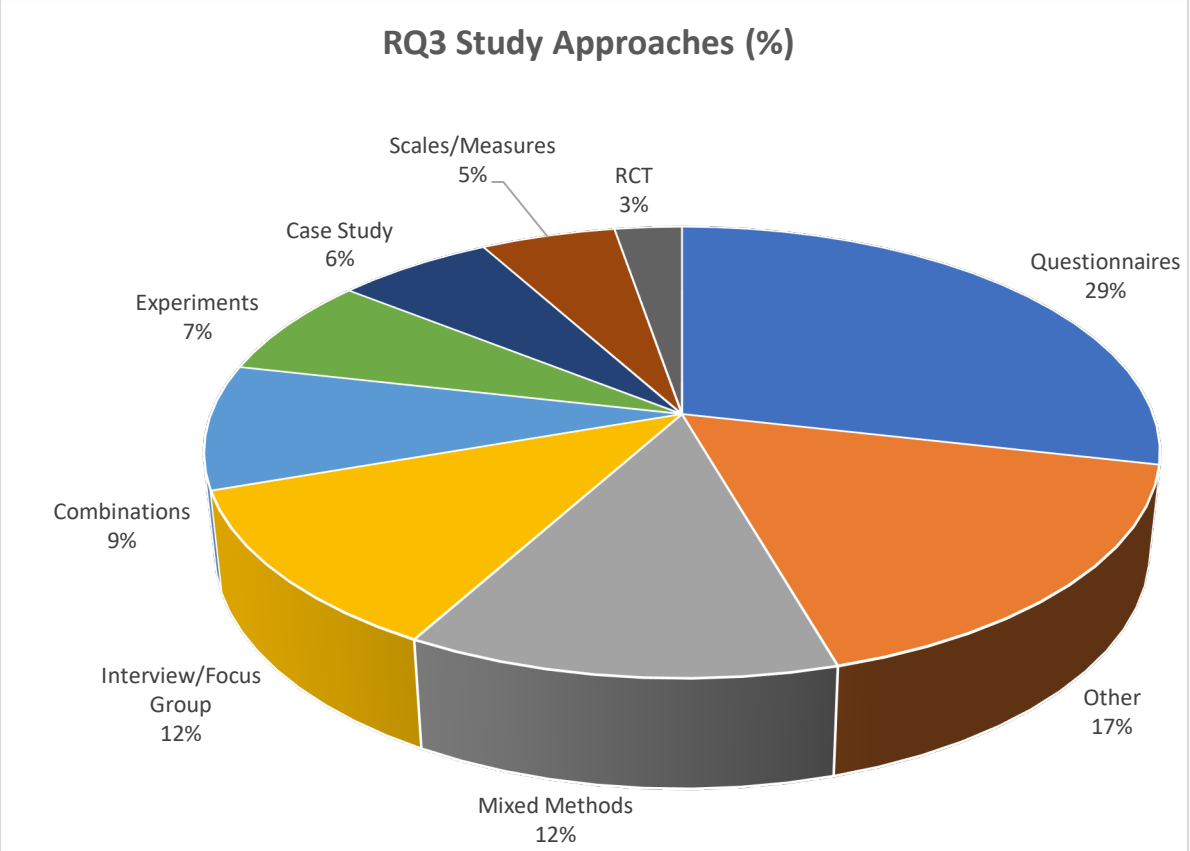


Figure 5.4 Research Question 3: Distribution of Study Approaches Represented in the Literature

Table 5.1 represents the details for all included studies: author, number of participants, mean age and grade level of participants, country of study, study setting and study type.

From analysis of the included studies, it is apparent that subject-specific content (knowledge, skills, values and dispositions) can support learning and development in other curriculum areas. This indicates that Wellbeing can be taught discretely through subjects, such as PE and SPHE, and can be taught or promoted through other subject areas, which is a critical aspect of reducing curriculum overload. Perhaps most significantly, is the evidence from the literature that curriculum processes, which include the school and classroom climate, the physical environment and the creation of a sense of belonging for all pupils, can impact wellbeing. This can be interpreted as the 'positive school culture and climate' that is already a context for the teaching of SPHE in the 1999 Curriculum (GoI 1999c). This could be a very efficient context for supporting Wellbeing in an overloaded curriculum.

Table 5.1 Details of Articles Included for Research Question Three

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
1	Abdulla et al. (2022)	725 pupils 30 teachers	Pupils: M=10.5 years	Grade 5	3 & 4	Maldives	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
2	Akyola (2021)	20 pupils	M=5 years	Kindergarten	Other	Turkey	Kindergarten	Early Years	Pre-test, post-test	Other
3	Anderson et al. (2015)	95 pupils	11-12 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Focus group	Interview/FG
4	Askell-Williams et al. (2013)	4970 parents, teachers and project officers	Pupils: M=9.7 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
5	Atkinson et al. (2019)	Not stated	12-18 years	Not stated	Other	UK	Post-primary	Secondary	Reflective narrative	Other
6	Babalis et al. (2013)	306 pupils	Not stated	Grades 5-6	3 & 4	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
7	Balbag and Kaya (2019)	93 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Word association test	Scales/Measures
8	Balci and Yanik (2020)	1138 pupils	12-13 years	Not stated	Other	Turkey	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
9	Bertills et al. (2018)	439 pupils	13 years	Year 7	Other	Sweden	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
10	Bhatti et al. (2021)	200 pupils	Not stated	8th Class	3 & 4	Pakistan	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
11	Bozgün and Akın-Köstereliоğlu (2020)	582 pupils	9-11 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
12	Brignell and Woodcock (2016)	100 pupils	M=9.3 years	Grades 3-6	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Placebo experiment design	Experiments
13	Buchanan et al. (2021)	23 pupils	7-9 years	Years 3-5	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Life history approach: interviews and observation	Combinations

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
14	Cantero et al. (2020)	182 pupils	M=10.32 years	Grade 5	3 & 4	Spain	Elementary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
15	Carlson et al. (2021)	12 pupils 22 caregivers 5 teachers	10-14 years	Grades 5 and 7	3 & 4	Uganda	Primary school	Primary	Focused ethnography	Other
16	Carmen (2020)	281 pupils	6-8 years	Years 1-2	1 & 2	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
17	Carraro and Gobbi (2018)	42 pupils	M=9.8 years	Grades 4-5	3 & 4	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
18	Carroll et al. (2020)	854 pupils	8-12 years M=9.64 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
19	Cava et al. (2021)	479 pupils	9-14 years M=11.5 years	Grades 4-6 and Years 1-2 of secondary	Combinations	Spain	Primary school and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
20	Cefai and Pizzuto (2017)	18 pupils	4-7 years	Kindergarten-Year 3	Combinations	Malta	Nurture class in Primary school with Kindergarten classes	Combinations	Group interview	Interview/FG
21	Cefai et al. (2018)	97 pupils	4-5 years	Kindergarten	Other	Malta	Kindergarten	Early Years	Pre- Post-Questionnaire	Questionnaires
22	Crawford et al. (2021)	48 pupils 12 teachers	Pupils: 7-11 years	Not stated	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Focus group	Interview/FG
23	Cristian et al. (2013)	38 pupils	M=10.75 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Romania	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
24	Danby and Hamilton (2016)	18 teachers, assistants and learning needs coordinators	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	UK	Primary school	Primary	Mixed Methods: Questionnaire and Interview	Mixed Methods
25	Deans et al. (2017)	38 pupils	4-5 years	Preschool	Other	Australia	Preschool	Early Years	Practitioner Research	Other
26	Diebel et al. (2016)	116 pupils	M=9.4 years	Years 3-6	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Pre-Post-Questionnaire	Questionnaires
27	Erhorn (2014)	26 pupils	8-11 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Germany	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic case study	Case Study

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
28	Follari (2022)	450 pupils 65 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic case study	Case Study
29	Forber-Pratt et al. (2022)	17 students with disabilities and/or at risk of disability identification	12-15 years	Grades 6-8	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Narrative enquiry	Other
30	Giannotta and Özdemir (2013)	161 pupils	M=11.14 years	Grades 6-8	Combinations	Italy	Middle school	Combinations	3 wave longitudinal analysis	Other
31	Glazzard and Szreter (2020)	557 students	11-16 years	Years 8-10	Combinations	UK	Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
32	Grace et al. (2018)	47 pupils	3-5 years	Preschool and Long-day Care Centre	Combinations	Australia	Early childhood	Early Years	Interview	Interview/FG
33	Graham and Truscott (2020)	114 pupils 50 teachers	Pupils: 9 years	Year 4	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Interview and focus groups	Interview/FG
34	Guan et al. (2020)	246 students	M=13.09 years	Grade 7-8	Other	USA	Junior high school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
35	Hargreaves et al. (2022)	23 pupils	7-8 years	Year 3	1 & 2	UK	Primary school	Primary	Interview and lesson observation	Combinations
36	Harris et al. (2022)	10 students	Not stated	Grade 8	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Focus groups	Interview/FG
37	Hubley et al. (2020)	121 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Elementary and Middle school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
38	Hussain et al. (2015)	328 boys	9-13 years	Grades 6-8	3 & 4	Pakistan	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
39	In et al. (2019)	873 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Survey and measures	Case Study
40	Jacquez et al. (2020)	111 pupils	M=10.21 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	USA	Montessori Elementary school	Primary	Non-randomised control test	Other

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
41	Johnson et al. (2014)	5 classroom teachers	Not stated	Years 5-6	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
42	Kartowagiran et al. (2021)	654 pupils 100 teachers	Not stated	Grades 5-8	3 & 4	Indonesia	Elementary school	Primary	Scale	Scales/Measures
43	Kautz et al. (2021)	30462 pupils4273 teachers12216 parents	Not stated	Grades 3-12	Combinations	USA	Elementary school, Middle school, High school	Combinations	Questionnaire and school administrative records	Combinations
44	Kim and Hong (2019)	70 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	Hong Kong/USA	Elementary, Middle and High school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
45	Kirby et al. (2021)	88 children:63 primary 25 post-primary	8-14 years	Not stated	Combinations	UK	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
46	Kiuru et al. (2020)	848 pupils	M=12.3 years	Grades 6-7	Combinations	Finland	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Questionnaire and academic records	Combinations
47	Krull et al. (2014)	2839 pupils	M=6.47 years	Grade 1	1 & 2	Germany	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: interview and questionnaire	Mixed Methods
48	Lester and Cross (2015)	1800 pupils	11-14 years	Last year of Primary school, first 2 years of Secondary school	Combinations	Australia	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
49	Lizuka et al. (2015)	69 pupils 23 teachers	10-12 years	Grades 6-7	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Pre-and post-test	Other
50	Longaretti (2020)	16 pupils	11-12 years	Year 6	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
51	Lonigan et al. (2015)	855 children 110 teachers	2-5 years M=4.48 years	Preschool	Other	USA	Preschool	Early Years	Mixed-methods	Mixed Methods
52	Lopes et al. (2017)	60 pupils	9 years	Grades 3-4	3 & 4	Portugal	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experimental design	Experiments

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
53	Lunga et al. (2022)	8 early childhood educators	Not stated	Not stated	Other	South Africa	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Participatory action learning and research approach	Other
54	Macdonald et al. (2021)	75 teachers	Not stated	Kindergarten to Year 2	1 to 4	Australia	Primary School with Kindergarten classes	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
55	MacEvoy et al. (2016)	499 pupils	8-12 years M=9.88 years	Grades 3-5	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Measures	Scales/Measures
56	Makuna and Maizere (2022)	5 pupils	13-14 years	Grades 4-5	Other	Zimbabwe	Primary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
57	Marsh et al. (2019)	68 students22 teachers	8-18 years	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
58	McCormick et al. (2015)	435 pupils 435 parents 120 teachers	M=5.38 years	Kindergarten and Grade 1	Combinations	USA	Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Multilevel regression analyses	Other
59	Menendez and Fernandez-Rio (2017)	12 students 3 PE teachers 1 parent	15-16 years	Grade 9	Other	Spain	Public high school	Secondary	Interview and Focus groups	Interview/FG
60	Midgen et al. (2019)	84 pupils (with SEN)	3-16 years	Not stated	Combinations	UK	Nursery-Secondary school	Combinations	Mixed methods: questionnaire, reflection	Mixed Methods
61	Mihic et al. (2016)	164 children	3-6 years	Preschool	Other	Croatia	Preschool	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
62	Mischenko et al. (2021)	40 children	6-7 years M=6.43 years	Preschool	Other	Russia	Preschool	Early Years	Pedagogical experiment Motor tests and Index	Experiments

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
63	Mnubi (2017)	54 student leaders (interviews) 581 student leaders (focus groups) 29 head teachers 35 mentors 24 champions 27 community leaders	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	Tanzania	Primary school and Secondary school	Combinations	Interview and focus groups	Interview/FG
64	Mohamed and Thomas (2017)	21 students 3 parents 63 school staff	9-19 years	Not stated	Combinations	UK	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Mixed methods: interview and questionnaire	Mixed Methods
65	Moore et al. (2021)	2218 pupils	11-12 years	Last year of primary school	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaires	Questionnaires
66	Morcom (2016)	31 pupils	9-11 years	Year 4-5	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Social and reflective practices including interviews	Combinations
67	Moreira et al. (2015)	603 students	4-20 years M=13.02 years	Not stated	Combinations	Portugal	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
68	Mori et al. (2022)	125 students	12-13 years	Grades 7-8	Other	Japan	Junior high school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
69	Morris et al. (2018)	300 child/parent dyads 25 teachers	M=4.7 years	Preschool	Other	Australia	Preschool	Early Years	Mixed methods: assessments, questionnaire	Mixed Methods

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
70	Nascimento and De Micheli (2015)	1316 students Control group (n=339) Experimental group (n=907) – (Inconsistency unclear from article)	Not stated	8th year of Elementary- Year 3 of Secondary	Combinations	Brazil	Elementary and Secondary School	Combinations	Drug Use Screening Inventory	Other
71	Ng and Fisher (2022)	165 teachers	Not stated	Kindergarten	Other	Hong Kong	Kindergarten	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
72	Ní Chorcora and Swords (2022)	356 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Ireland	Primary school	Primary	Vignettes within a questionnaire	Other
73	Ntovolis et al. (2015)	241 pupils	M=11.52 years	Grades 5-6	3 & 4	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
74	Olive et al. (2019)	821 pupils	Not stated	Grades 2, 3, 6	1 to 4	Australia	Elementary school	Primary	Anthropometric and fitness measures	Scales/Measures
75	Özgan (2016)	35 pupils	13-14 years	8th class	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Qualitative case study	Case Study
76	Palomino (2017)	26 pupils (with SEN)	7-12 years	Years 1-3	1 to 4	Spain	Primary school	Primary	Multi-dimensional concept scale	Scales/Measures
77	Pérez-Ordás et al. (2020)	210 pupils	10-12 years M=11.04 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Spain	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
78	Phan (2017)	258 students	Not stated	Year 8	Other	Fiji	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
79	Powell et al. (2018)	606 students	Not stated	Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 (Primary) Years 8 and 11 (Secondary)	Combinations	Australia	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Focus groups	Interview/FG

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
80	Ricketts et al. (2022)	5 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	UK	Black Supplementary School	Other	Case study: semi-structured interview	Case Study
81	Rickson et al. (2018)	30 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Case study using action research	Case Study
82	Rillo-Albert et al. (2021)	222 students	M=14.86 years	Years 3-4	Other	Spain	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire and scales	Combinations
83	Rix and Bernay (2014)	126 pupils 6 teachers	Not stated	Grades 2-6	1 to 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: Reflection and questionnaire	Mixed Methods
84	Robertson et al. (2020)	82 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Professional Development Settings (schools and university clinical setting)	Other	Observation and 'debriefing' notes	Combinations
85	Rubin et al. (2021)	419 pupils	9-10 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Israel	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire, scales and school records	Combinations
86	Samur and Deniz (2014)	44 pupils	6 years	Preschool	Other	Turkey	Preschool	Early Years	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
87	Sandseter and Seland (2016)	171 pupils	4-6 years	Preschool	Other	Norway	Preschool	Early Years	Mixed methods: Conversations with children based on an electronic questionnaire	Mixed Methods
88	Sanchez et al. (2021)	17 pupils	11-12 years	Not stated	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Photovoice	Other
89	Scrimin et al. (2018)	62 pupils	M=6.73 years	1st Class	1 & 2	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Selective attention task	Other
90	Segal et al. (2017)	9 pupils	Not stated	Grade 6	3 & 4	Israel	Primary school	Primary	Ethnography	Other

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
91	Sgro et al. (2019)	100 pupils	10 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
92	Sharpe et al. (2017)	14690 pupils	10-13 years	Year 6 and 8	Combinations	UK	Primary and Post-primary schools	Combinations	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
93	Shi-Jer et al. (2013)	30 pupils	Not stated	Grade 5	3 & 4	Taiwan	Elementary school	Primary	Pre-post-test	Other
94	Simmons et al. (2015)	606 pupils 89 teachers	6-17 years	Not stated	Combinations	Australia	Primary and Post-primary schools	Combinations	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
95	Skrzypek et al. (2020)	90 pupils	10-13 years	Grades 5 and 8	Combinations	USA	Middle school	Combinations	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
96	Smith et al. (2016)	2079 students	Not stated	Grade 4-5	3 & 4	USA	Middle school	Primary	Questionnaire and scales	Combinations
97	Sotardi (2017)	16 pupils	Not stated	Grade 3	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
98	Stapp and Lambers (2020)	58 pupils	10-12 years	Grade 5	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
99	Sujarwo et al. (2021)	252 pupils 30 teachers	M=11 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Indonesia	Elementary schools	Primary	Research development method	Other
100	Tian et al. (2015)	706 pupils	M=11.07 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	China	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire and scales	Combinations
101	Tudor et al. (2020)	54 students 6 teachers	Students: 13 years	Not stated	Other	UK	Post-primary school	Secondary	Interview and focus groups	Interview/FG
102	Vaquero-Solís et al. (2021)	452 students	M=13.8 years	Not stated	Other	Spain	Secondary school	Secondary	Cross-sectional design	Other
103	Vaz et al. (2015)	266 pupils	M=11.89 years	Final year of primary school	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
104	Victorson et al. (2022)	Not stated	Not stated	Kindergarten-Grade 12	Combinations	USA	Elementary school and High school	Combinations	Reflection	Other
105	Wan et al. (2021)	20000 students	Not stated	Grade 8	Other	China	Junior high school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
106	Wikman et al. (2022)	143 pupils	M=8.33 years	Grade 2	3 & 4	Sweden	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
107	Wong et al. (2014)	27 pupils	Not stated	Grades 1-3	1 & 2	Hong Kong	Church and Primary school	Other	Scale	Scales/Measures
108	Yang et al. (2018)	9659 pupils (Elementary school) 9535 students (Middle school) 6702 students (High school)	Not stated	Grades 4-12	Combinations	USA	Elementary, Middle and High school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
109	Yanko and Yap (2020)	Not stated	Not stated	Grade 1	1 & 2	Canada	Primary school	Primary	Autoethnographic storying approach (Case Study)	Case Study
110	Yoon et al. (2021)	6477 students	11-14 years	Grades 6-9	Other	Vietnam	Lower Secondary school	Secondary	Cluster randomised controlled trial	RCT
111	Yüksel et al. (2019)	281 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
112	Zurbriggen et al. (2021)	518 students	Not stated	Grades 4 and 7	Combinations	Austria	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

5.3 Outcomes from Studies

A thematic analysis of the studies produced 6 main themes to provide evidence on the desired curriculum processes and essential curriculum content for children's learning and development for Wellbeing/PE/SPHE within the broad primary curriculum. The 6 themes included; Skills; Values, School and Classroom Culture and Climate; Health; Voice/Agency; and Processes and Content.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Skills

This theme is broken into 4 sub-themes: social and emotional learning (SEL), skills-based interventions, physical skills and other skills.

5.3.1.1 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL was the most common theme that emerged. The articles that related to this theme included social and emotional skills, resilience, emotional regulation, social skills, self-efficacy, self-concept and self-esteem. Only one article specifically focused on the ways in which curriculum overload could be addressed in relation to Wellbeing. Kim and Hong (2019), in a study involving 70 children from a mix of elementary, middle and high school in both the USA and South Korea, recognised the potential of integrating SEL approaches in language, literacy, and Arts. They noted that teacher participants underscored that, despite technological advances in society, technology cannot replace emotions, social awareness, or collaboration, hence the need to teach Wellbeing explicitly.

SEL is concerned with both curriculum content and processes, thereby having the potential to support Wellbeing across different curriculum areas. This section outlines how SEL is taught discretely as a set of skills or SEL curriculum, integrated with other subject areas, and as part of the school culture and climate.

A number of articles highlighted the discrete teaching of SEL. This was due to a correlation between SEL skills and academic achievement or other learning outcomes. Babalis *et al.* (2013) confirmed that SEL programmes had an effect on the emotional competence and academic achievement of 306 primary-school pupils in Greece. They concluded that, considering the programmes can result in an increase in pupils' emotional intelligence and school performance, SEL programmes should be incorporated into everyday educational practices. In a Greek study of 281 primary-school children, Yüksel *et al.* (2019) also indicated that academic outcomes improved when pupils developed social emotional skills, coupled with hope and self-efficacy.

The concept of self-efficacy was also something that could be promoted through curriculum processes. In the largest-scale study included in this SLR, Kautz *et al.* (2021) concluded that both SEL

competencies and school experiences were related to students' future outcomes, but their predictive power relative to academic measures varied. Their study, which involved 30462 students in elementary, middle and high schools, 4273 teachers and 12216 parents. Of the SEL competencies and school experiences examined, self-management was most strongly associated with students' future outcomes. They also observed a gender difference, whereby at nearly every grade level, female students reported moderately higher levels of self-management and social awareness than their male peers. Self-management is an important skill for learning. A study by Scrimin *et al.* (2018), explored attention in 62 first-graders in Italy and established that pupils' focused attention was influenced by the interaction between the learning environment and their own self-regulation. This highlights a need for children to understand self-regulation and learn skills to support their self-regulation in the classroom to support better learning. Similarly, Wikman *et al.* (2022) noted that SEL benefited the academic outcomes of 8-year old pupils in Sweden (n=143), in both reading and Mathematics. In addition, the findings illustrated that pro-social behaviour, wellbeing, and self-concept can be taught and could be an important target for early academic support interventions.

Phan (2017) highlighted the positive influences of self-esteem on daily functioning and motivation towards schooling and learning in secondary school students in Fiji (n=258), as well as an inverse association between self-efficacy and emotional wellbeing. He also noted the positive influences of relating to others on liking school, and on motivation towards schooling and learning. The discrete teaching of emotional intelligence is advocated by Cantero *et al.* (2020), who analysed the impact of the two-year emotional intelligence intervention programme '*EDI'*. Results indicated improved emotional intelligence and a positive influence on academic performance in general, and specifically on Mathematics and language performance. The study recommended long-term work in the upper stages of primary school, which could enable adequate socio-emotional development and a smoother transition to adolescence, promoting better wellbeing and health.

Various articles focused specifically at SEL and children deemed to be 'at risk' of poorer wellbeing, including children with different needs. Moreira *et al.* (2015) examined the subjective wellbeing of 603 students with special educational needs (SEN) in Portugal, aged 4-20 years. They established socio-emotional functioning as a core underlying component of subjective wellbeing. In terms of curriculum content, this highlights a need for programmes that support healthy socio-emotional development. The researchers also concluded that there were certain curriculum processes that needed to be emphasised, such as using programmes that support autonomy for learners with SEN. Krull *et al.* (2014) examined the social and emotional situation of German first graders (n=2839) with classroom behaviour or learning difficulties in inclusive classes. They highlighted the need for specific

curriculum content to be taught by way of skill development for self-regulation, emotional regulation and social skills, to reduce behavioural issues and prevent social exclusion. They also indicated the need for a positive classroom climate to support the pupils' behaviour, again highlighting the need for different teaching and learning contexts for SEL.

There was a number of studies that highlighted the potential for SEL to be integrated through the teaching of other areas. Victorson *et al.* (2022) recognised that SEL, while not new, has become a priority for schools. The authors, three American dance educators, reported on their experience of integrating SEL through dance education. They described the benefits for pupils' SEL through opening and closing routines, mindful moments, and engaging practices for performance preparation. Specific benefits included; increased participation, agency and calmness; strategies for managing stress; development of problem-solving skills; greater enjoyment of classroom activities and increased overall motivation. The sample size of pupils was not stated.

A study conducted by Hubley *et al.* (2020) with 121 elementary and middle school students in the USA highlighted the potential of Entertainment Education (EE) for SEL interventions focused on mental-illness stigma reduction. EE refers to media content that has embedded pro-social messages that typically focus on health-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. The study evaluated the effects of EE on the issue of coping with bi-polar disorder. This was delivered in a live-play format to students, which included a 30-minute post-play workshop to assist the students to engage further with the play's content. The results highlighted a small, but statistically significant, improvement in mental health stigma. Therefore, the potential of EE for systematically improving SEL skills may warrant consideration, which could be implemented through media studies.

The potential to teach SEL in language and literacy classes was also highlighted. Shi-Jer *et al.* (2013) had 30 pupils use blogs in literacy to support social and emotional development in a Taiwanese school. Specifically, it was noted that the pupils' information literacy and interests could be improved through e-portfolio in a blog-assisted life education course. Moreover, the pupils' information literacy and competence, course satisfaction, collaborative learning attitudes, and attitudes toward blog use were improved. In addition, the pupils' life education values were significantly enhanced. Interestingly, the levels of social-emotional development, academic grit and subjective wellbeing were higher in female pupils who received preschool education and had a high frequency of daily book-reading.

SEL can also be promoted through the school culture and climate. Yang *et al.* (2018), in a large-scale study across elementary, middle and high school students (n=25896), concluded that student

engagement is enhanced through quality pupil-teacher relationships, pupil-pupil relationships and the explicit teaching of social-emotional competencies. However, this was impacted not only by class level, but also on pupils' perceptions of what happens at whole-school level. The authors suggested attention to cooperation and communication among teachers, teacher education, clear procedures and structures, support from the school principal, a well-defined school policy or vision, a caring and inviting school climate, and integration of SEL into the general curriculum and daily teaching practices. In terms of curriculum content, the study indicated that pupils need to be taught social emotional competencies. This study highlights the need to teach SEL through the three contexts of positive school culture and climate, discrete lessons and integration across the curriculum.

Classroom practices and pupil-teacher relationships are key aspects of the development of SEL. Harris *et al.* (2022) explored how black boys think about emotion and its regulation. The 10 participating boys in the study, based in the USA, identified the tensions between emotional expression and control. They expressed a desire to demonstrate a wider range of emotions in general, especially in the school context. However, they felt limited because of their relationships with teachers and their assumptions about teacher responses. The importance of SEL teaching is underscored throughout this study and the relationship between teacher and student is crucial. An Austrian study by Zurbriggen *et al.* (2021) investigated classroom characteristics and teaching practices that can foster social participation, in general, and reduce the effect of lower social participation among students with SEN, in particular. A total of 518 students from grades 4 and 7 participated. The findings indicated that students with SEN perceived their social participation to be lower than students without SEN. Importantly, as this social participation difference became smaller, there was an increase in positivity within the social classroom climate the more positive the social classroom climate was. The study concluded that interventions focusing on social climate should not focus on the improvement of individual students (with SEN) alone, but on changing the whole classroom environment. In the USA, in their study with 17 students with SEN or at risk of a diagnosis of SEN, Forber-Pratt *et al.* (2022), recommended motivational interviewing, a therapy strategy, as a promising approach to enable students with SEN to develop SEL competencies.

Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu (2020) examined the effects of some demographic variables on the social-emotional development, academic grit and subjective wellbeing of 582 primary school pupils in Turkey. Girls, students who availed of preschool education, students with a high frequency of daily book reading, and students with a combination of these variables performed significantly better for each of these variables than their peers. In the UK, Tudor *et al.* (2020) conducted a study to explore protective factors that alter secondary school students' responses to the common stressors

associated with PE participation. The study, which had 54 participating students and 6 participating teachers, highlighted protective factors that teachers could target to facilitate students' resilience in PE lessons. 'Differentiation' was the most frequently identified protective factor that ameliorates the relationship between stressors and positive adaptation. The study highlighted that the tendency to approach new challenges was a potential protective factor that promoted positive outcomes in the face of stressors. To encourage students' tendency to embrace challenge, practitioners may utilise additions to the curriculum that create opportunities for challenge by the students' own choice.

5.3.1.2 Skills-based Interventions

A number of studies examined the effectiveness of certain programmes or interventions. One such study, Deans *et al.* (2017), examined the use of a SEL programme called '*COPE-R'* with four and five-year-old children (n=38) in Australia. Findings indicated that the discrete teaching of content, skills, values and dispositions yielded positive results. Pupils were taught about empathy, respect, care, paying attention to others, and copying or modelling behaviours; recognising the emotions of others and employing vocabulary to express these (happy, sad, angry); acknowledging that they are different from other people and have personal preferences; understanding that emotions are a result of circumstances; and finally, they can adopt the persona of another in their play. Through the teaching of this SEL programme, children were also supported in their care for the environment. The teaching of this programme led to the demonstration of the values of empathy, reciprocity, generosity, kindness and joy. Along with the curriculum content, the curriculum processes were also significant in the success of the programme. The use of play, as a methodology, for pupils to experience a range of emotions and understand the feelings of others was vital. The teacher's role in providing a supportive and caring classroom environment, with flexibility to follow the pupils' leads, was also a contributing factor to the success of the programme.

Wong *et al.* (2014) focused specifically on evaluating the effect of a SEL programme for 27 students with difficulties in social and emotional management, as reported by their parents or teachers, in Hong Kong. The study used a modified and localised version of the S*trong Kids* programme. The programme included the teaching of awareness and expression of emotion, the connection between emotions, thinking and behaviour, managing stress and anxiety, clear thinking and positive thinking. Problem behaviours associated with internalising and hyperactivity were significantly less frequent and social skills were improved following the intervention. Such outcomes can result in better behaviour, which ultimately saves teachers time for teaching and learning. However, no significant changes were observed in the measures of social skills or in externalising behaviours.

Preschool PATHS (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies), an evidence-based universal prevention programme, was also cited in the literature. The programme focused on promoting children's social and emotional competencies and reducing the likelihood of behaviour problems and negative relationships with peers and teachers. This study by Mihic *et al.* (2016), based in Croatia, again established a link between social emotional competence and enhanced behaviour and outcomes for pupils. In this case the participants were 4-6-year-old children (n=164). The authors asserted that because skill acquisition is self-perpetuating and cumulative, investment in early learning and development may be more efficient and may generate more benefits, relative to investments later in life. While the explicit teaching of social emotional skills is advocated, the authors emphasised that a child's adaptation is also dependent on the child's environment. This conclusion indicates that the school and classroom environment can support a child's ability to use these social emotional competencies in context.

Cefai *et al.* (2018) evaluated the resilience programme '*RESCUR Surfing the Waves',* in 5 Maltese kindergartens with 97 children. The curriculum content focused on competencies including; developing a growth mindset, making use of one's strengths, self-determination, effective communication skills and healthy relationships, and overcoming challenges and obstacles. Following the year-long intervention, the children demonstrated an improvement in resilience skills, pro-social behaviour and learning engagement, but not in internalised and externalised problem behaviours. The programme was also tried with pupils in nurture classes, all of whom were referred for social, emotional and mental health difficulties. No effect was established for reduced behaviour or emotional problems for this cohort of pupils.

McCormick *et al.* (2015) conducted an evaluation of '*INSIGHTS'*, a temperament-based, preventive school-based intervention designed to enhance the development of low-income primary grade pupils at-risk for academic and behavioural difficulties. The intervention has programmes for teachers, parents, and children in Kindergarten and 1st grade in the USA. The study involved 435 parent-child dyads and 120 teachers. The researchers illustrated that the impact of *INSIGHTS* on Mathematics and reading achievement was partially explained by gains in both classroom emotional support (positive pupil-teacher relationships) and organisation.

Lonigan *et al.* (2015) explored the impact of a comprehensive school readiness curriculum for preschool children deemed to be 'at risk' for educational difficulties. They created the academic skills-focused curriculum by combining the primary elements of LEC (Literacy Express Curriculum) and pre-kindergarten Math. Two versions of this experimental curriculum were created for use by 2-5-year-old children (n=855) and 110 teachers in the USA. In the implicit socio-emotional version

(Implicit SE), teacher professional development and written guidance on general classroom and behaviour management skills were included, but these skills were not the primary focus of any specific classroom instructional activity. Thus, impacts on social-emotional skills would be indirect from other instruction and from behavioural expectations implicit within the classroom environment (for example, sustaining attention during daily small group activities). In the explicit socio-emotional version (Explicit SE), the elements of the PATHS (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies) curriculum were included in addition to the general classroom and behaviour management skills of the Implicit SE curriculum. In this version, there were specific teacher-directed, child-focused, classroom activities designed to promote children's socio-emotional development. There was no evidence that use of explicit activities, designed to promote children's self-regulation, resulted in more positive impacts on children's academic skills, than did an academically-focused curriculum without these explicit activities. While the addition of an explicit socio-emotional focus of classroom lessons did not significantly strengthen the children's skills, children in all classrooms, participating in one of the experimental curricula, had better, or at least comparable, socio-emotional skills than did children in non-intervention classrooms. This demonstrates the value of curriculum processes: thoughtful, well-organised curricula that enable teachers to support various facets of development through high-quality instructional interactions, which can lead to substantive increases in school readiness of children from backgrounds of poverty.

Another study, Follari (2022), examined relationship-centred education as a two-year ethnographic study in an American school that followed the '*Mindful Schools Programme'*. Follari (2022) observed that specific curriculum content enhanced the happiness of first graders (n=450). This content included direct instruction on kindness and empathy, and unique wellness activities. However, there were other curriculum processes that were also important and contributed to pupils' positive school outcomes. This included administrative leadership, intentional hiring and training, curricular investments and time and effort dedicated to relationships.

Rix and Bernay (2014) noted that an eight-week mindfulness programme was beneficial for a sample of 126 pupils in New Zealand. When mindfulness skills were taught, pupils in grades 2-6 had a sense of calm that became more pronounced as the intervention went on. This calmness lasted for longer than the intervention. It also positively impacted pupils' learning skills, in terms of their ability to focus over time. This included pupils who had difficulties with concentration. The programme led to an improvement in pupils' relationships, conflict resolution and ability to appreciate the point-of-view of another. However, it was dependent on the 'buy-in' from teachers. After three months,

where the programme was continued, there was an enhanced classroom culture, with pupils more relaxed, able to express feelings, able to emotionally regulate more effectively and co-operative.

Some findings from implemented programmes also supported the focus on particular SEL skills. *'I Can Succeed'* is a SEL programme based on interpersonal psychotherapy for adolescents. Research on the programme, completed by Rubin *et al.* (2021), indicated that it is a feasible and promising SEL programme for 4th grade pupils (n=419) in Israel. Specifically, results indicated a significant improvement in assertiveness and a significant decrease in internalising symptoms.

Jacquez *et al.* (2020) highlighted optimistic thinking as a facet of SEL in their work. They examined the effectiveness of an optimistic thinking tool called '*Dream It*' in an American elementary school setting with 111 pupils, in grades 4-6. While the content of the programme was not explored, the study findings highlighted its potential to improve SEL, but the consideration of optimistic thinking within SEL was important. In addition, Smith *et al.* (2016) undertook a partial replication study of the '*Tools for Getting Along*' curriculum, designed to increase self-regulatory functions of upper elementary school students. The sample was comprised of 2079 students in grades 4-5 in the USA. Collectively, both the previous and the present investigation, serve to extend the evidence base for universally delivered interventions for improving social-emotional and cognitive functioning and reducing maladaptive behaviour patterns among students 'at risk' for emotional and behavioural disorders.

5.3.1.3 Skills Developed through Movement, Sport and PE

A number of articles highlighted the benefits of physical activity for children, not solely for their physical impact, but also for the development of other skills. Carmen (2020) articulated that movement is a fundamental element for the growth and development of children aged 6-8 years, and that it supports sensory integration. The sample was comprised of 281 pupils in Years 1 and 2 in Italy. The results highlighted the strong relationship between sport practice, and psychomotor and cognitive development. The study also indicated that low levels of cognitive-adaptive functions may be predictors of possible learning difficulties, which, if identified early, enables pupils to be monitored and supported with appropriate educational interventions.

A study was undertaken in Spain by Rillo-Albert *et al.* (2021) to determine the effect of a 7-session pedagogical intervention, which taught cooperation-opposition traditional sporting games with competition and motor conflicts. The students (n=222), with a mean age of 14.86 years, answered two validated questionnaires of socio-emotional wellbeing, the Games and Emotions Scale (GES-II) and the Motor Conflict Questionnaire, at three phases during the experience (beginning, middle, and

end). The outcomes of the study revealed that conflict and negative emotions are part of games, but it was possible to turn them into experiences of socio-emotional wellbeing. Skills including interpersonal relationships, conflict, relational wellbeing, coping with intense or negative emotions, emotional regulation, social competence, dealing with competition and winning and losing were all skills that could be taught as part of some elements of the PE curriculum.

A study completed by Pérez-Ordás *et al.* (2020), provides further evidence that PE is an ideal setting in which pupils can develop social and emotional skills. This skillset can be subsequently applied to other life contexts. An emphasis on respect, cooperation and conflict resolution, were deemed fundamental for teaching these life skills. The quantitative study, which included a repeated measures design (pre- and post-test) with a control group and an intervention group in four Spanish schools involving 10-12-year-old pupils (n=210). Two measures were used: The Physical and Verbal Aggression Scale; and the Social Responsibility Behaviours' Record. A quasi-experimental design with three analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) tests was completed to analyse the results, and to study differences by socio-economic context and gender. The results highlighted that significant decreases in physical and verbal aggression total score (p=0.028) and in verbal aggression (p=0.003) were observed in the lower-middle socio-economic context experimental group. Verbal aggression was significantly reduced in girls (p=0.022) from the experimental group and improvements in social responsibility were also demonstrated by the intervention group.

The importance of fundamental movement skills (FMS), as a core component of PE, was illustrated in a study conducted by Sgro *et al.* (2019). The aim of this research was to examine the effect of the '*Sport di Classe'* project on the development of FMS in 10-year-old pupils in Italy (n=110). The study highlighted that low levels of FMS development remain a critical issue. The observed PE lessons were insufficient to deal adequately with the FMS deficit of primary-school pupils. The research also showed that the aims of PE can be attained if they are supported by an effective curriculum, based on well-known teaching strategies, such as game-centred and tactical approaches.

5.3.1.4 Other

Other skills that emerged during the analysis of the articles related to transition to post-primary school and threats to wellbeing. While addressing curriculum overload, the transition to second-level school is an important milestone for pupils and one that must be considered within the overall context of SPHE. A number of skills can be developed to support this transition for pupils. Moore *et al.* (2021) conducted a study exploring the worries of pupils (n=2218) about transition to second-level in the UK. Unsurprisingly, the major worries cited were related to the impact on existing

friendships and bullying. Despite this, pupils were simultaneously looking forward to forming new friendships or joining existing friendships in their new school. The study revealed that transition interventions require sensitivity to the needs of children from poorer backgrounds and children with mental health difficulties. The development of social-emotional skills is likely to support children during such a transition. By contrast, Longaretti (2020) focused her study on the complexities of belonging during the transition to secondary school with 16 pupils in Australia. Three major themes associated to belonging were identified from the analysis of the school transition experience: (i) students' perceptions of belonging at school, (ii) important factors for belonging at school in Year 6 and (iii) signs and consequences of belonging and not belonging at school. Considering that belonging is intricately linked to young people's motivation and achievement at school, the findings suggest the curriculum be designed with due consideration of the significance of relationships for young people. In a related study, Lester and Cross (2015) concluded that primary school is an important time for establishing quality connections to peers. Their study with 1800 pupils in Australia highlighted that relationships are an important support prior to the transition to secondary school. Kiuru *et al.* (2020) examined how the quality of interpersonal relationships and school wellbeing worked together to affect academic achievement during the transition from primary school in Finland (n=848). The results revealed that high levels of school wellbeing promoted higher academic achievement through increased quality of interpersonal relationships. Each of these studies highlight the need for pupils to have well-developed relationship skills to support their transition from primary to post-primary school.

The subtheme of 'threats to wellbeing' also emerged from the literature. Buchanan *et al.* (2021) focused their study on how 23 'lower-attaining' pupils in the UK experience threats to their wellbeing due to their lack of attainment. Their stories emphasised negative experiences in relation to academic achievement, which was detrimental to their wellbeing, as they expressed feelings of anxiety, fear and shame. The findings highlighted how the current results-driven competitive system that values high-attainment in very limited curriculum areas and assessments, is itself contributing to a diminished sense of wellbeing among certain children. An ongoing sense of failure may lead to educational disenfranchisement during adolescence and beyond.

Another threat to pupils' wellbeing emerged from a study by Özgan (2016), who investigated sources of conflict between 35 pupils and teachers in Turkey. The main causes of conflict arose from poor and inadequate communication between both parties, misunderstanding, prejudice, fixed opinions, continuing negative behaviour, incorrect information and teacher domination. The findings revealed that inappropriate conflict solving strategies negatively affect students' psychology, social behaviour

and academic success. In relation to desired curriculum skills, the study recommended conflict management through case study analysis, dramatisation and group therapy, where both teachers and pupils participate to build relationships. This again highlights the need for strong social-emotional skills.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Values

The teaching of Values Education supports both curriculum content and curriculum processes. Positive results are yielded when values are taught discretely and when they are taught both within and across subject areas.

A study with 44 preschool children in Turkey (Samur and Deniz 2014) highlighted the benefits of teaching a Values Education programme which emphasised peace, responsibility, sharing, and cooperation. Those involved in the programme displayed significant differences from the control group in the areas of emotional regulation, school readiness, social confidence and total social emotional development. Brignell and Woodcock (2016) concluded from their placebo experimental study that the teaching of gratitude as a value, through the use of gratitude diaries, promoted a sense of school belonging in 100 pupils from Grade 3-6 in the UK, although this was moderated by gender with boys demonstrating greater benefits than girls. Follari (2022) concluded the direct instruction in the values of kindness and empathy, through the *Mindful Schools* programme, led to a significant difference in the reported happiness of American first graders (n=450). A Turkish study by Yüksel *et al.* (2019) indicated that hope had a role in the relationship between elementary school pupils' ability and SEL levels (n=281). They highlighted that the development of pupils' sense of hope, coupled with social emotional skills and sense of self-efficacy, led to better academic outcomes.

The ability to scaffold peer collaborations through the explicit teaching of Values Education was explored by Morcom (2016) in an Australian primary school classroom, with 31 pupils, through a qualitative design. The methods and data sources were embedded in the teaching practices of the classroom over 1-year and provided in-depth detail, not only about the classroom, but also about the pupils and their perspectives, feelings and experiences. The findings suggested that teaching values explicitly, supported by targeted social and reflective practices, facilitated whole-class scaffolding of peer collaboration to develop mutual respect and positive relationships. This research contributes to knowledge about effective Values Education in a primary school classroom.

Bhatti *et al.* (2021) also explored the role of Values Education. The study was based in only one elementary school in Pakistan and had a sample size of 200 pupils in grade 8. The *Values Education Survey for Students* (VESS) was used as the measure along with a self-developed questionnaire to

measure the moral development of the pupils. It was concluded that values and ethical education support pupils to become honest, virtuous and compassionate. The researchers recommended that social, religious and moral traditions be part of school culture, with teachers acting as role models for primary-school children. They further highlighted the importance of classrooms being free of prejudice, discrimination and injustice.

A study completed by Kartowagiran *et al.* (2021), focused on the character values required in the 21st century. It was conducted in Indonesia with 654 pupils, in grades 5-8. The researchers claimed that character values are not simply inculcated in pupils, but need to be developed and implemented by combining, relating, and integrating various elements of education with character values. They measured six aspects of the character values of the 21st century, namely: mindfulness, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, and leadership. The study highlighted that character education, that has so far been developed for elementary school pupils, contains a very wide variety of character values. However, the authors warned that this results in a non-optimal inculcation of character values to primary school pupils. There are several positive impacts of integrating the character values of the 21st century: more balanced cognitive abilities, sensitivity to the surrounding environment, and enhanced self-confidence, empathy, a spirit of responsibility, and emotional intelligence. The implementation of character education can be applied both inside and outside schools. The authors concluded that integrating these character values can be achieved through:

1) Integrating classroom activities, outside the classroom at school, and outside of school (community/peer groups);
2) Integrating intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities;
3) Simultaneous involvement of school community members, families and communities.

Another study involving young children, published by Akyola (2021), aimed at evaluating the impact of picture books with value content on the social value acquisition of children in Turkey (n=20). In the study, 'The Scale for Preschool Social Values Acquisition' and 'Values Rubric' were used in determining the social values acquisition of children with a mean age of 5-years. The findings confirmed that picture books enrich children's experiences and are highly stimulating in personal, social, cultural, and aesthetic development. Akyola (2021) also emphasises the benefits of picture books in supporting curriculum overload, as carefully selected stories can support the teaching of values across a number of different subject areas.

The potential for integrating Values Education with a number of subject areas is outlined in several studies. Research completed by Balbag and Kaya (2019) illustrated the potential for Values Education to be taught in the context of social studies in Turkey. The project involved seven values including: respect, tolerance, love, responsibility, solidarity, benevolence and patriotism. These were to be taught to 93 pupils within the scope of the 4th grade social studies curriculum. Results revealed that pupils produced most words for the value of tolerance, and least for the value of solidarity. The authors concluded that there is potential to consider the teaching of Values Education in a cross-curricular manner and take consideration of the values that may be taught at different class levels. In Indonesia, Sujarwo *et al.* (2021) sought to produce, implement, and test the effectiveness of a mini-volleyball learning model, in order to habituate character values among primary school pupils. They confirmed that the mini-volleyball learning materials successfully familiarised pupils (n=252) with the character values of discipline, co-operation and hard work. While not explicitly stated, this study highlights the potential to teach Values Education, and specifically-named values, through games in PE.

5.3.3 Theme 3: School and Classroom Culture and Climate

The findings of numerous studies across all questions and stages of the SLR support the context of a positive school and classroom culture and climate as central to the implementation of Wellbeing as an area of learning. It is linked to a sense of belonging. The context of a positive school culture and climate underpins all of what is taught in the discrete SPHE curriculum (GoI 1999c).

5.3.3.1 School Culture and Climate

Ng and Fisher (2022), in their study involving 165 teacher participants in Indonesia, asserted that the care and concern which teachers have for their pupils is directly related to their connection to their own identity, spirituality and their subsequent wellbeing. This in turn influences the school culture.

Midgen *et al.* (2019) noted four aspects of school climate to be important in supporting children's sense of belonging in school in the UK: relationships, school environment, teaching and learning, and extra-curricular activities. This has substantial links with the key areas for wellbeing promotion in Irish schools, as outlined by DES (2019). Midgen *et al.*'s (2019) study concluded that children are likely to feel more connected to their schools and more satisfied with their lives overall when they can develop social skills and when they experience their schools embracing diversity among students. Friendship skills were explored in a study by MacEvoy *et al.* (2016) in the USA with 499 pupils. They concluded that friendship interventions should assess the standards to which children hold their friends and should potentially aim to support children with low standards to raise their friendship

expectations. Giannotta and Özdemir (2013) investigated the relationship between school bonding and alcohol use with 161 middle-school participants in Italy. They asserted that alcohol use is one of the first and most likely risk behaviours to be shared within peer groups. The outcomes of the study highlighted that in order to be effective, interventions should account for the timing of developmental changes and age associated with substance-use onset. An Australian study by Vaz *et al.* (2015), concluded that an accepting school environment, that creates a culture wherein an individual's strength and character are valued, can foster a sense of belonging among its pupils. This was based on a sample of 266 pupils.

For students with different learning needs, a sense of belonging to a school community is essential. Makuna and Maizere's (2022) study of the experiences of d/Deaf and hard of hearing children (n=5) at a mainstream school in Zimbabwe, highlighted the importance of friendships and ability to communicate for engendering belonging. The study also revealed that sign language is fundamental to removing communication barriers between hearing individuals and d/Deaf and hard of hearing pupils at the school. Finally, the importance of acceptance of d/Deaf and hard of hearing pupils, to nurture them in all spheres of school life, could alleviate stress and depression, and might therefore reduce their exposure to peer pressure, antisocial behaviour, drug use and other forms of substance abuse. Marsh *et al.* (2019) explored the level of school connectedness for 68 pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD), aged 8-18 years, in the USA. Comparative data highlighted that students with EBD reported lower levels of school bonding than did the general education students. The study highlighted the importance of teaching and supporting students with EBD to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships. This connection between actions at class level and benefits at whole-school level also emerged from other studies.

5.3.3.2 Classroom Climate

Classroom climate is essentially about curriculum processes. It encompasses relationships, physical and emotional environment, sense of belonging, teaching approaches, behaviour management approaches and all aspects of the hidden curriculum. Many of the identified articles relate to preschool pupils and those at stage 1 (infant classes). A study by Sandseter and Seland (2016), of 171 Norwegian preschoolers aged 4-6 years, established that aspects of the classroom climate influenced children's wellbeing, while Krull *et al.* (2014) highlighted the importance of a positive classroom climate to reduce behavioural issues and prevent social exclusion of young children. Their study involved 2839 pupils in grade 1 in Germany. In another study of young children, McCormick *et al.* (2015) concluded that the aspects of classroom climate that support achievement in literacy and

Mathematics in kindergarten/grade 1 children, are positive pupil-teacher relationships and high levels of classroom organisation. Their study involved 435 parent-child dyads.

Sandseter and Seland (2016), in their study of 171 Norwegian pre-schoolers, emphasised the importance of child agency, interpreted in this case as the opportunity to have an influence on where to move, what to do and with whom. This also included an atmosphere where pupils are permitted to oppose the staff, and negotiate or choose activities that differ from those selected by staff. The researchers also identified the value of the physical environment (internal/external), the toys/equipment, and the common activities for young children. Other aspects of classroom climate have been identified by Grace *et al.* (2018), as supporting the wellbeing of young children, aged 3-5 years, in a study involving 47 pupils. Routines associated with their arrival at school, and the handover from care-giver to teacher, were valued by the children and supported their sense of belonging; a key aspect of wellbeing. The children valued greetings and attention from the teacher on their arrival. They also valued being allowed to bring in their 'own' items from home, have a designated space for their personal belongings, and experience positive relationships with peers and staff. The young children also spoke more about activities in which they had autonomy rather than structured lessons or teacher-led activities. These findings explicitly demonstrate that agency has a role in the wellbeing of young children.

Research by Vaz *et al.* (2015) in Australia validates these findings, but with pupils in their final year of primary school (n=266). Their study supports the suggestion that classroom strategies, which allow for numerous and positive interactions between pupils and teachers, and among pupils, can be useful mechanisms for fostering school belonging. Several aspects of the classroom environment including task-goal structure, opportunities for student autonomy, classroom involvement, cultural pluralism, safety and anti-bullying were each noted to be significantly associated with pupils' sense of belonging.

Another study (Simmons *et al.* 2015), invited 606 students, aged 6-17 years, to present the ideal school that promoted their wellbeing. The Australian students identified creative ways regarding how teaching and learning, the school environment and relationships could be improved, changed or maintained to assist their wellbeing. They placed an emphasis on structures to have their voice included in relation to these matters, highlighting the importance of learner agency.

There are a number of different strategies and approaches outlined in some studies that supported a sense of school belonging through the teaching of SPHE. A study by Diebel *et al.* (2016), with 116 pupils in the UK, illustrated the use of gratitude diaries in SPHE to promote a sense of school

belonging. They concluded that this practice can be used to build social resources and make a novel connection between gratitude and sense of belonging. Indeed, the act of reflecting on positive experiences at school and experiencing gratitude towards them was associated with an increase in a sense of school belonging. Similar findings were also recorded by Brignell and Woodcock (2016) in the UK with 100 pupils in grades 3-6. They evaluated a school initiative where pupils were taught the skill of expressing gratitude through a gratitude journal. The pupils consequently demonstrated enhanced school belonging and gratitude. It should be noted that this included pupils at stages 2-4, so its efficacy at stage 1 (infant classes) was not determined. Other relevant skills to create a sensation of belonging were evident in a study by Cava *et al.* (2021). Their study, which involved 479 students in Spanish primary and post-primary schools, concluded that the skill of asking for help should be explicitly taught to children, highlighting that seeking assistance can reduce peer victimisation situations and prevent bullying.

The concept of 'at risk' children is frequently highlighted in the literature, with evidence that classroom climate can impede or support this group of learners. In a study by Hargreaves *et al.* (2022), they noted that the 23 'lower-attaining' pupils in their UK study had a poorer social network and greater experience of exclusion in classrooms where attainment was emphasised over positive relationships. They concluded that classrooms which promote collaboration over competition, and those that nurture relationships, support the inclusion of low-attaining pupils. Ricketts *et al.* (2022) examined the key curriculum features of a black supplementary school for boys (a school that educated black male children only). They reported that the pupils' social, emotional/mental health, and academic progressions were enhanced by a strong sense of belonging, self-awareness and pupil empowerment through different activities and experiences. It should be noted that the sample size for this study was only 5 pupils.

School and classroom culture and climate are important to support various aspects of wellbeing of pupils, but particularly their sense of belonging. Positive pupil-teacher relationships and pupil-pupil relationships are central to a sense of wellbeing. Content, skills, and values are an integral part of how this can be achieved in the classroom.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Health

A number of articles demonstrated desired curriculum content and processes for children's learning and development in Wellbeing in an overloaded curriculum. These related to mental health, physical health, and discrete teaching of elements of PE and SPHE.

5.3.4.1 Mental Health

It is interesting to note that Danby and Hamilton (2016) identified that school practitioners (n=18) in the UK are reluctant to address mental health topics and therefore highlighted a need for appropriate training to enhance practitioner confidence. The way that children are taught also matters. Carlson *et al.* (2021) recognised, in their research, that the vast majority of children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries lack access to interventions for mental health problems. As a result, they conducted a focused ethnography to explore pupils' (n=12), teachers' (n=5), and caregivers' (n=22) perspectives on implementing evidence-based mental health interventions as part of a violence-prevention programme in Uganda. Nearly all teachers, parents, and pupils expressed a belief that schools have a role in addressing pupils' mental health. They also highlighted the importance of safe and supportive relationships within schools for children.

In Ireland, a study completed by Ní Chorcora and Swords (2021) explored the Mental Health Literacy (MHL) and help-giving responses of 356 teachers. This is a topic which is relatively unexplored, particularly at primary school level. Multiple regression analyses identified that being female, and having more exposure to mental illness, were significantly associated with greater concern for affected children. More years of teaching experience was associated with less help-giving intentions. MHL training for teachers is recommended in order to improve their ability to identify and respond to children's mental health difficulties in a timely manner. In Japan, Mori *et al.* (2022) evaluated the effectiveness of a comprehensive MHL educational programme known as '*Sanita'* for improving junior high school students' knowledge of mental illness, attitudes towards people with mental health problems, and help-seeking behaviour. The programme was longitudinally effective at improving the knowledge of mental illness in the 125 junior high school students, although improvements in attitudes and help-seeking behaviour were insufficient.

Atkinson *et al.* (2019) documented the development of a student-led mental health initiative within a high-achieving girls' grammar school, led by students aged 12–18 years (the number of students was not supplied). Following input from educational psychology, the students devised a whole-school, student-friendly mental health strategy with the support of the educational psychologists and senior school staff. Findings indicated that mental health planning in schools should encourage greater student participation. However, the authors also advised caution over applying adult mental health models with children. They recommended the use of technology or visual resources to support learning about mental health. This links with findings by Sharpe *et al.* (2017) who observed that, in the UK, while mental health booklets may provide a low-cost means of promoting mental

health self-management and help-seeking in schools, there was no detectable impact of such booklets on the 14690 participating students in grades 6 and 8.

Mohamed and Thomas's (2017) research investigated the perceptions of 21 refugee children, 3 refugee parents and 63 school staff regarding the positive adaptation of refugee children in a new social context, and the subsequent effects on mental health and psychological wellbeing. The findings highlighted the role of family, culture, friends, and individual characteristics as significant in the mental health and wellbeing of the children. Considering the difficulties that the children faced, there was evidence of inner strength, such as spirituality, coping, optimism, self-esteem and happiness. The study highlights the importance of specific teaching of the skills of self-esteem, self-efficacy, happiness and gratitude.

Sotardi (2017) explored how a sample of grade 3 American children (n=16) from a supportive learning environment interpreted, experienced and reported coping with everyday stress at school. Despite nearly optimal learning conditions, child reports included a range of school stressors. These ranged from academic challenges to inter-personal conflicts. Pupils' interpretations of 'stress' seemed inextricably linked to their learning and social obstacles at school; those daily experiences were further linked to coping strategies. It was clear that children already knew about stress and coping through their own mastery experiences, and through these encounters, pupil appear to form certain assumptions about everyday school life. The study concludes that such information about children is central to developing effective pastoral care approaches within school.

An evaluation of the quality of implementation of the '*KidsMatter'* primary school mental health initiative in Australia was undertaken by Askell-Williams *et al.* (2013). The aims of '*KidsMatter'* were to: improve the mental health and wellbeing of primary school pupils, reduce mental health difficulties amongst pupils, and achieve greater support for pupils experiencing mental health difficulties. The study's findings illustrated that children's social and emotional competencies improved over a period of time in high implementing schools, but not in low implementing schools. A study by Yoon *et al.* (2021) evaluated the causal effects of a school-based health education programme on adolescents' multidimensional psychological health factors (n=6477) in Vietnam. They highlighted the positive impact of such programmes on students' self-efficacy, life satisfaction and quality of life. However, the programme had limited effects on reducing risky health behaviours.

One study by Wong *et al.* (2014) specifically examined mental health as a continuum of wellbeing. They evaluated an adaptation of the SEL programme '*Strong Kids'*, with 27 pupils in Hong Kong, which included the explicit teaching of awareness and expression of emotion; the connection between

emotions, thinking and behaviour; managing stress and anxiety; clear thinking; and positive thinking. Problem behaviours associated with internalising and hyperactivity were significantly less frequent in the intervention group after the programme, but no significant changes were noted in the measures of externalising behaviours. The findings by Wong *et al.* (2014) illustrated that school-based health education enhances students' self-efficacy, life satisfaction and quality of life, but had a limited effect on reducing risky health behaviours. Research findings by Glazzard and Szreter (2020) evaluated a six-week MHL programme, referred to as the Cambridge United Community Trust's '*Mind Your Head'* programme. The intervention involved the delivery of a short mental health curriculum to 557 students in years 8-10 by sports coaches employed by a football community trust. The statistical data indicated that statistically significant improvements in MHL were achieved, and this occurred across all genders and ethnicities. The qualitative data suggested that this programme resulted in positive attitudes towards mental health and improved knowledge of how to seek help. The clear benefit of schools working in partnership with community organisations is that these partnerships facilitate a non-stigmatising setting for mental health discussion.

5.3.4.2 Physical Health

Focusing on physical health, a study completed by Erhorn (2021) in Germany illustrated that approaches to teaching PE influenced the physical activity of the 26 pupils involved in the study. The study concluded that opportunities for movement in the school environment should be identified for pupils. Macdonald *et al.* (2021) established that the factors influencing the provision of classroom-based physical activity to pupils in the early years of primary school in Australia included insufficient time, limited training opportunities, limited resources, educator attitudes to physical activity, and confidence. The main strategy they recommended to support classroom-based physical activity was through the school climate by creating a supportive school culture towards physical activity. This, they asserted, can be achieved through the implementation of whole-school physical activity policies, with school administrators valuing physical activity and supporting its practice through scheduling physical activity opportunities into the regular routine of the school day. However, they also concluded that teachers needed to know about the benefits of classroom-based physical activity on children's physical activity, health and learning. Morris *et al.* (2018) articulated that in teaching preschool children about obesity as part of health and wellbeing in Australia, play-based learning is more useful to build the children's knowledge rather than obesity education and prevention. This finding was informed by 300 child-parent dyads and 25 teachers in Australia.

Using a theoretical model, Vaquero-Solís *et al.* (2021) analysed how physical activity predicts an adequate quality of life through self-concept and subjective happiness among adolescents. The sample was comprised of 452 Spanish students, of mean age 13.8 years. The results demonstrated acceptable fit indices for the proposed theoretical model, which indicates the importance of physical activity through self-concept and subjective happiness in quality of life. In conclusion, the importance of physical activity as a predictor of quality of life mediated by the perception of self-concept and mood in adolescents is evident. The researchers recommended increasing the daily minutes of physical activity and promoting mental wellbeing derived from physical activity. Another study, by Wan *et al.* (2021), sought to investigate whether physical activity can promote students' pro-social behaviour, by analysing the relationship between sports participation and the pro-social behaviour of 20000, grade 8, junior high school students in China. Results confirmed that sporting behaviour increased pro-social behaviour scores by 4%, and that regular physical exercise increased students' pro-social behaviour tendencies by over 0.2 standard deviations from the mean score. This indicates that physical activity has a significant positive effect on students' pro-social behaviour.

5.3.4.3 Physical Education

Many of the studies highlight that wellbeing can be taught through Physical Education (PE), but not solely in terms of physical activity and movement. Mischenko *et al.* (2021) observed that fitball aerobics in PE had a positive impact on the development of Russian preschool children's physical abilities (n=40). Cristian *et al.* (2013), in their study on motion gaming implemented in PE class, indicated positive effects of the work and the lessons of PE and sport active participatory methods in Romanian children (n=38) with an average age of almost 11 years. PE has the potential to support life-long interest in physical activity. It is important to consider this potential in addressing curriculum overload to support overall wellbeing across the life-span. Another study, by Ntovolis *et al.* (2015), assessed the effect of motivation in elementary school PE on leisure-time physical activity motivation and the related decision-making process. The research was carried out in Greece with 241 pupils. The findings support prior research and demonstrate an important mechanism for how motivation in primary school PE can influence leisure-time physical activity.

Balci and Yanik (2020) completed a study to determine the level of values related to the subject of PE and sport, with self-reported personal and social responsibility behaviours in 1138 students studying in Turkish secondary schools, and to examine the relationship between them. It was noted that students' values related to the subject of PE and sport when their self-reported personal and social responsibility behaviours were at a high level. According to the results of multiple linear regression analysis, the values of respect, awareness, healthy life and nutrition, national culture and

unity, solidarity, and sports culture explained 42% and 47% of the variance personal and social responsibility, respectively. As a result, it can be said that PE and sport values are important variables in predicting the self-reported personal and social responsibility behaviours of secondary school students.

A study undertaken by Bertills *et al.* (2018) investigated the relationship between PE teaching, student self-efficacy, PE aptitude and functional skills. It involved 13-year-old students (n=439) in Sweden. The impact of classroom climate in PE was found to be more obvious among students with disabilities. Perceived functional skills were associated with elevated general school self-efficacy, PE specific self-efficacy and aptitude to participate in PE. Better socio-cognitive functional skills had an overall positive effect on all outcomes.

Abdulla *et al.* (2022) applied self-determination theory to investigate the effects of a professional learning programme and an associated resource support package, that was then delivered by 30 generalist teachers delivering PE in the Maldives. The teachers undertook 8 hours of professional learning that focused on strategies and behaviours to support student satisfaction for the three main elements of self-determination theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The intervention effectively produced a change in students' perception of their teachers' ability to promote students' support, need satisfaction, and reduced need frustration on autonomy, competence, relatedness and positive adaptive outcomes for self-efficacy, enjoyment and engagement.

One study, by Olive *et al.* (2019), examined whether PE could improve the mental health of children (n=821). This four-year Australian intervention indicated that PE had a positive impact on girls' body dissatisfaction and boys' depressive symptoms in year 1, but the effects were not sustained over 4 years. This highlights the benefits of teaching PE, which extend beyond physical health and activity, and how PE can also support positive mental health.

5.3.4.4 Social Personal and Health Education

Johnson *et al.* (2014) completed a study examining the importance of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) through the implementation of a 10-week pilot of RSE work. Findings from the study, completed with teachers in 5 classrooms in Australia, highlighted the lack of time available for the area of RSE in the curriculum. The teachers identified the need for a proper curriculum resource.

5.3.4.5 Links between Physical Education and Social Personal and Health Education

Some of the studies included in the SLR illustrate that curriculum overload can be addressed by taking consideration of the potential of PE to support the teaching of SPHE and vice versa. A Spanish study undertaken by Menendez and Fernandez-Rio (2017) aimed to explore the impact of the

combination of two pedagogical models, Sport Education and Teaching for Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR), for 12 students with disabilities experiencing a contactless kickboxing learning unit. The hybridisation of Sport Education and TPSR was identified as a powerful tool for including students with disabilities in PE, supporting them and their classmates to connect in and out of class.

Using an achievement goal model, Guan *et al.* (2020) explored the relationship between achievement goals and social goals for 246 American junior-high students, and how these goals were associated with students' self-reported persistence towards physical activities. The results revealed that mastery-approach goals, social responsibility goals, and performance-approach goals were significantly positive predictors of persistence, whereas mastery-avoidance goals, performance-avoidance goals, and social relationship goals were not. Additionally, girls scored significantly higher values on social relationship, social responsibility, and mastery-avoidance goals than boys, whereas boys reported significantly higher values on performance-approach goals than girls.

There is clearly a possibility of linking aspects of social, personal or health education with PE, where there are shared benefits in terms of wellbeing.

5.3.5 Theme 5: Voice/Agency

The theme of voice takes account of child agency and the opportunities for pupils to express their views on matters which affect them, in relation to a broad concept of wellbeing. Some of the research specifies the wellbeing benefits of simply seeking opinions from pupils about their school and/or education. Another important aspect of voice/agency is that of the teacher, because teacher agency supports pupil agency (Robertson *et al.* 2020).

In Australia, Simmons *et al.* (2015), in ascertaining how children imagined an ideal school for wellbeing, noted that the 606 participating pupils placed a particular emphasis on expressing opinions in relation to issues of pedagogy, school environment, and relationships. In a Tanzanian study, Mnubi (2017) sought to improve the quality of basic education by using gender-sensitive and democratically-elected student councils in both primary and secondary schools. This action to support student voice and agency, led to increased leadership skills in both female and male students, improved school management and increased teachers' accountabilities. The evidence was noted that students voiced concerns and issues, and displayed increased advocacy skills. The students also demonstrated better pupil-teacher relationships, increased attendance, and reduced pregnancies.

An interesting study on using photovoice to identify sexual health needs among Latina pupils was conducted by Sanchez *et al.* (2021). They sought to investigate topics related to cultural identity, gender and sexual health. The principle of the study was that 11-12-year-old pupils (n=17) in the USA were supported to take the lead in designing sexuality programmes and assessing their value, rather than simply telling researchers what effective programmes should mean and include. The photovoice project involved three components: training, focus group discussions and social action. In the initial group meetings (weeks 1 and 2), youth collaborators participated in team building exercises. During weeks 3 and 4, youth collaborators were loaned instant polaroid cameras with a digital component for the duration of the project and trained by a seasoned photographer in basic photography, storytelling and image ethics. During weeks 5-10, youth collaborators were assigned weekly photography assignments that explored a designated topic related to the broad themes for the project. The findings reveal that four themes were created; culture and gender, family influence on dating expectations; double standards for boys and girls, and the need for a safe space to talk about sex. In summary, youth participatory action research, such as through photovoice projects, provides an entry point for young people into the decision-making processes that affect their lives, whether at school, in their community or at government level.

The literature often highlights the voices of children 'at risk'. One such group is the children who attend nurture classes. Cefai and Pizzuto (2017) worked with 18 children aged 4-7 years, in a nurture class in Malta. The experiences of pupils who attended the nurture class on a part-time basis was extremely positive. One of the activities they enjoyed was Circle Time where they were offered the opportunity to express themselves in a safe and supportive environment. This taught them basic communication skills, thus, enabling them to use their voice in the mainstream classroom. Powell *et al.* (2018) engaged in a two-year study with 606 students, aged 6-17 years, in Australia. The main outcome of the study was the value in accessing students' views for change and reform in schools regarding student wellbeing.

A further study, completed by Segal *et al.* (2017), involved Grade 6 pupils in Israel, using an ethnographic approach and involving interviews, observations and focus groups. It concluded that opportunities for pupil voice can happen by 'problematising' the curriculum, expanding pupils' conceptual tools and teachers' pedagogical repertoire and seeking ways to make space for disenfranchised voices. However, for teachers to promote child agency, Robertson *et al.* (2020) discovered that teachers (n=82) in the USA benefited from professional development focused on leadership, autonomy, intentionality and reflectivity to enhance their agency. The authors highlighted the significance of this to promote child agency.

5.3.6 Theme 6: Processes and Content

The theme of Processes and Content takes account of curriculum processes, including methodologies, classroom practices, and specific PE- and SPHE-related content.

5.3.6.1 Teaching Methodologies

Lunga *et al.* (2022) identified that a play-based approach was very useful to support children's holistic development and that play-based pedagogies supported integrated learning in South African early childhood settings. It is interesting to note that Morris *et al.* (2018) also noted from their work with 300 parent-child dyads and 25 teachers in Australian pre-school settings that play-based learning was more useful for building children's knowledge on wellbeing than obesity education and prevention. However, it was also noted in their research, that there was a need to train teachers in play-based learning towards knowledge on wellbeing. Teacher professional development has been highlighted for the successful implementation of many aspects of Wellbeing in the curriculum. Another study, by Cefai and Pizzuto (2017), listened specifically to the voices of 18 young children in a Maltese nurture class. They identified that curriculum processes matter to this group of learners. Active methodologies that support engagement and participation of pupils including hands-on, play based learning were favoured by the 4-7-year-old pupils who also benefited from a focus on relational and emotional dimensions of learning.

A New Zealand study examined the value of music for children following the trauma of earthquakes. This two-year action research case study involved 30 pupils in a daily singing activity, '*Singing for Wellbeing'*, which combined both wellbeing and music education (Rickson *et al.* 2018). Teachers were very positive towards the integrated approach, but were concerned that they were not meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of both subject areas. There was a tension between singing for pleasure (wellbeing) and singing as a learning process within music. Findings indicated that teachers experienced the singing initiative as a motivating, equalising, and accessible activity (when the focus was on fun and enjoyment). However, they had concerns that the language used in the curriculum naturally draws teachers towards formal assessment of student outcomes. The study concluded that even when teachers have poor self-efficacy with regard to singing and teaching music, they are still able to engage learners in singing by taking the focus away from music learning. Yanko and Yap (2020) also demonstrated the beneficial links between music and SEL, but they also added movement to the mix. They presented autoethnographic vignettes to depict how an unspecified number of grade 1 pupils in Canada interacted with their broader school environment. The study illustrated how the children engaged with meaning-making about a local stream through music and movement, and

how engagement with the Performing Arts supported mindfulness and social emotional skills. Results articulated that learning in a co-constructivist setting, which facilitated opportunities for reflective listening, choice, intentional focus, and feedback, supported the development of behavioural and emotional abilities. Furthermore, it empowered the pupils to delve deeper into their connections with nature through composing abstract music and movement pieces. The study highlights a symbiotic relationship between the Performing Arts, SEL, and mindful learning, which is primarily concerned with creating positive learning experiences and activity-based, discovery learning.

Substance use is a topic covered in the current SPHE curriculum in Irish primary schools. While this content is not in question, the methods of teaching substance use have been explored by Nascimento and De Micheli (2015) in primary and secondary schools in Brazil. The aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of three different types of preventive intervention performed in the school setting for reducing substance use among students (n=1316). The results indicated that teacher-performed interventions were most effective in reducing both substance use and the severity of substance-associated problems than interventions delivered by experts. The use of a 'single lecture' intervention indicated that such approaches are ineffective. The authors concluded that preventive actions that were contextualised to the student's reality and the school environment, and that included the active involvement of both teacher and student, were most effective at reducing the prevalence of substance use and the severity of associated problems in students.

5.3.6.2 Classroom Practices

A number of classroom practices including mindfulness, meditation and restorative practices are worthy of consideration, regarding both curriculum processes for wellbeing and curriculum overload.

Study findings in relation to meditation and mindfulness practices in classrooms are generally very positive, although some caveats are highlighted. A study with 50 teachers and 114 year 4 pupils in Australia by Graham and Truscott (2020) suggested that medication supports both the emotional and social wellbeing of both pupils and their teachers. They asserted that the benefits occur in multiple, accumulative and often reciprocal ways. Silent meditation in particular offered short-term calming effects for pupils that benefitted their emotional state and subsequent social interactions. Stapp and Lambers (2020) examined the impact of mindfulness-based yoga interventions, on grade 5 pupils in the USA (n=58), on perceived anxiety and stress levels. It involved a 3-month intervention. The study findings articulated that mindfulness-based yoga can be a positive tool for reducing pupils' anxiety and stress; with male pupils reporting the greatest benefit. Rix and Bernay (2014) noted that the teaching of mindfulness skills in New Zealand, to a sample of 126 primary-school pupils, caused

a sense of calm in the pupils that became more pronounced as the intervention continued and lasted for longer. It also supported pupils' ability to focus over time, including pupils who experienced difficulties with focusing. Mindfulness led to an improvement in pupils' relationships, conflict resolution and ability to perceive the view point of another. However, it was dependent on the 'buy-in' from teachers. After 3 months, the mindfulness programme continued by teachers led to enhanced classroom culture, with pupils more relaxed, able to express feelings, able to emotionally regulate more effectively and co-operative. Crawford *et al.*'s (2021) study linked mindfulness practice with attention, focus, emotional regulation and stress reduction. The British research involved 48 pupils, aged 7-11-years, and 12 teachers. The researchers highlighted and critically examined the inherent ethical dilemmas of implementing mindfulness-based interventions in contexts that include vulnerable and conscripted audiences in particular. They argued the need for 'a louder revolution' (p.17), whereby education deepens its engagement with mindfulness, or alternatively considers abandoning mindfulness rhetoric altogether, particularly as the interpretation of mindfulness in education is fundamentally different from the Buddhist interpretation of the term.

A qualitative study by Skrzypek *et al.* (2020) endorsed the inclusion of restorative practice circles in schools. The benefits for 10-13-year-old students (n=90) in the USA included support for the promotion of communication, expression of thoughts and feelings, perspective taking and opportunities for learning. The study also highlighted the importance of including students' perspectives into the practice. That study endorsed the earlier findings of Carraro and Gobbi (2018) on the use of restorative circles in Italy. The findings of the earlier study, provided evidence for a strong connection between community building circles used in restorative practice and social-emotional learning.

5.3.6.3 Interventions and Programmes

Further curriculum processes were considered through the evaluation of programmes. Kirby *et al.* (2021) presented an evaluation of the '*Hopeful Minds'* programme, a school-based mental health promotion programme aimed at children and pre-adolescents, used with 88 participants in the UK. The findings illustrated that the participating primary school children had a reduction in negative emotions and emotional arousal, which indicates improved emotional regulation, as a result of the programme. The post-primary students did not have any changes in anxiety levels, but reported better coping strategies and resilience. Therefore, the programme had successful outcomes, not just regarding mental health but also concerning emotional learning.

An evaluation of the '*Friends for Life'* programme on pupils' (n=69) and teachers' (n=23) emotional states for a school in a low socio-economic status area was conducted by Lizuka *et al.* (2015). The study examined the impact of the programme when delivered with specific coaching support during the implementation of the initial sessions. The findings indicated that pupils who were initially identified as being 'at risk' were associated with a pre-post decrease in their anxiety levels. More specifically, the pupils exhibited a decrease in their levels of separation anxiety, obsessive compulsive symptoms, and physical anxiety at the end of the intervention.

Another social emotional wellbeing programme, '*Happy Kids'*, was evaluated by Anderson *et al.* (2015). They concluded that the programme demonstrated positive social and emotional outcomes for the 95 Australian pupils, aged 11-12 years. There was a particularly positive impact upon pupils' confidence, social skills and wellbeing. '*Koolkids'* was also endorsed by Carroll *et al.* (2020) as a teacher-led, classroom-based structured programme for enhancing Australian pupils' SEL. They illustrated how the use of an interactive, multi-media format and animated character enabled the children (n=854) to develop their self-esteem, emotional regulation capacities, social and friendship skills, and empathy and compassion for others.

5.3.6.4 SPHE- and PE-related Content

The SLR identified a number of studies which highlighted key aspects of SPHE- and PE-related content that could be prioritised in an overloaded curriculum.

Follari (2022) undertook a case study, with 450 pupils and 65 teachers in the USA, to ascertain the school community's perceptions and practices in relation to whole-child education, and to explore the impact of SEL instruction on children, staff, and the school climate. Five key district- and school-wide practices emerged from this research as influential on perceptions of overall school climate and supports for whole-child practices. The SPHE- and PE-related themes included time and effort dedicated to relationships and unique nutrition, physical fitness, and wellness activities. Further studies have evaluated the benefits of direct instruction on certain values and dispositions. One such study on gratitude was conducted by Tian *et al.* (2015) with 706 primary-school pupils in China. They concluded that gratitude is significantly related to subjective wellbeing in schools, and pro-social behaviour partially mediated the relationship between gratitude and positive affect in school. A gender difference emerged, with boys displaying greater benefits of gratitude than girls.

A study by Hussain *et al.* (2015) sought to assess health education needs of elementary school boys in Pakistan. The 328 male pupils were aware of the main constructs of health education, but required

awareness, specifically, in food and nutrition, hygiene, seasonal and tropical diseases, infectious diseases, and psychological problems.

In relation to PE, a study by Lopes *et al.* (2017), sought to test the effectiveness of primary school PE on 60 pupils' motor-skill and physical fitness development. Findings from the Portuguese study indicated that PE lessons had a positive impact on the development of specific motor skills in all sports, except track and field. Even two lessons per week led to an improvement in motor skill competence, especially in gymnastic and basketball. However, two lessons per week were not enough to improve physical fitness or body composition.

5.3.6.5 *Supports for Learners with Different Needs*

A number of studies also focused on pupils deemed to be 'at risk' of lower levels of wellbeing. These include pupils with low academic achievement or those with learning needs. Buchanan *et al.* (2021), in a 5-year longitudinal study with 7-9-year-olds (n=23) in the UK, emphasised that the wellbeing of lower-achieving pupils was poorer than that of higher-achieving pupils. This resulted in feelings of shame, anxiety and fear. Some were even afraid that this would hinder their success in adult life. Some teacher practices, which form part of curriculum processes, were observed to exacerbate this issue by having pupils not partaking in break time activities in an effort to catch up on academic tasks. Such actions had the potential to impact negatively on the physical and emotional wellbeing of the pupils. The authors concluded that pupils need to have a sense of achievement, which implies the need for teachers to differentiate and/or individualise learning. They also highlighted the need for pupils to interact with peers during leisure times at school, where they use their social and emotional skills in context.

Zurbriggen *et al.* (2021) specifically examined teaching practices that can foster social participation, in general, and reduce the effect of lower social participation among students with SEN, in particular. This study included both primary and secondary school pupils (n=518). The results indicated that curriculum processes were very influential. The social climate of the classroom impacted self-perceived social participation. Students with SEN received fewer peer nominations, and perceived their social participation to be lower, compared to their peers without SEN. However, this was moderated by the social classroom climate, i.e. the difference became smaller when the social classroom climate was more positive. Furthermore, the higher the personalised instruction was rated by a student, the higher his or her social status. Palomino (2017) reported on a study with 26 Spanish pupils, aged 7-12 years, with compensatory education needs. Using an analysis of the pupils' perceptions of self-concept, the research focused on the development of a mindfulness programme

that was based on the group's needs. The study concluded that an individualised approach to a mindfulness programme was very successful.

5.4 Chapter Summary

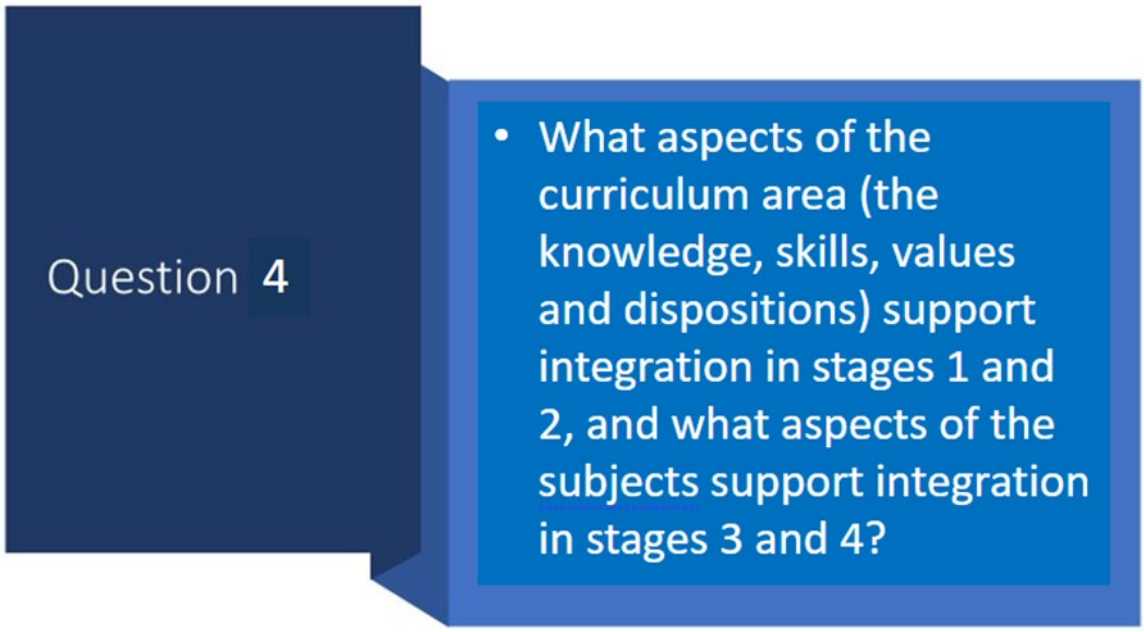
The findings from the literature that was reviewed in this chapter provide considerations for the essential curriculum skills and processes in the area of Wellbeing, with reference to PE and SPHE. It was noted that three contexts emerged: the discrete teaching of content and skills, the integration of Wellbeing across the curriculum, and teaching it through a positive school/classroom culture and climate. These are the three contexts in which SPHE is currently taught in the *Primary School Curriculum*.

The number of articles returned on the theme of skills alone provides evidence for the need to teach specific skills in PE and SPHE and in the integrated area of Wellbeing in stages 1 and 2. There is potential to teach SEL skills, in particular, in SPHE and through integration with other subject areas. Similarly, PE skills can also be taught beyond PE. There is evidence to support the importance of Values Education in the Wellbeing area of learning. Certain aspects of wellbeing are best taught discretely. One such aspect is health, but it includes both mental and physical health. The findings illustrated that teachers regard mental health as the area of health that they feel most anxious about teaching. A number of interventions and programmes are presented across this chapter, but they may add to curriculum overload rather than support its reduction.

In the context of curriculum overload, it is important to note that culture and climate are very influential in the development of wellbeing, both in the context of the classroom, and the overall school. Studies highlighted that pupils who feel a sense of belonging at school and experience positive pupil-teacher relationships have better wellbeing. The findings in relation to curriculum processes highlight the use of various approaches, such as circle work and restorative practices. In addition, the implementation of a range of methodologies support the teaching of curriculum skills and processes. The results of studies on mindfulness activities are mixed, but they present interesting insights for how such approaches are implemented in classrooms, which might not in fact support skill development for pupils.

Similar to Question Two, it is clear that tailored continual professional learning opportunities for teachers, and the provision of adequate resources, are critical to support teachers in executing the relevant curriculum skills and processes.

Chapter Six: Addressing Question Four



6.1 Introduction

The purpose of Chapter Six is to identify, from the literature, aspects of the curriculum area of wellbeing (the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions) that support integration in stages 1 and 2, and aspects of PE and SPHE that support integration in stages 3 and 4.

Fifty-two studies are relevant to this section of the literature review. A significant number of studies span across both stages 1 and 2, and 3 and 4. It was, therefore, unhelpful to present the findings according to distinct stages. Consequently, a thematic approach was used. Fourteen of the included studies were related to PE, while the remainder were related to SPHE or to Wellbeing more broadly.

6.2 Overview of included studies

Figure 6.1 illustrates the distribution of countries represented within this section. The majority of studies (23%) were located in the USA (n=12), followed by 13 % in Turkey (n=7) and 7% in New Zealand (n=4). The UK, Tanzania, Finland and Australia were represented by 6% (n=3) each. The category of 'Other' countries comprised 33% (n=17) of the 52 studies. This included Ukraine, Spain and Greece with two studies each, while Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, South Korea, Sweden, and Taiwan were each represented once.

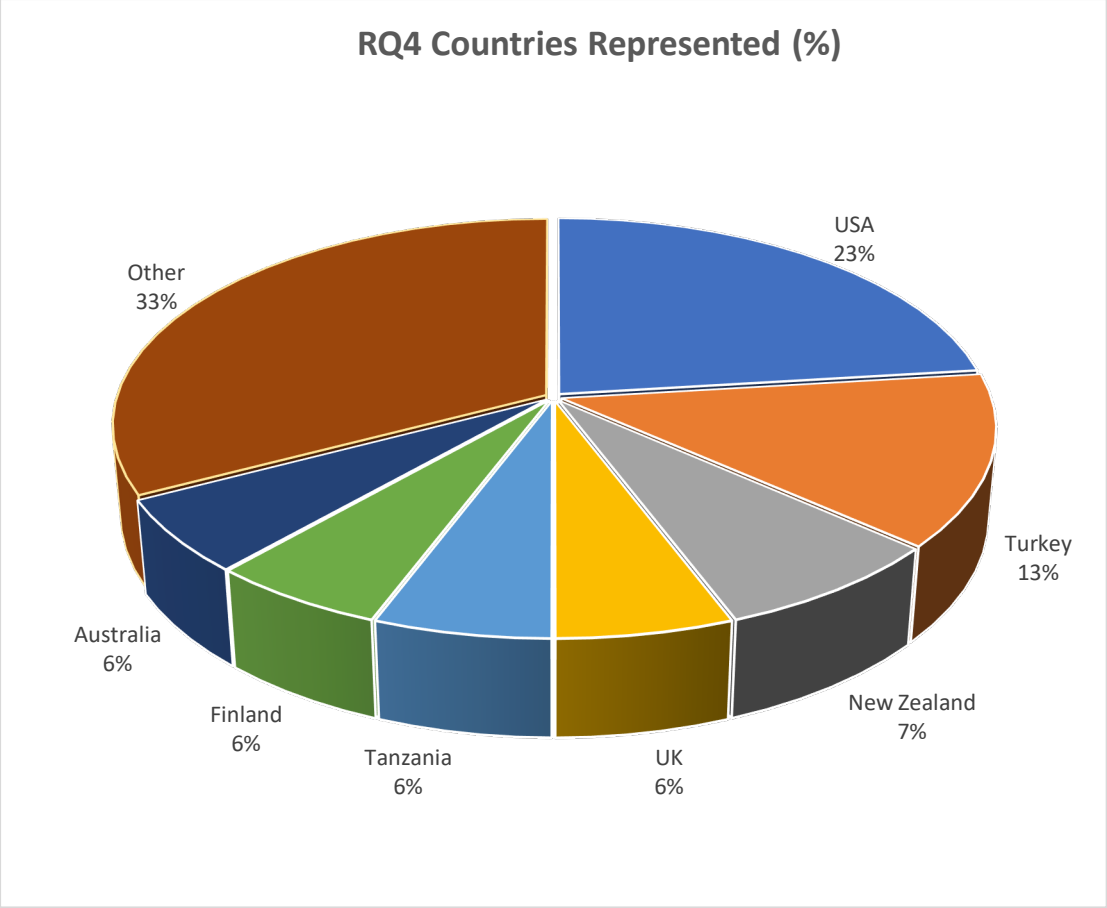


Figure 6.1 Research Question 4: Distribution of Countries Represented in the Literature

The distribution of settings represented within the articles is illustrated in Figure 6.2 The majority (63%) of the 52 studies were conducted in primary schools (n=33). Early years (n=3) and secondary schools (n=5) were settings for 6% and 10% respectively. A further 17% of studies (n=9) included various combinations of settings, such as early years and primary school, primary and secondary school or all three settings. 'Other' settings, which included special or alternative settings accounted for 4% of studies (n=2).

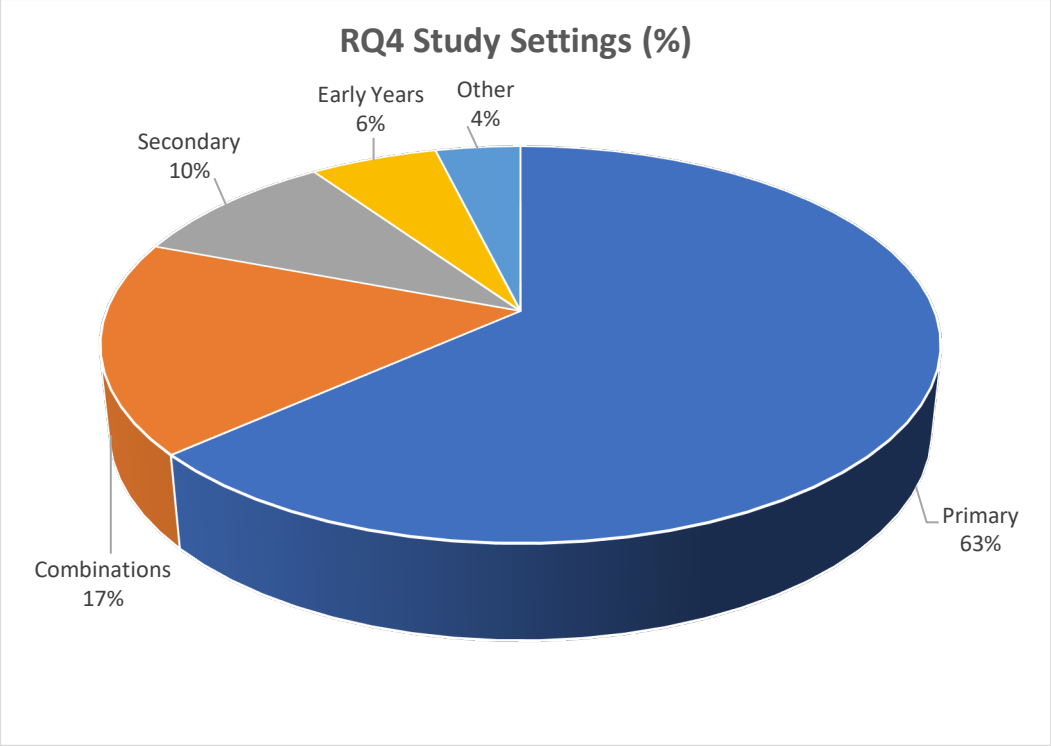


Figure 6.2 Research Question 4: Distribution of Settings Represented in the Literature

Pupils in stages 3 and 4 were represented in 31% (n=16) of the 52 included studies, while pupils in stages 1 and 2 were represented in 6% (n=3) of the studies. In addition, 17% (n=9) of the studies included pupils in stages 1 to 4 and 20% (n=10) included children in a combination of stages such as early years and stage 1 or stages 3 and 4 and secondary school. Participants in secondary or preschool stages only were included in 15% (n=8) of the studies and were categorised as 'other'. Finally, 12% (n=6) studies did not state the grade level of the participants. Figure 6.3 displays the distribution of stages, that were represented in the articles.

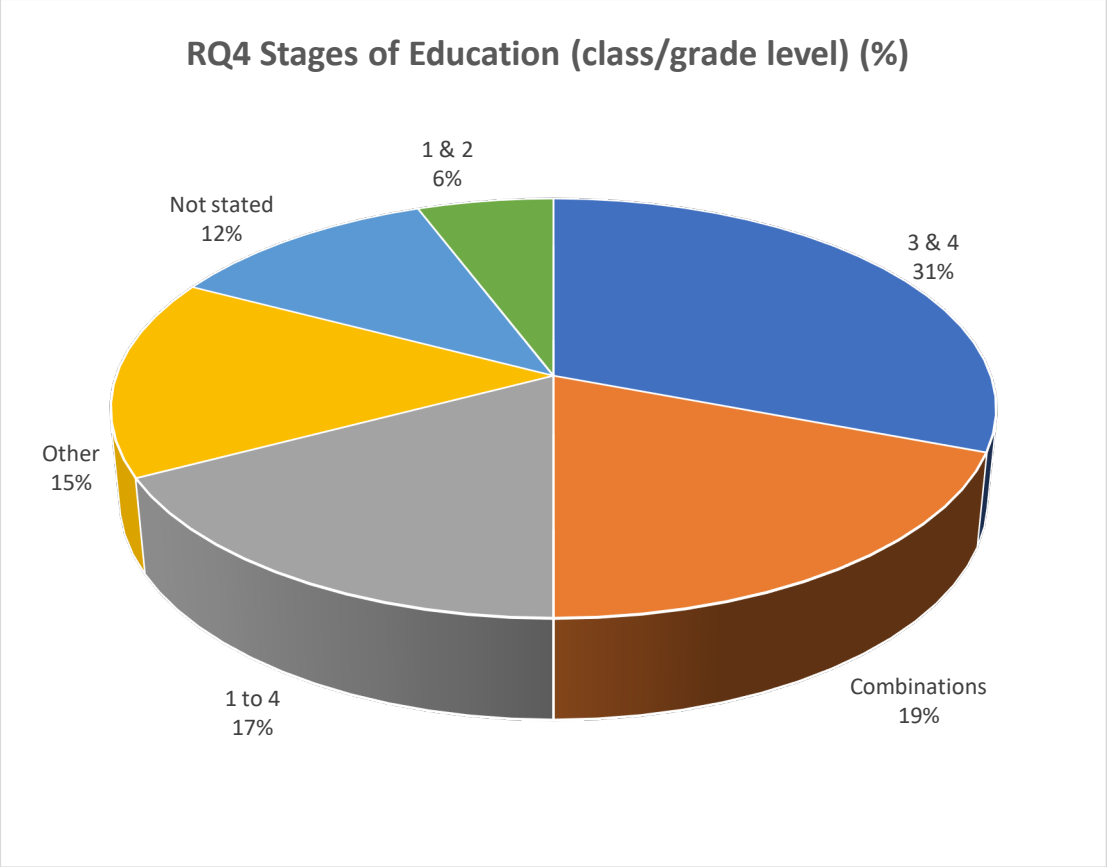


Figure 6.3 Research Question 4: Distribution Stages Represented in the Literature

Figure 6.4 illustrates the distribution of data collection techniques used within the studies. Questionnaires were used for data collection in 37% (n=19) of the 52 articles, followed by case studies in 11% (n=6), and scales/measures in 11% (n=6) of the studies. Data was also collected through experiments in 10% of the studies (n=5) and RCTs in 6% of the studies (n=3). Interview/focus groups, mixed methods and 'other' methods were used in 4% of the studies each (n=2). In addition, 13% of studies used a combination of data collection strategies (n=7).

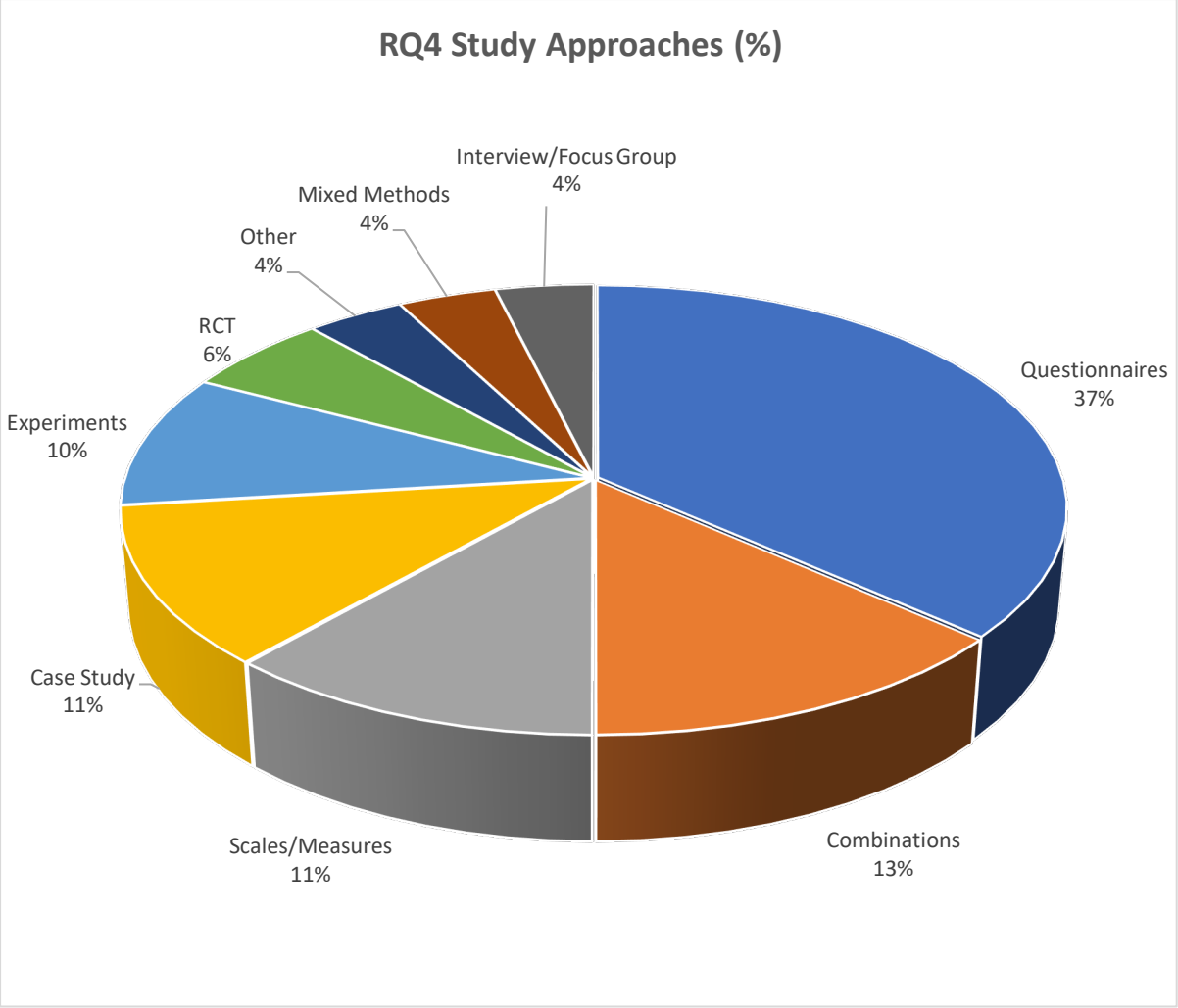


Figure 6.4 Research Question 4: Distribution of the Study Approaches Represented in the Literature

Table 6.1 represents the details for all included studies: author, number of participants, mean age and grade level of participants, country of study, study setting and study type.

Table 6.1 Details of Articles Included for Research Question Four

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
1	Andrade et al. (2020)	213 pupils	7-11 years M=9.41±0.48 years	Grades 4-5	1 to 4	Brazil	Elementary school	Primary	Experimental design	Experiments
2	Backman et al. (2012)	200 students	11-16 years	Not stated	Combinations	Sweden	Middle school	Combinations	Written reflections	Other
3	Balbag and Kaya (2019)	93 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Word association test	Scales/ Measures
4	Balci and Yanik (2020)	1138 pupils	12-13 years	Not stated	Other	Turkey	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
5	Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu (2020)	582 pupils	9-11 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
6	Bozkur (2019)	272 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
7	Buchanan et al. (2021)	23 pupils	7-9 years	Years 3-5	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Life history approach: interviews and observation	Combinations
8	Chung and Li (2020)	Not stated	Not stated	Elementary	Not stated	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Case study	Case Study
9	Cipra and Hall (2019)	404 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4, 5, 7, and 8	Combinations	USA	Middle school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
10	Coskun (2019)	12 pupils	10 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
11	Erhorn (2014)	26 pupils	8-11 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Germany	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic case study	Case Study
12	Follari (2022)	450 pupils 65 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic case study	Case Study
13	Garnett et al. (2022)	107 pupils 17 staff	8-10 years	Grades 3-5	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Staff Surveys and pupil questionnaire	Questionnaires

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
14	Georgios et al. (2018)	65 pupils	M=11.49 years	Grades 5-6	3 & 4	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
15	Haapala et al. (2014)	1463 students	Not stated	Grades 4, 5, 7 and 8	Combinations	Finland	Primary school and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
16	Hargreaves et al. (2022)	23 pupils	7-8 years	Year 3	1 & 2	UK	Primary school	Primary	Interview and lesson observation	Combinations
17	Haruna et al. (2018)	120 students	11-15 years	Not stated	Other	Tanzania	Secondary school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
18	Haruna et al. (2021)	120 students	11-15 years	Not stated	Other	Tanzania	Secondary school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
19	Hirvonen et al. (2015)	377 pupils	Not stated	Pupils followed from Kindergarten to Grade 4 (346)	Combinations	Finland	Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
20	Housman et al. (2018)	100 pupils	2-6 years	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Private child development centre	Other	Psychometric testing	Scales/Measures
21	Hraste et al. (2018)	36 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Finland	Elementary	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
22	Hubley et al. (2020)	121 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Elementary and Middle school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
23	Kell and Harney (2019)	98 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4-9	Combinations	USA	Elementary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
24	Kingston et al. (2020)	43 pupils	M=9.95 (4th class) M=12 (6th class)	4th and 6th class	3 & 4	Ireland	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
25	Kopelman-Rubin et al. (2021)	419 pupils	9-10 years M=9.5 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Israel	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire and school records	Combinations

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
26	Leonenko et al. (2019)	149 pupils	M=12.8 years	Grades 6-7	Other	Ukraine	Middle school	Secondary	Physical health index	Scales/Measures
27	Loureiro et al. (2020)	150 pupils	10 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Luxembourg	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire, drawing and open-ended questions	Combinations
28	Lynch and Wishart (2021)	11 pupils Teachers Parents Gardener	Not stated	Grades 1-6	1 to 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic: photography, interviews with adults, classroom observation, focus groups with pupils, and document collection	Combinations
29	Macdonald et al. (2021)	75 teachers	Not stated	Kindergarten to Year 2	1 to 4	Australia	Primary School with Kindergarten classes	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
30	Mercier et al. (2022)	948 pupils	11- 14 years	Grades 6-8	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
31	Mihic et al. (2016)	164 children	3-6 years	Preschool	Other	Croatia	Preschool	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
32	Miliffe (2016)	132 pupils	10 years	Years 5-6	3 & 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Mixed method semi-structured discussion and questionnaire	Combinations
33	Min et al. (2019)	212 children	5 years	Kindergarten	Other	South Korea	Kindergarten	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
34	Mnubi (2017)	54 student leaders (interviews) 581 student leaders (focus groups) 29 head teachers 35 mentors 24 champions 27 community leaders	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	Tanzania	Primary school and Secondary school	Combinations	Interview and focus groups	Interview/FG
35	Nixon (2016)	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods: art activities and reflection	Mixed Methods
36	Olive et al. (2019)	821 pupils	Not stated	Grades 2, 3, 6	1 to 4	Australia	Elementary school	Primary	Anthropometric and fitness measures	Scales/Measures
37	Palomino (2017)	26 pupils (with SEN)	7-12 years	Years 1-3	1 to 4	Spain	Primary school	Primary	Multi-dimensional concept scale	Scales/Measures
38	Papadopoulos (2020)	120 pupils (gifted)	5-6 years	Not stated	1 & 2	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment; pre- post-questionnaires	Experiments
39	Pérez-Ordás et al. (2020)	210 pupils	10-12 years M=11.04 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Spain	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
40	Ricketts et al. (2022)	5 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	UK	Black Supplementary school	Other	Case study: semi-structured interview	Case Study
41	Rickson et al. (2018)	30 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Case study using action research	Case Study
42	Rix and Bernay (2014)	126 pupils 6 teachers	Not stated	Grades 2-6	1 to 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: Reflection and questionnaire	Mixed Methods

ID	Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
43	Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015)	99 pupils	9-11 years M=10.24 years	Grades 4-5	3 & 4	USA	Primary school	Primary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
44	Shavel et al. (2021)	100 pupils	6-10 years	Not stated	1 to 4	Ukraine	Primary school	Primary	Anthropometric measures	Scales/Measures
45	Sohrabi (2019)	2 classes	Not stated	Grade 5	3 & 4	Iran	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
46	Su and Chung (2022)	16 children	M=6.2 years	Kindergarten	Other	Taiwan	Kindergarten	Early Years	Mixed methods: interview, drawing, photography and observation	Combinations
47	Twyford (2012)	46 pupils 14 teachers/ teacher aides	5-10 years	Not stated	1 to 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
48	Victorson et al. (2022)	Not stated	Not stated	Kindergarten-Grade 12	Combinations	USA	Elementary school and High school	Combinations	Reflection	Other
49	Vural and Kirbas (2020)	1600 students	Not stated	Grades 5-8	3 & 4	Turkey	Middle school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
50	Yang et al. (2018)	9659 pupils (Elementary school) 9535 students (Middle school) 6702 students (High school)	Not stated	Grades 4-12	Combinations	USA	Elementary, Middle and High school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
51	Yanko and Yap (2020)	Not stated	Not stated	Grade 1	1 & 2	Canada	Primary school	Primary	Autoethno-graphic storying approach (Case Study)	Case Study
52	Yüksel et al. (2019)	281 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

6.3 Outcomes for Question Four

The key aspects of Wellbeing, PE and SPHE identified in the analysis of literature that support integration are as follows: SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) and relationship building to be included across all curricular areas; integration of SPHE concepts and PE; integration with Arts Education; integration with SESE; integration through teaching methodologies; and school climate and school environment as facilitators for integration. In the following sections, the literature is presented for each of these themes.

6.3.1 Theme 1: SEL across All Curricular Areas for Wellbeing and Academic Outcomes

It has emerged, quite strongly, in the literature that opportunities can be taken across the entire school day to integrate SEL. In their study, which included 419 students in a SEL programme based on interpersonal psychotherapy, Kopelman-Rubin *et al.* (2021) reported that the 'I can Succeed' SEL Programme supports 4th grade pupils in Israel to improve assertiveness (interpersonal skills) and decrease internalising symptoms. This SEL programme was noted to support interpersonal, social, and emotional wellbeing, in addition to the academic functioning of the pupils. Similarly, in their study, which followed 377 children from kindergarten to 4th grade in Finland, Hirvonen *et al.* (2015) highlighted the importance of teaching behavioural self-regulation in all subject areas for long-term academic outcomes. These findings were echoed by Coskun (2019), Yang *et al.* (2018), and Yüksel *et al.* (2019), who report that developing self-regulation skills (Coskun 2019), social-emotional skills, hope and self-efficacy (Yüksel *et al.* 2019) can be effective in contributing towards academic achievement, and for this reason that SEL should be integrated across all curricular areas to support students and their learning (Yang *et al.* 2018).

Similar findings were reported in studies that focused on children in the early years (aged 3-6). Housman *et al.* (2018) evaluated the effects of an early learning approach that promotes emotional competence and self-regulation on young children's social and emotional skills, by teaching emotional knowledge and emotional regulation. This study included 100 children aged 2-6-years-old in the USA. The programme provided educators with opportunities to scaffold emotional, cognitive, and social skills with children during lived experiences. By focusing on the promotion of emotional competence through co-regulation in lived emotional experiences, as they occurred throughout the day, results confirmed significant improvements in children's critical foundational social-emotional regulatory skills.

Another programme, the preschool PATHS (Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies) programme, was implemented by teachers with their 164 children (aged 3-6 years) in Croatia during one preschool year (Mihic *et al.* 2016). The programme is based on Greenberg and Kushe's (1993) affective-behavioural-cognitive-dynamic model of development to promote social-emotional skills and reduce problem behaviour in children. In addition to discrete lessons focusing on social and emotional skill development, the PATHS curriculum included formal and informal extension activities to provide pupils with opportunities throughout the school day to transfer and practice key concepts and skills. This study reported that the PATHS curriculum had positive effects on children's pro-social behaviour, emotion regulation, emotional symptoms, peer problems, relational, aggression, conduct problems, and hyperactive-impulsive behaviour, which influence children's wellbeing, in addition to their academic outcomes. Therefore, these studies contribute to the evidence that SEL can be integrated across the curriculum to enhance outcomes for children and can be taught as specific contexts arise in the classroom.

6.3.2 Theme 2: Integration between SPHE and PE

The integration of SPHE concepts with PE in primary classrooms has been explored in the literature. In their study on the relationships between PE and sports values and behaviours, Balci and Yanik (2020) reported that PE lessons presented important opportunities for the social and moral development of students (n=1138). In that Turkish study, awareness, respect, solidarity, healthy lifestyle and nutrition, sports culture, national culture, and unity were identified by students as the most important values, and these were noted to be significant in predicting students' social responsibility behaviours. In another Turkish study, Vural and Kirbas (2020) evaluated an interdisciplinary approach to Values Education through 'PE and Sports' lessons with 1600 middle school students across one academic year. They reported that value learning occurred through students' experiences, for example, respect for others through losing games, engaging with peers and sharing the environment. These studies present the argument that PE and sports have the potential to teach values in context.

The potential for teaching SEL in PE has also been identified in the literature. Pérez-Ordás *et al.* (2020) investigated the effects of Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) in PE on aggression and social responsibility. The study was conducted in Spain with 210 primary school pupils. The results indicated that TPSR in PE has the potential to improve aggressive and pro-social behaviours in primary school pupils, particularly in low-performing schools. Sohrabi (2019) used a quasi-experimental design to evaluate the effect of PE games (Sport Education Model) on the social skills of 5th grade girls (n=577)

in Iran (mean age=11 years). The experimental group was taught using game-based methods, where pupils were involved in group play within 2x60-minute sessions for 12 weeks. Examples of the games included dodgeball, volleyball, relay races, cooperative ball games, and local Iranian games. The control group continued regular instruction. The results of this study revealed that, through the incorporation of opportunities to practice social activities and express social interests, group games with 5th grade girls in Iran improved the girls' social and communication skills with their peers. The author claimed that, through communicating in group games, children can learn about the perspectives of others and, thus, develop values. The study concluded that incorporating Sport Education in the primary PE curriculum would facilitate the development of communication, values, and transferrable skills. Similarly, Cipra and Hall (2019) conducted a pilot study with 404 students in Grades 4, 5, 7 and 8 in the USA to evaluate *'Core Matters'*, an intervention that integrates martial arts and SEL. The authors reported that the intervention increased students' self-esteem, reduced bullying behaviours, and fostered a greater sense of community cohesion and trust within the school. These studies illustrate that PE is a potential setting for pupils to develop social and emotional skills that can be applied to other life contexts.

Victorson *et al.* (2022) reported findings from dance teachers in the USA on how to develop SEL in dance lessons. Successful strategies included the integration of mindfulness through breathing activities, guided meditation activities, and mindful movement activities within the dance content. The mindful movement activities taught students to be aware of their bodies, in addition to their minds, and the authors recommended that the students participate in pairs for social interaction. Strong routines embedding SEL were also reported to build student confidence, develop teamwork skills, and allow students to explore and take risks in safe environments. Routines included students checking in at the beginning of a lesson, and peaceful closures that might incorporate breathing exercises. Through incorporating SEL in their dance lessons, teachers reported increased student engagement, motivation, agency, and enjoyment in dance lessons. Teachers also reported that students' problem-solving and stress-management skills were enhanced. An earlier study by Georgios *et al.* (2018) reported that a traditional Greek dance programme, taught as part of the PE curriculum to 65 pupils in Grades 5 and 6 in Greece, resulted in higher pupil interest, more active participation, and improved fitness, in addition to enhancing the pupils' self-esteem, socialisation, and overall wellbeing. These studies illustrate how dance can contribute towards the SPHE goals of social, personal and health development.

Andrade *et al.* (2020) used a randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effects of 'exergames' (active electronic games) on the mood states and self-esteem of 4th and 5th grade pupils (aged 7-11 years)

during PE classes, in Brazil (intervention group n=68). The intervention group participated in exergames for 3x40-minute classes. The control group (n=72) participated in traditional PE classes. Brunel's Mood Scale and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale were used to evaluate mood and self-esteem. Girls in the intervention group were noted to have reduced anger and increased vigour. The main results of the control group indicated increased self-esteem in boys and a reduction in the variable of 'mental confusion' in girls. This study indicates that both 'exergames' and PE had an impact on boys' and girls' self-esteem and mood. In addition to illustrating the integration of SPHE and PE outcomes, Andrade *et al.* (2020) argued that PE could be made more attractive by varying the content and including technology.

6.3.3 Theme 3: PE and Children's Mental and Physical Health

In a number of studies, PE has been recognised as positively influencing pupils' mental and physical health. Olive *et al.* (2019) evaluated the effects of a specialist-taught PE programme on childhood mental health. A randomised controlled trial was conducted with 821 participating pupils in Australia. Results indicated that the programme had a positive impact on girls' body dissatisfaction and boys' depressive symptoms in year 1. However, the results were not sustained over 4 years. The effects of a 'recreation-oriented tourism programme' in PE on the physical health of middle school-aged children in Ukraine was evaluated by Leonenko *et al.* (2019). The students in the intervention group (n=149) engaged in hiking, cycling, walking, skiing and other health-related recreational activities during PE lessons, while the control group engaged in regular PE lessons. The authors reported that engaging in the outdoor physical activities during PE had a positive impact on child physical health. Another Ukrainian study, Shavel *et al.* (2021), reported similar findings in their study with children aged 6-10 -years who are d/Deaf (intervention n=37, control n=35). The pupils in the intervention group engaged in a PE programme consisting of physical breathing, posture exercises and physical games. The games were organised by complexity, level of perception, physical intensity, and level of body impact. Results of the study reported that PE positively impacted the physical condition of d/Deaf primary school-aged pupils. The studies indicate that PE can influence the physical and mental health of pupils and provide a useful context for delivering wellbeing programmes.

In the USA, Mercier *et al.* (2022) evaluated the attitudes of middle-school students (n=948) towards PE and physical activity, and the physical activity behaviours of the students. They reported that attitudes of students towards physical activity and PE were related, but distinct. Positive attitudes towards physical activity most predicted student intention and engagement in physical activity. Similar findings were reported by Erhorn (2014). This ethnographic study evaluated the PE experiences and

the everyday movement practices of primary school children (n=26) aged 8-11-years in Germany. This study reported that there is a relationship between pupils' movement patterns inside and outside of school, and that opportunities for movement in their environment should be identified for the children. The approaches to teaching PE were noted to influence children's physical activity outside of school and, therefore, illuminate the influence of PE experiences on children's physical health.

6.3.4 Theme 4: PE, Movement and Academic Outcomes

The integration of physical activity into the classroom and across the school day has been reported in the literature to have positive effects on pupils' cognitive abilities and physical outcomes. Kingston *et al.* (2020) examined the acute effects of a 4-week physical activity policy intervention that incorporated PE, structured play and unstructured play on the working memory and inhibition of 4th and 6th class pupils in Ireland (n=43). The 30-minute PE lessons that took place each week were based on the *Games* strand of the curriculum and incorporated FMS (Fundamental Movement Skills). The unstructured play involved leisurely activity (for example, 'catch', 'tip the can' etc.) and took place for 20 minutes at break times twice a day, 4 days a week for the 4 weeks. The structured play was physical activity, for example, skipping, basketball, hula hoops etc. and took place for 20 minutes at lunchtime on Fridays across the four weeks. The authors reported that the physical activity intervention, particularly the PE component, had a significant positive association with cognitive function. The whole-school physical activity programme was noted to benefit both boys and girls equally in their executive function and, therefore, in their academic performance and achievement. Hraste *et al.* (2018) examined the effects of teaching Mathematics via physically active methods on the mathematical learning of Grade 4 pupils (n=36) in Finland. Results after 4 weeks of the integrated programme indicated that the intervention group (n=19) gained significantly more mathematical knowledge than the control group (n=17). Similarly, teachers in kindergarten to year 2 in Australia reported that pupil engagement in learning tasks improved during or following classroom-based physical activity (Macdonald *et al.* 2021). These studies highlight the potential of integrating physical activity in academic lessons as an efficient and effective approach to supporting pupils' cognitive outcomes. Whole-school approaches to physical activity have been identified as supporting pupils' academic and physical skills, and subsequently, enhancing their wellbeing, by increasing their daily physical activity levels and improving their health.

6.3.5 Theme 5: Integration with Arts Education

Two studies support the exploration of SPHE content through Visual Arts and the enhancement of SPHE content within Visual Arts. In their study, Chung and Li (2020) illustrated the potential to

integrate the teaching of social justice issues, such as homelessness, within and through Visual Arts in the USA. Similarly, Nixon (2016) reported that emotional learning through Visual Arts can be a powerful tool to support pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing in the USA. In this initial pilot study, an unspecified number of elementary-school pupils engaged in the process of art making and art viewing. This enabled them to express their understanding and processing of experiences within a safe and supported environment. The study highlighted the importance of experiential teacher professional development and the creation of a safe and supportive environment when encouraging pupils to express emotions.

Integrating music and SPHE concepts was also reported in the literature. Daily singing for wellbeing was explored by Rickson *et al.* (2018) in New Zealand following the trauma of earthquakes. The authors reported that teachers were incredibly positive towards the integrated approach, however, they were concerned that they were not achieving the learning outcomes of both music and wellbeing. In addition, there was a tension between singing for pleasure (wellbeing) and singing as a learning process in the Music curriculum. In another New Zealand study, Twyford (2012) explored music as therapy for 46 pupils with SEN, aged 5-10-years. This study illustrated how an inclusive musical approach using music therapy can support pupil wellbeing, although it had resource implications.

The use of movement and music in the outdoors was also explored in the literature and noted to be effective in developing social-emotional skills in young children. In the research by Yanko and Yap (2020), which explored mindful learning in the early years, autoethnographic vignettes depicted the journey of Grade 1 pupils as they explored, wondered, investigated, and connected with the ecosystem of a stream near their school in Canada. The children's stories illustrated their meaning-making through music and movement, and how engagement with the Performing Arts can scaffold growth in mindfulness and the development of social-emotional skills. The study illustrated that learning in a co-constructivist setting, which allows opportunities for reflective listening, choice, intentional focus, and feedback, supports the development of behavioural and emotional abilities. This approach empowered pupils to delve deeper into their connections with nature, through composing abstract music and movement pieces. The authors noted a symbiotic relationship between the Performing Arts, SEL, and mindful learning. While the integration of SPHE and Music can be challenging, these studies highlight the potential for integrated learning across the subject areas.

The development of SEL competencies through drama activities was also reported in the literature. Papadopoulos (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of a SEL-based programme on the self-esteem and self-perception of 120 gifted pupils, aged 5-6-years, in Greece. During the lessons within this programme, pupils engaged in role-play games and acted in front of their peers to practice specific

skills, for example, self-regulation, responsible decision-making, and self-confidence strategies. The results revealed that the programme was effective in increasing pupils' self-esteem and self-perception. In addition, the authors reported a significant positive effect of the programme on all the SEL skills that were taught through the dramatic activities. Similarly, 'Entertainment Education', in the form of short drama plays, was observed by Hubley *et al.* (2020) to reduce mental illness stigma and foster SEL among 121 pupils in elementary and middle schools in the USA. These studies illustrate the potential of integrating SPHE concepts, such as social and emotional competencies, and Drama to enhance children's self-esteem and mental wellbeing.

Min *et al.* (2019) integrated physical activity, nutrition, and drama to enhance the physical fitness of 5-year-old children (n=212) in South Korea. The children engaged in a 6-week intervention programme, *'NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Mission X: Train Like an Astronaut'*. The programme was effective in improving the children's physical activity levels, their attitudes towards physical activity and their self-esteem. This study highlighted links between enhanced physical activity at the preschool level and psychological need satisfaction via exercise and interest in physical activity.

6.3.6 Theme 6: Integration with SESE

Through their study, Balbag and Kaya (2019) illustrated that values can be taught to 4th grade pupils (n=93) through the social studies curriculum in Turkey. However, the study indicated that more emphasis was placed on certain values (for example, love and family), over others (for example, responsibility), and that there is, therefore, a need to teach values more explicitly, in addition to the need to be more explicit in the values that are taught.

The literature also demonstrated that care of self, others and the environment can be taught through PE (Balci and Yanik 2020). Through their research on the relationship between PE and sports values and behaviours, the researchers reported that 12-13-year-old students (n=1138) in Turkish schools identified the importance of protecting nature and the environment in sporting activities. The study concluded that these values can be taught and practised in PE lessons, therefore, illustrating the integration of SESE and PE.

6.3.7 Theme 7: Integration through Teaching Methodologies

6.3.7.1 Co-operative learning/collaboration

Several studies advocated for the use of collaborative and cooperative learning to contribute towards students' wellbeing. The use of these approaches was reported by Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu

(2020) to enhance student relationships, foster a sense of community, enhance SEL and contribute to students' overall wellbeing. Their study involved 582 pupils, aged 9-11 years, in Turkey. Miliffe (2016) reported insights into the wellbeing of 132 primary school children in New Zealand, which included the importance of relationships. The author asserted that to affect positive change for the larger school community, pupils and teachers needed to collaborate, and release traditional role boundaries. Similarly, but in a PE context, Pérez-Ordás *et al.* (2020) reported that in Spain where pupils (n=210) perceived a strong cooperative learning climate, their motivational patterns, task achievement, and self-approach goals are influenced positively. In another study exploring the associations between school-wide SEL approaches and student engagement, Yang *et al.* (2018) also reported the importance of relationship-building and teaching social skills within all subject areas in a large sample of elementary, middle and high school students (n=25896) in the USA. This is reiterated by Hargreaves *et al.* (2022), who investigated the role of peer relationships from the perspective of 23 pupils designated as 'low achieving' in the UK. The authors asserted that a greater emphasis on collaboration and the nurturing of relationships in school could support 'lower attaining' pupils' creative learning and attainment. These studies illustrate that cooperative learning is a teaching approach, which supports pupil wellbeing through the development of supportive relationships. The literature present illustrates that the cooperative learning approach, traditionally used in PE, can and should be adapted for use in SPHE and other curricular areas.

6.3.7.2 Games and gamification teaching approaches

Three studies highlighted the importance of play and games in teaching SPHE content. Haruna *et al.* (2018) and Haruna *et al.* (2021) reported that game-based learning and gamification were effective teaching approaches and motivated pupils to learn sexual health education. Both studies took place in Tanzania with 11-15-year old students (n=120). In Turkey, Bozkur (2019) reported how students also develop values through playing games.

6.3.7.3 Circle time and Mindfulness

Two additional practices that were observed to support pupils' learning and emotional development, when integrated across the curriculum, were restorative practice and mindfulness. In a study in the USA, involving 107 pupils, aged 8-10-years, Garnett *et al.* (2022) reported a strong connection between restorative practice community-building circles and emotional learning. This connection subsequently influenced pupils' academic achievement. Schonert-Reichl *et al.* (2015) reported on a study with 99 pupils in the USA, aged 9-11-years. They demonstrated that mindfulness attention training, in combination with opportunities to practice social skills, can improve pupil focus and

attention within the classroom, in addition to enhancing their social and emotional competence. Rix and Bernay (2014) also reported similar findings in New Zealand as a result of an 8-week mindfulness intervention with 126 pupils in years 2-6 of primary school. They concluded that mindfulness increased calm, reduced stress, and improved focus and attention, in addition to enhancing self-awareness and the development of positive relationships.

6.3.8 Theme 8: School Climate as a Facilitator for Integration

The school climate has been identified throughout the literature as an important facilitator for developing pupils' social, personal, health, and physical education. The key areas identified were school-wide support systems and relaxation time.

6.3.8.1 School-wide support systems and events

Yang *et al.* (2018) reported that it is important to establish a school-wide support system to promote students' positive school-wide perceptions. The authors identified some important school factors that facilitate the establishment of a school-wide support system, which included cooperation and communication among teachers, adequate teacher training, clear procedures and structures, support from the school principal, a well-defined school policy (or vision), a caring and inviting school climate, and integration of SEL into the general curriculum and daily teaching practices. This study was based across American elementary, middle and high schools and included 25896 students. In the study conducted by Miliffe (2016) in New Zealand, primary school children (n=132) identified several similar factors contributing to their wellbeing. In addition to the three main themes of relationships, emotional health, and interests, the pupils also identified safety, values, dedicated events, and accomplishment in school, as contributing towards their wellbeing. Similar findings emerged from Follari's (2022) ethnographic case study with 450 children and 65 staff in the USA. The study highlighted the importance of unique wellness activities within the school (for example, indoor garden, sensory garden, Fitness Fridays, wellness activities) in not only facilitating the integration of various subject areas, but in contributing to positive school outcomes for children. However, findings also underscored the importance of administrative leadership, intentional hiring and training of teachers, investment in the curriculum, and time and effort dedicated to relationships in contributing to positive learner outcomes. The need for positive relationships among and between teachers and students, was also highlighted by Miliffe (2016) as essential to developing school-wide support systems. Similarly, Su and Chung (2022) reported on how 16 Kindergarten children in Taiwan learned about values and identify caring behaviours through experiencing and observing teacher caring behaviours during transition times and daily routines. The importance of positive school climate,

relationships and integration across the curriculum was reiterated again in the findings of the *Black Boys Matter* case study. In this study, Ricketts *et al.* (2022) reported that a keen sense of belonging, promoting self-awareness, and pupil empowerment across the curriculum enhanced social-emotional and mental health, in addition to contributing to the academic outcomes of the 5 participating pupils in a Black Supplementary School in the UK.

6.3.8.2 Recess, relaxation, and physical activity

In their study, which analysed children's drawings to explore the concept of an ideal school, Loureiro *et al.* (2020) reported a strong link between school break times, recreation, and pupils' subjective wellbeing. The study, undertaken in Luxembourg, involved 150 children, aged 10-years. Similarly, in a Swedish study with middle school students (n=200), Backman *et al.* (2012), in their written reflections on 'how to make school the best place for learning', identified school climate and school environment as important contributors to students' wellbeing. In relation to the school climate, in particular, they identified the need to start school later, to have more relaxation time and to have more opportunities for physical activity. In a Finnish study with 1463 primary and secondary school students, Haapala *et al.* (2014) reported that student participation in physical activity during recess was positively associated with peer relationships. They noted that physical activity was linked to the development of a positive school climate and students' school-related social factors. A more recent study by Buchanan *et al.* (2021) reported that 'lower-attaining' pupils (n=23) in the UK experienced threats to their wellbeing, in relation to their lack of attainment and associated shame in academic-type subjects. The 7-9-year old pupils in the study identified play and friendships as their most enjoyable school activities. Similarly, in their analysis of self-concept in students with compensatory educational needs, Palomino (2017) identified a link between low-level sport and physical activity, and distortions in body image and self-perception in 26 pupils with SEN in Spain. These studies highlight the need for pupils to engage in free play and physical activity regularly during the school day, particularly during break times as these opportunities contribute to the development of their physical, mental and social wellbeing.

6.3.9 Theme 9: School Environment as a Facilitator for Integration

6.3.9.1 Variety of spaces and materials

A number of studies, which evaluated pupils' perceptions, reported on the importance of the school environment and the need for a variety of resources to support pupil wellbeing. In Luxembourg, Loureiro *et al.* (2020) identified strong links between the school environment and pupils' subjective wellbeing. They reported that the 150 pupils, aged 10-years, appreciated different learning materials, the use of technology, being close to nature, and having green schools and playgrounds, which was

communicated through their drawings. Similarly, Backman *et al.* (2012) reported that Swedish middle-school students identified the need for improved indoor and outdoor facilities, including sports areas and vibrant or calming colours in the environment as important contributors to their wellbeing.

In their ethnographic case study with 11 pupils in Grades 1-6 in Australia, Lynch and Wishart (2021) reported that diversity in play spaces was important to the pupils. Diverse play spaces were reported to have the potential to create opportunities for unstructured, imaginative play, and physical risk-taking. These opportunities enhanced physical skills and provided opportunities for physical activity, in addition to supporting curriculum learning in areas such as PE. The authors also noted that opportunities for pupils to retreat to quiet, hidden places were significant for child wellbeing.

The outdoor environment was identified in the literature as an opportunity for integration. Kell and Harney (2019) identified how tasks from various curricular areas could be performed outdoors to support relaxation and wellbeing in their sample of 98 pupils in the USA. For example, being outdoors and completing tasks, such as written reflections, drawing or sketching could support the practice of reflection/mindfulness. Su and Chung (2022) also identified that Kindergarten children construct meanings of caring and learn values through social interactions in the outdoor environment.

6.3.9.2 Student Councils as a facilitator for Integration

Mnubi (2017) explored the effect of gender-sensitive student councils on the quality of basic education in primary and secondary schools in Tanzania. The author reported that the experience of organising and operating gender-sensitive and democratically elected student councils can contribute to students' understanding of democracy and gender equality, and to instilling these ideas within the school climate. This also links with child voice/agency which is explored further in Section 7.4.

6.4 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to identify aspects of the curriculum area of wellbeing (the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions) that support integration in stages 1 and 2, and aspects of PE and SPHE that support integration in stages 3 and 4.

The key aspects of wellbeing, PE and SPHE (identified through the analysis of literature) that support integration are manifold: SEL and relationship building can be included across all curricular areas; SPHE concepts can be taught in PE, integration with Music and the Visual Arts; Drama and dance can be integrated, aspects of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education can be linked to PE (such as care for the environment) and components of wellbeing can be taught through a variety of active teaching methodologies. Finally, the school climate and school environment facilitate the integration of a range

of knowledge, skills values and dispositions, such as, relationship building, friendships, and physical activity. It must be acknowledged that as a result of the limitations outlined in Chapter Two, the findings reported within this chapter must be interpreted with these caveats in mind.

Chapter Seven: Integration and Agency

7.1 Introduction

Following the presentation of the literature that emerged in relation to the four specific research questions, this chapter expounds on the findings in relation to Integration and Agency. The systematic literature review (SLR) returned few findings on how PE and SPHE can be integrated in stages 1 and 2 for the curriculum area of Wellbeing in specific terms. Integration is at the heart of the Wellbeing curriculum, and has been addressed across the various research questions. It is a powerful way of reducing curriculum overload, when implemented with integrity. However, its centrality in the redeveloped curriculum warrants an explicit examination of the concept to ensure a shared understanding of its complexity. A hand search of articles was conducted to provide more information on the concept of integration and its role in teaching and learning. The literature highlighted the potential to integrate Wellbeing with the Arts, STEAM, language and literacy, and play. This chapter also provides the opportunity to examine the place of spiritual wellbeing in the curriculum. This aspect of wellbeing is cited in the *Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools* (DE 2023), as part of the 'being well' competency, which references specific wellbeing subsets including physical, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The latter subset, spiritual wellbeing, has not featured as prominently as the other 3 subsets in the SLR. It was therefore decided to extend the discourse by completing a hand search of articles to provide information on what it means and its potential for integration in the curriculum. The agency of both pupils and teachers is an important consideration in any curriculum, therefore, this topic is also presented here.

7.2 Integration

There is a tendency in education to use the terms curriculum integration, thematic teaching, and cross-curricular approach interchangeably. It is assumed that thematic teaching is a way of achieving curriculum integration (Lipson *et al.* 1993; Loughman 2005). Curriculum integration, according to Etim (2005, p.3), can be defined as a 'pedagogical approach that is student-centred and focuses on a theme centred on real life issues and problems drawn from several subject areas'. This indicates a clear move away from disciplinary teaching and learning. Such an approach clearly supports pupil agency.

A part of the SLR which specifically searched for articles based on the integration of Wellbeing in the curriculum, yielded 22 articles, with only 7 of this number being relevant for review. The 7 selected articles can be categorised under the following headings; Types of Integration; Wellbeing and the Arts, and Wellbeing and Other Curricular Areas. Following findings from the SLR, which produced few

articles about spiritual wellbeing, a hand search of this topic was undertaken to examine the potential for the integration of Wellbeing with spirituality. This is included as a separate section (7.2.4), but it should be noted that these articles were not extracted from the SLR. However, before examining these themes, it is important to create a shared understanding of the concept of integration, its advantages, disadvantages and considerations. For this purpose, a separate hand-search of articles is presented, although most of this section comes from Tynan (2020), who has synthesized this information. It should be noted that some of the articles use the term thematic teaching or cross-curricular approach instead of curriculum integration.

There are many advantages to high quality curriculum integration. According to Nurlaela *et al.* (2018), integration has the potential to make learning more meaningful. It provides a longer timeframe to work on a theme, which facilitates higher levels of classroom discourse and negotiation. This, in turn, supports pupils' civic education (Gaughan 2003) and enhances pupil involvement (Chumdari *et al.* 2018). It also enables teachers to address issues in a holistic manner, which achieves better understanding (Ignatz 2005), particularly when it is viewed through the lens of different disciplines. Rosner and Hoffman (1992) demonstrated its use as a framework for pupils to make connections in their learning. This leads to deeper and more meaningful learning, that is likely to be understood and remembered. Integration also facilitates a balance between content and process (Ignatz 2005) and emphasises conceptualisation rather than memorisation, thus promoting higher-order thinking (Chumdari *et al.* 2018). To expound on skill development, integration promotes the generalisation of skills and knowledge, thus, enabling pupils to transfer their learning across subject areas and contexts (Lipson *et al.* 1993). The teaching approaches used for thematic teaching, or integration, are important for the success of this pedagogy. It is best implemented through the use of active learning with pupil autonomy prioritised. This way, pupils can be independent in their learning and experience higher levels of intrinsic motivation (John 2015).

Unfortunately, there are limitations, or disadvantages, to this approach. Lipson *et al.* (1993) explained that sometimes the integrated curriculum is presented in terms of activities rather than in terms of curriculum. This can result in an imbalanced, impoverished curriculum with some subject areas inadequately covered in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. There is also a significant workload associated with the approach and a need for professional development for its successful implementation (Leung 2006). This is particularly true in maintaining the integrity of each subject area (Alleman and Brophy 1991), and preventing superficial curriculum links to a theme. Alleman and Brophy (1991) highlighted the tendency of teachers to integrate many subject areas with literacy and/or numeracy, which can lead to the literacy/numeracy outcomes being attained, but a failure to

teach curriculum content or subject-specific skills in the other subject areas. Another challenge for teachers is assessment. According to Wolfinger and Stockard (1997), it can be difficult to assess pupils' learning across a wide range of disciplines. Thorough and continuous assessment of various techniques can be difficult to implement. All of these challenges indicate the need for this approach to teaching and learning to be understood by practitioners, with a need for high quality professional development and practical supports.

To overcome some of these difficulties, Tynan (2020) highlighted some key considerations. Ideally the chosen theme, on which the foundation of the curriculum integration will be built, should be carefully chosen and be of interest to both pupils and teacher. It should allow for broad exploration across several subject areas. However, no subject area should be 'forced' to be integrated. Links should be natural and sensible. Curriculum objectives/learning outcomes for different subject areas should be outlined in a thematic plan or scheme of work so that the integration is not 'trite', but meaningful. This also ensures that the integrity of each subject area is maintained. The theme should allow for the development of knowledge, skills, dispositions, values and attitudes. It should not focus on the development of cognitive capacities alone. In addition, specific teaching and learning activities should be identified and appropriately sequenced, with assessment of and for learning planned in advance to support the learner. Authentic materials should be sourced where possible. Materials need to be fully vetted by the teacher in advance, to ensure that they suit the cognitive and developmental stages of the pupils. The role of the teacher is integral to the success of this approach. The teacher needs to be knowledgeable in the different aspects of the theme, articulating a high level of content knowledge to ensure the topic is explored fully through different subject areas. The teacher also needs to be highly competent at managing co-operative learning activities to ensure pupils are consistently focused on the theme. The findings from the SLR have demonstrated the possibilities of integrating wellbeing content, skills, dispositions and values with the Arts in particular. Smaller numbers of articles highlighted the potential of integrating wellbeing with STEAM, language and literacy.

7.2.1 Types of Integration

This section presents the findings from the only study which emerged from the SLR that focuses on models of integration. Chumdari *et al.* (2018) sought to investigate the differences between the yields of inquiry-based integrated thematic instruction and thematic instruction model in primary schools in Indonesia. The study involved four experimental classes (n=129) and four control groups (n=139). The study indicated that not all thematic instruction models are the same. It noted that inquiry-based integrated thematic instruction has more significant and positive contributions on the character education of pupils compared to the thematic instruction model.

While there was not a lot of evidence of the practical application of integrated teaching for Wellbeing, the studies that were presented provided an insight into the potential to teach discrete Wellbeing content and/or skills through other curriculum areas, such as the Arts, STEAM, language and literacy.

7.2.2 Wellbeing and the Arts

An article by Yanko and Yap (2020) presented autoethnographic vignettes of Canadian Grade 1 pupils to illustrate how the Performing Arts can support mindful learning and social emotional skills. The authors identified a symbiotic relationship between the Performing Arts, SEL (Social and Emotional Learning), and mindful learning over the course of 6 months. They stated, 'When students apply music and movement as a way to illustrate connections, values, and understandings, they participate in co-constructivist processes that evoke subjective vulnerabilities, feelings, and ideas' (p.249). The authors also highlighted how this approach to learning enabled pupils to develop specific skills linked to social emotional development, such as resolving peer conflict, managing emotions and being attentive.

Rickson *et al.* (2018) also presented a study which integrated wellbeing and the Arts. This study involved a '*Singing for Well-being*' project following the Wellington earthquakes in New Zealand. Participants included teachers and 30 pupils who met every day to sing for pleasure. The programme was less structured than a Music education programme; there was a high level of choice regarding the songs to be sung, there was no pressure and few expectations. It avoided the teaching of the academic or technical aspects of Music. As a result, teacher participants had concerns about meeting curriculum benchmarks for Music. While this was not a 'typical' classroom-based integration of two subject areas, there is still learning to be gained from the link between singing and wellbeing. The researchers noted that singing contributed to learner wellbeing because it promoted positive emotions, improved mood, connected people (both in the sessions, and as a result of the sessions), and supported participants to feel energised, comforted and calm. Even though participant teachers agreed that the New Zealand Arts curriculum is broad enough to enable each school to develop a curriculum that is suited to their community, they were intimidated by the focus on measurable outcomes.

The Performing Arts featured again in a study by Victorson *et al.* (2022) who sought to integrate social emotional strategies in dance classes across Kindergarten, primary and high school in the USA. This is of particular interest because the focus was on social emotional skills, rather than presenting any content knowledge. They observed that pupils engaged better in dance as a result of this focus. They participated more, developed a sense of agency, were calmer after class, could cope better with stress, had better problem-solving skills with peers, expressed enjoyment of the activities, and displayed heightened motivation to attend dance class and to attend school.

7.2.3 Wellbeing and Other Curricular Areas

This section contains insights into possibilities for integrating Wellbeing with other curricular areas. There is one article for each of the following areas: STEAM, Language and Literacy, and Play.

In the USA, a study by Ericksen and Glassman (2022) evaluated a STEAM project that involved the collaboration of children from preschool with Grade 4 pupils. The project supported the language and social skills of the younger pupils through their interaction with the older pupils. The Grade 4 pupils displayed enhanced self-confidence, communication, social skills, and problem-solving skills as a result of working with the preschool children. This clearly also holds potential as an approach for multi-grade classes where there is a wide age-cohort of pupils are in one classroom.

A study comparing the application of SEL in language and literacy in both South Korea and the USA by Kim and Hong (2019) discovered differences between the countries. Teachers in South Korea were less familiar with SEL, therefore, they experienced challenges in integrating it with language and literacy. However, teachers in the USA were better informed about SEL and developed it across the curriculum, including through text-based literacy lessons, to support the development of self-awareness and social awareness. They also promoted vocabulary development to support self-expression. This is an important insight into the understanding of wellbeing and its value in the curriculum. The study highlights the need for teachers to be informed about the subject area and about strategies for integrating it across the curriculum.

Another article concerned the aftermath of earthquakes, this time with preschool children. It examined the integration of play and wellbeing. It could be interpreted that play is a methodology, but in the Irish context, play is also valued as a distinct part of the infant curriculum and is taught through the *Aistear* framework, hence the inclusion of the article. Bateman *et al.* (2013) established that the engagement of 52 preschool children in pretend play and *Learning Stories* books supported their wellbeing by enabling them to cope with their traumatic experience of an earthquake.

7.2.4 Wellbeing and Spirituality

The philosophical basis for Wellbeing in the curriculum highlighted a number of points about spirituality. Maslow's revised *Hierarchy of Needs* also indicates the place of transcendence in his theory of motivation. In addition, the *Primary Curriculum Framework*'s key competence of 'Being Well' acknowledges the place of spirituality in developing and experiencing 'a sense of wonder and awe and to know that life has a meaning' (DE 2023, p.11) for children in the curriculum. Spiritual wellbeing and spirituality have received much attention in academic discourse and research, despite it not emerging

as a theme in the SLR. Gomez and Fisher (2003) asserted that a sense of wellbeing that is derived from a deepened awareness of wholeness and integration of all aspects of one's life, includes the spiritual elements of life. Spiritual wellbeing is the linking of the two concepts of spirituality and health. Spirituality, like wellbeing, does not have one agreed definition, but rather is understood in terms of attributes and characteristics. It can be comprehended as exploring human values, the personal search for meaning and moral issues (Rossiter 2010).

Spirituality, in the literature, is often understood to be concerned with a person's sense of connectedness, or relationship with Self, Others, the World, and for some, God (Adams *et al.* 2008; Hyde 2008). These first three relationships have links to each of the strands in the current SPHE curriculum. Hay and Nye (2006) referred to this as 'relational consciousness'. Out of such relational consciousness can arise meaningful aesthetic experience (Pandya 2021), individual and traditional responses to mystery and being, as well as moral perception and connection with a higher power.

Similar to the criticisms about positive psychology, Adams (2009) and Eaude (2022) highlighted that spiritual wellbeing is more than simply being concerned with children feeling happy and good about themselves, but must incorporate questions of an existential nature. Children experience sadness, loss, and aloneness in life. A curriculum that enables children to approach sadness and difficulty in life, in addition to allowing them to explore and ask about difficult and complex issues, can be a way of encouraging children to attend to their spiritual wellbeing. It has obvious links with the feelings and emotions component of the SPHE curriculum.

The SPHE strand unit of 'self-identity' allows for integration with spirituality. Spiritual wellbeing can contribute to increased self-confidence and self-esteem, which play an important part in shaping identity; identity being a key factor in spirituality (Adams *et al.* 2008). Eaude (2022) purported that the spiritual wellbeing of children is a vital element of their education, allowing them to explore their inner life, find their place in the world and seeking answers to the 'big' questions in life, either within a religious context or outside of it, all leading to a greater sense of wellbeing. Spiritual wellbeing can be fostered across the entire curriculum (Pandya 2021) and school culture, thus contributing to the holistic development of the child. Palmer (2003) argued that spirituality involves an appreciation of the wonder and beauty in nature, this has scope to be integrated with the Social and Environmental Education curriculum. In Ireland, there is the potential to integrate spiritual wellbeing with the various religious and values education programmes to support a deeper understanding and experience of wellbeing.

7.3 Teacher Agency

The concept of teacher agency has been researched and presented in different contexts, including policy and teacher agency, teacher agency and curriculum making, teachers' beliefs in relation to educational reform and teachers' interaction between capacities and conditions (Bergh and Wahlstrom 2018, p.136). This section provides a short review of literature regarding teacher agency in the context of teaching Wellbeing or in relation to curriculum change involving Wellbeing.

Biesta *et al.* (2015) conducted a two-year study into teacher agency during the implementation of Scotland's *Curriculum for Excellence*, which was a significant educational reform. They confirmed that personal qualities including knowledge and skills, beliefs and values, are important aspects of teacher agency. However, they noted the potential for disconnect between the individual and the institutional culture. Where policy lacked clarity, teachers may have had a superficial understanding of the discourse (p. 636), leading to a narrow focus on broad concepts. This, in turn, caused teachers to emphasise short-term goals, which could impact their agency. This study identified important possible issues for Irish curricular reform. Biesta and colleagues (2015) demonstrated the need for clearly articulated curricular/policy visions and supports for teachers to understand the broader issues at stake. It would appear from the complexity of Wellbeing that such issues will require consideration.

MacLean (2018) also published research conducted with teachers in Scotland, following the introduction of the *Curriculum for Excellence*, and specifically examined the teaching of dance. In this reframed curriculum, dance remained part of the PE curriculum, but was also included as part of the Expressive Arts. This gave teachers flexible opportunities to teach dance in one curriculum area only, or to assign it more time by teaching dance in both PE and Expressive Arts. This underscored the role of teacher agency, as teachers had to make professional decisions regarding dance. MacLean (2018) demonstrated the value in the curriculum design of enabling teachers to individualise the curriculum to the social and cultural context of the school, and therefore, to maximise pupil inclusion and engagement.

The place of teacher agency was also revealed through curricular reform in Australia. In 2011, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended mental health promotion in school settings, organised through the development of child-friendly schools, the teaching of social-emotional skills and a whole-school approach to wellbeing. The Australian Government's response was the implementation of the '*KidsMatter*' programme. A study by Askell-Williams and Lawson (2013) highlighted the response of a sample of Australian teachers to this development. They demonstrated that, prior to the implementation of '*KidsMatter*', most teachers indicated good levels of professional

expertise in recognising pupils at risk of social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Between half and two-thirds of the teacher sample felt efficacious and knowledgeable about aspects of mental health promotion in schools. The '*KidsMatter'* programme, and the associated professional development, led to an improvement in teacher knowledge and confidence, in addition to a more positive attitude to mental health. This demonstrates the importance of a structured curriculum, with applied resources and teacher professional development to support curriculum change. A further Australian study by Hogan *et al.* (2018) examined the commercialisation of SEL in Australian schools and why teachers value these resources. They cited previous research, which indicated that commercialism in schools reduced teacher agency. They discovered the opposite, that while teachers bought a range of commercial resources to teach SEL, this was for the purpose of high-quality resources which could be used as part of their 'toolbox' (p.617) to meet the needs of an individual class or student. This finding presents teachers as agentic professionals, who gather resources to make informed decisions for high quality teaching and learning, in their individual context.

Some studies examined the experiences of teachers in teaching aspects of Wellbeing. In Sweden, Kimber *et al.* (2013) conducted a thematic analysis of the process diaries of teachers involved in SEL professional development. This study revealed that participants had a sense of unease about their ability to teach SEL effectively, particularly to students who may be negatively affected by the content. However, their engagement with professional development enhanced their perceptions of collegial networks and support, which impacted positively on their commitment to work, and towards their relatedness to students. This conclusion links to the work of Martínez (2016) who studied the conditions which facilitated the implementation of SEL in a school in the USA. She indicated that teachers' experience of teaching SEL had a positive influence on their pedagogical thinking about SEL, and in particular their commitment to teaching 'the whole child'. The participating teachers reported an initial tension when teaching SEL, between teaching academic content and fostering SEL learning. However, the more teachers taught, the more this tension resolved, as they experienced more meaningful learning and possibilities for integration. Despite the fact that the teachers were reporting on a school-designed SEL programme, which had the advantage of being context-based, they highlighted some barriers to implementation. Based on these findings, Martínez (2016) recommended that schools create spaces for teachers to actively participate in the programme design and implementation plan, collaborate around SEL, share best practice, and provide time for teachers to plan for SEL.

Teacher agency also emerged as a theme from a participatory action research trial of the *Youth First Resilience Curriculum* in India. Sachs Leventhal *et al.* (2018) concluded that there was a need to assess

any new programme on more than student outcomes alone. They indicated that teachers could be up-skilled. However, in the implementation of a curriculum, there is a need to anticipate how the programme will be initiated, how teachers will be supported, in terms of motivation and interest, and how the different needs of teachers can be met. These factors have the potential to support teacher agency.

The SLR has highlighted, very clearly, the central role of positive pupil-teacher relationships in the teaching of Wellbeing. Sandilos *et al.* (2020) examined the moderating influence of SEL training on teacher burnout and teacher-child interactions in a large RCT. Preschool teacher were assigned to one of three SEL interventions (*Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies* (PATHS), *Incredible Years*, or *Tools of the Mind-Play*) or to a control group. Findings identified the differences between SEL interventions. When teachers availed of training for *PATHS* or *Incredible Years* SEL interventions, it created a moderating effect against the negative effects of burnout on teachers' classroom practice. The teachers in the control group reported higher levels of burnout, which was related to less instructional support over the year of the research. This indicates the value of SEL professional development for teachers, as the practices they use in classrooms may also support their own stress levels.

One Irish study (Scanlon *et al.* 2021) documented the experiences of one teacher in starting to teach the new Leaving Certificate Physical Education syllabus. While not based on primary schools, it was focused on the teacher's sense of agency throughout this process. It was noted that agency was never deemed to be achieved, but rather it was an ongoing process, with fluctuations. The study concluded that agency cannot be linked to one specific element, but rather is a culmination of interdependent relationships, social processes, and contextual and structural factors (p.48). Scanlon *et al.* (2021) recommended the use of communities of learners, as a form of formal or informal professional development. They also highlighted the limitations of teacher agency with regard to highly structured, accountable end-goals, such as the Leaving Certificate, but reminded teachers of the scope to be agentic regarding their daily pedagogical practice.

7.4 Pupil Agency

Among the 40 substantive rights in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the right for children to have their views respected (Article 12). This was ratified by Ireland in 1992. Article 12 provides that children have the right to have their opinions considered; their views respected in decision-making that affects them; and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. This article recognises children as citizens with a stake in their community and society,

and consequently, the right to have their voices listened to. It applies to all areas of society, including schools. Prioritising children's participation within their educational experience impacts positively on their self-esteem and confidence; and promotes their overall development, autonomy, independence, social competence, and resilience (Ring *et al.* 2018; Harmon 2021; DE 2023).

Fostering authenticity in pupil voice in an educational setting empowers children to take an active part in decisions that involve them in their learning journey. This also requires adults to act upon these views in an appropriate way. Article 12 has proved challenging, and in order to prevent tokenistic participation, it requires adults to actively involve children as agents in their education (Montreuil *et al.* 2021). Such involvement views children as agents, rather than objects, and enables children's views to be interpreted through child-centred outlooks, rather than solely through adults' views of their experiences (Montreuil *et al.* 2021).

Homogeneity in pupil voice can result in partial, or biased, conclusions in which the voices of pupils who are more confident, articulate, or successful in school are privileged (Flutter 2007; Cremin *et al.* 2011). Whilst seeking out marginalised voices or suppressed voices is challenging (Arnot and Reay 2007), doing so can lead to a richness of important and serious insights (Fielding 2004). Building trust with pupils, and placing trust at the heart of pupil voice initiatives, can begin to shift power differentials (Ruddock and McIntyre 2007; Czerniawski 2012) and so contribute to more child-centred environments.

The Primary Curriculum Framework (DE 2023) promotes a child-centred and holistic vision of learning in which children are considered agents in the construction of their own knowledge. Such an understanding of learning adds to a vision of the child as being intrinsically involved in making decisions about their own learning. While consistent with the vision underpinning the curriculum framework, child voice has a specific resonance within the curriculum area of Wellbeing, by aiming to 'develop self-awareness and knowledge, build life skills, and develop a strong sense of connectedness to their school, their community, and wider society' (DE 2023, p.11). In the early years, the child-led practices promoted in *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* (NCCA 2009) support children's decision-making in their own learning environments. Indeed, 'children as citizens' is one of the guiding principles of the Framework.

The rationale for prioritising child voice in the education journey is twofold in terms of optimising children's learning and development, and being a matter of promoting the principles of human rights and social justice.

7.5 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to expand on a number of issues deemed to be central to the introduction of Wellbeing as a curriculum area in Irish primary schools. The *Primary Curriculum Framework* (DE 2023) supports the integration of subject areas and curriculum areas, therefore it is essential that this is understood by stakeholders and that it is approached correctly to be pedagogically sound. This chapter included hand searches (searches of academic articles outside of the SLR) to present information on the concept of integration, its advantages, disadvantages and considerations for its use, as well as the possibilities for integrating Wellbeing with other subject areas. Spiritual wellbeing, cited in the *Primary Curriculum Framework* as part of the competency of 'being well', was explored in some detail to clarify its meaning and present possibilities for integration in the curriculum.

In addition, teacher agency and pupil agency/child voice were explored as central components to a redeveloped curriculum. In terms of curriculum reform, research from Scotland has highlighted the need for a clearly articulated curricular vision with supports for teachers to understand the broader issues at stake. This is especially true with a new curriculum area such as Wellbeing, which by its very nature is difficult to define and conceptualise, as discussed in Chapter Three. Teacher agency is also connected to personal life experiences and values, which may or may not be supported in the school culture and vision. The *Primary Curriculum Framework* promotes a child-centred vision of learning which supports pupil agency. Facilitating child voice in education enhances the overall development and wellbeing of the child, yet it requires adults to act upon pupils' views in an appropriate way. Teachers must also be aware of marginalised and suppressed voices to foster inclusion in educational processes.

Chapter Eight: What Now for Wellbeing in the Redeveloped Curriculum?

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have presented a broad response to the four research questions posed by the NCCA. The approach to the systematic literature review (SLR), which formed the evidence base for answering these questions, was rigorous, but limiting. In the first instance, the process returned a very limited number of research studies in the Irish context. This highlights the lack of empirical studies on wellbeing in education and also on SPHE in Ireland. Some considerations for SPHE as a subject area are proposed in Section 8.2. What emerged as another gap in this process was a dearth of evidence explicitly linking PE to wellbeing. Considerations for PE in the redeveloped curriculum are presented in Section 8.3.

The philosophical and educational basis for Wellbeing in the curriculum is justified following a review of the literature returned for Question One. Wellbeing and learning are clearly connected. The literature demonstrated the importance of a positive school experience for every child; where all children feel welcomed and part of a community, where they have a sense of belonging, and where they experience supportive relationships. This raises the issue of how Wellbeing could or should be taught. The literature clearly identifies three contexts: through a positive school and classroom culture and climate, integration with other subject areas, and discrete teaching. It is clear that such an approach mirrors that which is currently used in Irish schools for the teaching of SPHE. The question that remains is, what now for Wellbeing in the redeveloped curriculum?

The discourse around discrete teaching in any curriculum area concerns not only what will be taught in terms of content, skills, values, and dispositions, but also the process of teaching and learning. The value of curriculum processes, such as teaching methodologies and approaches, in wellbeing promotion is clearly illustrated in the findings. A range of methodological approaches are associated with enhanced wellbeing, such as peer collaboration. However, the mention of playful pedagogical approaches as a means to promote wellbeing and learning achievement seems sparse in light of the emphasis on playful learning in the *Primary Curriculum Framework* and in the broader literature on wellbeing. It is an area that requires more research, particularly regarding play and Wellbeing, for all class levels of the primary school.

Curriculum processes involve the role of the teacher, who needs to enable pupils to be active participants in their learning and expose them to a wide range of educational experiences to promote

a sense of wellbeing. This is particularly true of children deemed to be 'at risk' of poor wellbeing, which includes children with different learning needs, children from minority cultures and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The findings also draw direct awareness to teacher intentionality with regard to what teachers prioritise in their own classrooms and the attitudes and values that underpin these decisions (Rix and Berbay, 2014). The effective teaching of a curriculum area requires teacher agency, the ability of a teacher to confidently make decisions relevant for their specific teaching context. The question of ongoing and quality continued professional development for teachers is essential to support curriculum implementation. This was highlighted across the SLR, where teachers benefited from professional training in the area of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and specific teaching approaches. The literature on integration also highlights the many challenges of this curriculum approach and indicates the need for professional development for practitioners.

Integration is a means of reducing curriculum overload when it is used effectively. The SLR indicated many opportunities for integrating Wellbeing with other curriculum areas. It was demonstrated that Arts Education has much to contribute to the area of wellbeing. In the articles reviewed, wellbeing in the curriculum emerged more commonly as a combination of SPHE and Arts Education rather than SPHE and PE. This raises a number of issues. The inclusion of Wellbeing as an area of learning may have unintended consequences. There is clearly so much wellbeing value in Arts Education that one could rightfully question whether SPHE and PE are best subject areas to integrate for Wellbeing. Whatever the subject areas, there is the potential for all areas of the curriculum to support and promote pupil wellbeing, provided the integrity of each subject area can also be maintained.

At a macro-level, there are indications of the politicisation of the term wellbeing in educational policy development. For example, when the *Wellbeing Guidelines* (DES and DoH, 2013) were published, wellbeing was aligned with suicide prevention, which is clearly a component of mental health. There are dominant discourses that change over time, and influence the wellbeing agenda. PERMA and wellbeing interventions related to gratitude and mindfulness are examples of current popular discourses, but these are likely to change across the lifespan of a curriculum. This is important to highlight in terms of curriculum content and learning outcomes. Research has provided mixed results, and indeed caveats, for certain approaches to wellbeing. A broad and balanced curriculum experience for pupils that supports their wellbeing and the wellbeing of the school community is indicated.

Attention to a holistic educational experience for children also has implications for the subject areas of PE and SPHE and underscores the need to retain the unique identity of each subject area across all class stages. The following section 8.2 and 8.3 present some particular points in relation to SPHE and PE.

8.2 Considerations for Social, Personal and Health Education

The findings of this research provide evidence for a development of the current contexts for SPHE; in terms of school culture and climate, discrete teaching and integration across the curriculum. This highlights not only the quality, but the foresight of the 1999 curriculum. A development of the current SPHE specification would facilitate teacher self-efficacy, as the curriculum change would be based on a known structure.

SPHE fulfills many aspects of wellbeing in education but has a strong value in being retained as a distinct and discrete area, which contributes to wellbeing, rather than being framed in relation to wellbeing concepts, programmes or interventions. The exploration of identity, body care, feelings and emotions, relationships, sexuality education, personal safety education, and substance use education supports wellbeing across the lifespan, which underlines the value and importance of SPHE as a subject area within a Wellbeing curriculum. The unique nature of SPHE enables children to develop their relationships with self, with each other, and with the world around them. Using active learning methodologies within SPHE allows all children to become engaged in their own learning and provides the children with the opportunity to be introspective with others and to be reflective about the world around them, sharing one's own gifts, talents and unique life perspectives (DES 1999).

The historical context of SPHE merits some discussion, as it has influenced how SPHE evolved and embedded itself in schools. There are three distinct programmes that the DE recommends to support the implementation of SPHE. These are the *Walk Tall programme*, the *Relationships and Sexuality Education programme* and the *Stay Safe programme*. Although, not used exclusively by schools in terms of the SPHE resources, these programmes intentionally form the cornerstone of the SPHE curriculum. While all of the aforementioned programmes are directly related to the curriculum and support implementation across the strands and strand units, each programme is distinctive. The *Walk Tall* materials were originally designed on foot of a *Ministerial Task Force Report*, which recommended that substance misuse prevention strategies should be put in place as early as possible in the classrooms (Professional Development Service for Teachers 2016). The *Relationship and Sexuality Education* resource materials were developed to facilitate the teaching of these sensitive topics in line with curriculum and guidelines (GoI 1998). *Stay Safe* is a personal safety skills programme, which aims to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying through the provision of personal safety education for children (Child Abuse Prevention Programme 2016). Unintentionally, this has led to SPHE being considered in terms of components: Personal Safety, Relationships and Sexuality Education and Substance Use. Children are currently explicitly taught the knowledge and skills to keep safe and to be able to identify different types of bullying, including cyberbullying, and sexualised and identity-based

bullying. There is an argument for developing these skills further through different key elements of SPHE (Jenkins, Demaray and Tennant 2017). This curriculum juncture does, however, provide an opportunity to consider SPHE from the curriculum structure perspective, rather than broad topics, and appreciate that the skills and values from the distinct areas transfer and overlap.

Some considerations for development in terms of SPHE include a specific focus and naming of the skills that are developed in and through SPHE. The 1999 History, Geography and Science curricula place a focus on skill development, in addition to content development for each class level. This could be considered for SPHE and would mirror wellbeing developments in other countries, such as the development of social and emotional skills.

Currently, the topic of feelings and emotions is a component of the Strand Unit 'Growing and Changing'. Considering the alignment of this strand unit with the 'sensitive' areas of SPHE, there is a concern that it may become overlooked or receive less attention than warranted. A stronger focus on feelings and emotions should be considered with an emphasis on a range of skills and strategies that could enable children to understand and deal with powerful emotions, such as anger, empathy, sympathy, sadness and grief (Murad 2022; Das and Ghosh 2021). While the current curriculum mentions 'strong' feelings, there is scope to explore topics such as bereavement and loss in more depth with children (Holland 2008). The identification of the different family structures that exist in 21st century society should be identified in the curriculum to support teachers in addressing the diversity in family life and to promote a sense of belonging and community for every child.

The *Stay Safe* programme is currently the only mandatory programme on the primary school curriculum (DES 2011), therefore its place in the overall curriculum structure is very important. The findings of the *Sexual Violence Survey* (2022) endorse the need for the teaching of personal safety skills to children. The main results of the survey reveal that 22% of those aged 18-24, who reported experiencing sexual violence, had this experience as both a child and adult (Central Statistics Office 2023). The various forms of media in children's lives also have the potential to threaten children's safety. There is an opportunity within the curriculum to address key issues associated with media development, such as online safety, the challenges of social media, mobile phone usage, online hate and gaming. The *Action Plan for Online Safety* 2018-2019 (GoI 2019) highlights that such issues need to be addressed. It specifically names curriculum development as a possible strategy to reduce such threats.

Developing the curriculum in the area of RSE that is both enabling for teachers and age-appropriate for children, will require particular negotiation. However, its centrality in the SPHE space is important, and needs to be enhanced further with a greater focus on areas that children will need knowledge of,

such as sexualities, gender identities, pornography and consent at primary level, an opinion that was widely shared in the findings of the RSE review (NCCA 2019). There are opportunities to consider further integration across the curriculum, for example, the current strand units of 'My Friends and Other People' and 'Relating to Others' is one area where content may be combined and the strand unit of 'Developing Citizenship' naturally integrates with the content of the Geography curriculum. The arguments presented in relation to family structure, citizenship and RSE highlight the need for SPHE as a subject area to encompass not content and skills, but also attitudes and values.

8.3 Considerations for Physical Education

A study by Shirley (2020), included in the literature review, stated that many wellbeing models neglect physical health, in preference of SEL. This was indeed the experience from the SLR process. The focus on specific outcomes in several of the included PE studies could lead to the impression of PE as having an instrumental, rather than intrinsic, value. The absence of contemporary thinking in relation to the teaching of PE can be explained, in part, to a research approach which does not examine PE alongside wellbeing. It could be argued that PE *is* wellbeing or certainly a component of wellbeing. Definitions of PE may never explicitly use the term 'wellbeing' even though the outcomes of PE complement numerous wellbeing concepts. To avoid misinterpretation, there is value in sharing some key contemporary ideas in primary PE to emphasise its merits as a distinctive and discrete subject, that contributes to overall wellbeing. Despite acknowledging this, it is necessary to be cautious of framing PE within specific wellbeing concepts. It creates a danger of a limited and narrow version of PE focused on physical wellbeing only. Rather, due weight should be given to the distinctiveness of approach that PE offers as a learning opportunity for children.

Mostly PE is represented in PE literature as a self-contained area with a valuable end in and of itself; the PE literature is focused on the development of a physically educated individual (as opposed to using the language of wellbeing). Quennerstedt (2019) asserts the necessity of PE being educational, involving an experience that leads to the growth of further experience, a version of teaching 'in such a way where the possibilities for a change in how we view the world, the society and ourselves occur' (p.615). There is widespread consensus internationally on the purposes of primary PE (Ní Chróinín *et al.* 2020) that aligns with Quennerstedt's proposal; the answer to the question of PE is more PE. This makes PE distinctive by providing a different form of learning experience with explicit opportunities to learn about, and through, movement.

Scholarship focused on primary PE (Griggs and Petrie, 2017; Jess, Keay and Carse, 2019) highlights the educational value and impact of primary PE where children learn about themselves, others, and the

world around them. PE privileges learning about, and through, physical activity-based experiences. Through these experiences, children can learn skills, knowledge and dispositions that allow them to position physical activity within their everyday lives. Careful consideration should be given to the activities in which children participate to ensure the educational value of the subject. Mechanistic or reductionist discourses that equate the purpose of PE with health and fitness are being replaced with explicit positioning of PE and sport within movement cultures that can provide deeper meaning (Ronkainen and Nesti 2019). This conceptualisation of PE provides opportunities for it to support children's physical, social and emotional development in ways that are meaningful and enduring. An example of this approach is the work of Kretchmar (2008), who suggests that 'when movement is joyful and meaningful, it may even inspire us to do things we never thought possible' (p.162).

The attainment of physical literacy has become a common objective of PE programmes worldwide (Giblin *et al.* 2014). Having conducted a meta-analysis of the existing physical literacy literature, Young *et al.* (2021) outlined how the term has been typically used to articulate health promotion, motor competence, or human embodiment objectives. This latter objective, which adopts a holistic approach to children's development, is typified by the work of Whitehead (2010, p. 12) who describes physical literacy as 'the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to maintain physical activity throughout the lifecourse'. In this context, Wainwright *et al.* (2016) suggest that play-based approaches can contribute to the development of children's physical literacy.

The importance of movement skill development has been identified within the physical literacy literature. Although, universal definitions of fundamental movement skills are contested (Newell 2020), there is sufficient evidence to support the inclusion of comprehensive movement development components within the PE curriculum (Barnett *et al.* 2016; Wainwright *et al.* 2019). There is worldwide consensus on the place of fundamental motor skills because these are best mastered in the primary school years (Barnett *et al.* 2016). As a result, activities that focus on development of fundamental skills are common in primary school curricula. In the Irish context, fundamental skill interventions by Bolger *et al.* (2019) and Behan *et al.* (2020) suggest that the development of movement competency can enhance children's overall wellbeing. One consideration for the new specification is to consider how to include attention to fundamental motor skill development within a PL framework. In particular, because all children are different and develop at different rates, approaches need to avoid isolation of skill development, emphasising performative narratives of skill performance, comparing or measuring children, or highlighting differences. Similarly, fitness testing is not recommended in primary PE. O'Connor *et al.'s* (2022) recent proposal to reclassify games and sports in PE also merits attention with regard to how PL focused content is organised in the new specification. In effect, this

links to the overall wellbeing of children in PE class with less focus on competition and more focus on enjoyment and skill development.

There is a growing body of literature that considers how children can best learn in PE. In this regard, recent research on Meaningful PE (Fletcher and Ní Chróinín 2022) provides an overall conceptual frame for teacher pedagogical decision-making. Research with teachers (Beni *et al.*, 2021) and children (Ní Chróinín *et al.* 2021) in Ireland, using this approach, provides encouragement and direction regarding how to teach PE that is inclusive and supportive of student diversity. It is also noteworthy that PE teacher educators, at almost all primary teacher education institutions in Ireland, now use this approach with future teachers (Sweeney *et al.* 2020). The focus on personal meaningfulness within Meaningful PE focuses attention on the quality of individual experience, in ways that support children to value their participation as a part of their everyday lives. Beni *et al.* (2017) provide a useful overview of what matters to children in shaping the quality of their experiences; the features of Meaningful PE are social interaction, fun, challenge, motor competence, and personally relevant learning. This has obvious links to eudaimonic wellbeing. Attention to what is important to children should inform curriculum content and teaching approaches.

Meaningful PE proposes a combination of democratic and reflective pedagogies in primary PE. Student voice is an area of increasing attention in primary PE in respect of democratic approaches. A recent systematic review (Iannucci and Parker 2022) provides important direction on why student voice matters in PE spaces. Encouragingly, recent research in Ireland, in collaboration with the Irish Primary Physical Education Association, is providing resources that will enable primary teachers to adopt more democratic approaches in primary PE in Ireland (for example, Beni *et al.* 2022). Developing understanding of how student voice can be activated to promote learning in PE, aligns with national priorities in relation to student voice (Lundy 2007) across the curriculum.

In developing a comprehensive specification for Wellbeing that encompasses PE, a multitude of factors must be taken into consideration, based on existing literature. Firstly, it is crucial to encourage a broad range of activities in order to provide children with ample opportunities to develop their movement skills and explore new passions. By offering a diverse array of activities, children can be supported to cultivate a love for movement and promote a healthy and active lifestyle (O'Connor and Penney 2020).

Secondly, it is essential to approach PE holistically, recognising its potential to develop physical, cognitive and affective learning. By considering PE in this manner, we can provide a rich and rewarding experience for children. It is important to prioritise the intrinsic value of movement, with the context

of a range of meaningful PE experiences and opportunities to learn in, about, and through movement (Kretchmar 2006).

Thirdly, in order to ensure that the learning outcomes of the PE curriculum are both meaningful and educational, it is necessary to recognise the inherent value of PE to enrich children's lives. In this context, it is important that all activities within curricular PE must have a clear learning focus. Physical activity that is not focused on explicit PE learning cannot be considered PE. The existing literature recognises the potential for PE, physical activity and extracurricular sport to enhance the lives of children and young people, and their overall wellbeing. It is important, however, to identify and promote the distinctive contribution made by curricular PE in this regard (Kirk 2010; Ward 2018).

In summary, developing a comprehensive specification for wellbeing that encompasses PE requires careful consideration. It should acknowledge the role of PE as a distinct subject that offers a broad range of educational activities, supports every child's holistic development within PE, and recognises its inherent value in addition to specific curricular and whole school wellbeing goals. It is essential to prioritise the core elements of PE and to avoid narrowing the curriculum towards activities that may not provide the rich and meaningful learning experiences that children require.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided some considerations for the development of the curriculum area of Wellbeing, based on the international literature. It has noted the merits of a distinctive place for SPHE and PE as valuable subject areas in their own right, in addition to through an integrated Wellbeing curriculum area. Considerations about PE and SPHE's contribution to the development of a curriculum specification for Wellbeing were also presented. Some indications for curriculum redevelopment in both subject areas have been offered, while acknowledging that Wellbeing is appropriately taught through the three contexts of school culture and climate, discrete lessons and integrated across the curriculum. How Wellbeing is actualised in these areas will determine their combined overall impact on a child's wellbeing.

Concluding Comments

The proposal to include SPHE and PE under the curriculum area of Wellbeing is a new departure for Irish education. Consequently, the purpose of this SLR is to provide evidence to decision-makers within the DE and NCCA, regarding the development of curriculum specifications for the area of Wellbeing in Irish primary and special schools. The research was conducted under the guidance of addressing four core research questions, that were outlined in the Executive Summary.

To begin to understand Wellbeing as a concept, the SLR explored the definition of Wellbeing and the philosophy behind its inception. This is followed by the methodology used within this research to build a wellbeing studies data repository. Despite the limitations regarding the dearth of wellbeing research available, the challenges were identified and overcome, with the extraction of 180 research studies from around the globe. There were only a few extrapolated from Ireland, with the majority identified from the US. The breath, scope and variation of the data identified areas of Wellbeing such as teacher/pupil agency, sense of belonging, the importance of school climate and environment, PE and the philosophy of mindfulness, inclusion, movement, the necessity of teacher professional development, the critical nature of integration, the facilitation of pupil agency for self-fulfilment and the importance of Wellbeing for enhancing academic achievements. The synthesise of this pool of knowledge allowed different cultural aspects, nuances, and ideologies to permeate the findings.

In conclusion, the literature highlights that wellbeing can, and potentially should, be implemented across three contexts, similar to the current SPHE curriculum, and that is (i) through discrete teaching, (ii) integrated with other subject areas, and (iii) as part of the school and classroom climate through affirmed policies and teacher agency. The literature in relation to each of the four questions has provided guidance in relation to the what and how of Wellbeing as an area of learning. It should be noted that, where certain limitations were identified across the literature, potential approaches to overcome them were addressed in the latter chapters. Issues in relation to the subject areas of PE and SPHE with Wellbeing, as well as the potential of integrating wellbeing through many subject areas were addressed. It seems inevitable that a specification for Wellbeing will include a combination of discrete teaching, integrated methods and whole-school approaches. How Wellbeing is actualised in these areas separately will determine their combined overall impact on a child's wellbeing.

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Appendices

Appendix A: PEO Framework

Population	**RQ1** **Exposure: Philosophical**	**RQ2** **Exposure: Wellbeing**	**RQ2** **Exposure: Curriculum**	**RQ2/RQ3** **Exposure: Curriculum Integration**	**RQ3/RQ4** **Exposure: Curriculum processes and content**	**RQ1-4** **Exposure: Pupil voice/ teacher agency**
"Early childhood" Nursery Kindergarten ECCE Pre?school "early years" Primary Elementary School*age Post?primary "high school" "middle school" Youth "Secondary school" "special education" "special school" "special class"	"conceptual framework" philosoph* defin*	"mental health" "psychological health" "SEL" "social emotional learning" soci*?emotion* "physical health" OR "spiritual health" OR "sexual health" "school climate" "classroom climate "school culture"	Well?being AND "physical education" Well?being AND "health promotion" Well?being AND "physical learning" Well?being AND "fundamental movement skills "OR "fundamental motor skills" Well?being AND "physical literacy" Well?being AND "meaningful Physical Education" Well?being AND "social personal and health education" Well?being AND SPHE Well?being AND "relationships and sexuality education" Well?being AND "stay?safe" Well?being AND "personal development and	Well?being AND "curricul* integration" "thematic teaching" Well?being AND "curricul* overload"	Well?being AND knowledge OR skil* OR value* OR disposition*	Well?being AND "pupil voice" "student voice" "child voice" "learner voice" "pupil agency" "child agency" "agentic child" "student agency" "school council" "student council" "agentic teacher" "teacher agency

			mutual understanding” Well?being AND health Well?being AND Personal and Social responsibility Well?being and Substance Use/Misuse Well?being AND ethic* education Well?being AND “values education” Well?being AND “citizenship education” Well?being AND child*rights			

RQ: Research Question

Appendix B: Database Advanced-level Search

	Population	**Exposures**
1.	(“early childhood education” OR “early years” OR ECCE OR pre?school OR kindergarten OR nursery)	AND well?being
2.	(“primary school” OR “primary education” OR “elementary school” OR “elementary education”)	AND (well?being) AND (“conceptual framework” OR philosoph* OR defin*)
3.	(“secondary school” OR “secondary education” OR “middle?school” OR “high?school” OR “post?primary”)	AND (“mental health” OR “psychological health”)
4.	(“special education* needs” OR “special needs education” OR “SEN” OR “inclusive education”)	AND (“SEL” OR “social emotional learning” OR socio*?emotion*)
5.		AND (“physical health” OR “spiritual health” OR “sexual health”)
6.		AND (“school climate” OR “classroom climate” OR “school culture”)
7.		AND (“physical education” OR “health promotion” OR “physical learning” OR “physical literacy” OR “fundamental movement skills” OR “fundamental

		motor skills” OR “meaningful physical education”) AND (well?being)
8.		AND (“social personal and health education” OR “SPHE” OR “relationships and sexuality education” OR “stay?safe” OR “personal and social responsibility” OR “well?being and health” OR “personal development and mutual understanding” OR “substance use” OR “substance misuse”)
9.		AND (“ethic* education” OR “values education” OR “citizenship education” OR “child* rights”)
10.		AND (“curricul* integration” OR “thematic teaching” OR “curricul* overload”)
11.		AND (well?being) AND (knowledge OR skil* OR value OR disposition*)
12.		AND (“pupil voice” OR “student voice” OR “child voice” OR “learner voice” OR “pupil agency” OR “child agency” OR “agentic child” OR “student agency” OR “school council” OR “student council”)
13.		AND (“agentic teacher”) OR (“teacher agency”)
14.	*	AND (“physical education” OR “health promotion” OR “physical learning” OR “physical literacy” OR “fundamental movement skills” OR “fundamental motor skills” OR “meaningful physical education”)

*This search was conducted at a later time due to low numbers of PE related articles included.

Each search phrase in the population column was searched with each exposure across each of the four databases. A total of 224 searches were completed. Some of the search phrases were slightly adapted depending on the Boolean operators and symbols recognised by the specific databases. Searches included Title, Abstract and Keywords.

Appendix C: Table of Systematic Literature Review Articles

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Abdulla et al. (2022)	725 pupils 30 teachers	Pupils: M=10.5 years	Grade 5	3 & 4	Maldives	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Akyola (2021)	20 pupils	M=5 years	Kindergarten	Other	Turkey	Kindergarten	Early Years	Pre-test, post-test	Other
Anderson et al. (2015)	95 pupils	11-12 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Focus group	Interview/FG
Andrade et al. (2020)	213 pupils	7-11 years, M=9.41±0.48 years	Grades 4-5	1 to 4	Brazil	Elementary school	Primary	Experimental design	Experiments
Askell-Williams et al. (2013)	4970 parents, teachers and project officers	Pupils: M=9.7 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Atkinson et al. (2019)	Not stated	12-18 years	Not stated	Other	UK	Post-primary	Secondary	Reflective narrative	Other
Babalis et al. (2013)	306 pupils	Not stated	Grades 5-6	3 & 4	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Backman et al. (2012)	200 students	11-16 years	Not stated	Combinations	Sweden	Middle school	Combinations	Written reflections	Other
Balbag and Kaya (2019)	93 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Word association test	Scales/Measures
Balci and Yanik (2020)	1138 pupils	12-13 years	Not stated	Other	Turkey	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Balga et al. (2019)	438 pupils	8-13 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Slovakia	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Bateman et al. (2013)	60 pupils	Not stated	Preschool	Other	New Zealand	Preschool	Early Years	Recording of children's play activities	Other
Berg and Aber (2015)	4245 pupils 841 teachers	Pupils: M=8.5 years	Grade 3	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire and interview	Mixed Methods
Bertills et al. (2018)	439 pupils	13 years	Year 7	Other	Sweden	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Bhatti et al. (2021)	200 pupils	Not stated	8th Class	3 & 4	Pakistan	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu (2020)	582 pupils	9-11 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Bozkur (2019)	272 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Brignell and Woodcock (2016)	100 pupils	M=9.3 years	Grades 3-6	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Placebo experiment design	Experiments
Buchanan et al. (2021)	23 pupils	7-9 years	Years 3-5	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Life history approach: interviews and observation	Combinations
Cantero et al. (2020)	182 pupils	M=10.32 years	Grade 5	3 & 4	Spain	Elementary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Carlson et al. (2021)	12 pupils 22 caregivers 5 teachers	10-14 years	Grades 5 and 7	3 & 4	Uganda	Primary school	Primary	Focused ethnography	Other
Carmen (2020)	281 pupils	6-8 years	Years 1-2	1 & 2	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Carraro and Gobbi (2018)	42 pupils	M=9.8 years	Grades 4-5	3 & 4	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Carroll et al. (2020)	854 pupils	8-12 years M=9.64 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Cassidy et al. (2022)	19 pupils	10-11 years	Grade 6	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Community of Philosophical Inquiry	Other
Cava et al. (2021)	479 pupils	9-14 years M=11.5 years	Grades 4-6 and Years 1-2 of secondary	Combinations	Spain	Primary school and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Cefai and Pizzuto (2017)	18 pupils	4-7 years	Kindergarten-Year 3	Combinations	Malta	Nurture class in primary school with Kindergarten classes	Combinations	Group interview	Interview/FG
Cefai et al. (2018)	97 pupils	4-5 years	Kindergarten	Other	Malta	Kindergarten	Early Years	Pre- Post-Questionnaire	Questionnaires

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Chung and Li (2020)	Not stated	Not stated	Elementary	Not stated	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Case study	Case Study
Cipra and Hall (2019)	404 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4, 5, 7, and 8	Combinations	USA	Middle school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Cleland et al. (2018)	765 early childhood educators	Not stated	Early childhood	Other	Australia	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Pre- Post test	Other
Coskun (2019)	12 pupils	10 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
Crawford et al. (2021)	48 pupils 12 teachers	Pupils: 7-11 years	Not stated	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Focus group	Interview/FG
Cristian et al. (2013)	38 pupils	M=10.75 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Romania	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Danby and Hamilton (2016)	18 teachers, assistants and learning needs coordinators	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	UK	Primary school	Primary	Mixed Methods: Questionnaire and Interview	Mixed Methods
Deans et al. (2017)	38 pupils	4-5 years	Preschool	Other	Australia	Preschool	Early Years	Practitioner Research	Other
Diebel et al. (2016)	116 pupils	M=9.4 years	Years 3-6	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Pre-Post-Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Dobrescu (2019)	55 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Romania	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Duncan et al. (2020)	124 pupils	6-7 and 10-11 years	Key stage 1 and 2	1 to 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Cluster randomised controlled trial	RCT
Erasmus et al. (2022)	119 pupils	9-12 years	Grades 4-5	3 & 4	South Africa	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Erhorn (2014)	26 pupils	8-11 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Germany	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic case study	Case Study
Ericksen and Glassman (2022)	Not stated	Pre-Kindergarten and Grade 4	Pre-Kindergarten and Grade 4	Combinations	USA	Pre-Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Case Study	Case Study

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Escriva-Boulley et al. (2018)	293 pupils 15 teachers	Pupils 5–11 years M=8.31 years	Not stated	1 to 4	France	Primary school	Primary	Cluster randomised controlled trial	RCT
Farmer et al. (2018)	439 pupils	Not stated	Grades 2-5	1 to 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Drawings	Other
Fink et al. (2018)	23215 pupils	8-11 years M=9.06 years	Years 4-5	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Flückiger et al. (2018)	200 pupils	3-8 years	Not stated	Combinations	Australia	Kindergarten and Primary school	Combinations	The Mosaic Approach- draw-and-describe; walk-and-talk; show-and-tell.	Other
Follari (2022)	450 pupils 65 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic case study	Case Study
Forber-Pratt et al. (2022)	17 students with disabilities and/or at risk of disability identification	12-15 years	Grades 6-8	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Narrative enquiry	Other
Garnett et al. (2022)	107 pupils 17 staff	8-10 years	Grades 3-5	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Staff Surveys and pupil questionnaire	Questionnaires
Georgeson et al. (2014)	Not stated	4-5 years	Reception	1 & 2	UK	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: Interviews, focus group, questionnaire	Mixed Methods
Georgios et al. (2018)	65 pupils	M=11.49 years	Grades 5-6	3 & 4	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Giannotta and Özdemir (2013)	161 pupils	M=11.14 years	Grades 6-8	Combinations	Italy	Middle school	Combinations	3 wave longitudinal analysis	Other
Glazzard and Szreter (2020)	557 students	11-16 years	Years 8-10	Combinations	UK	Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Gosset and Silverman (2019)	313 pupils	9-11 years	Upper Elementary	3 & 4	USA	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Grace et al. (2018)	47 pupils	3-5 years	Preschool and Long-day Care Centre	Combinations	Australia	Early childhood	Early Years	Interview	Interview/FG
Graham and Truscott (2020)	114 pupils 50 teachers	Pupils: 9 years	Year 4	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Interview and focus groups	Interview/FG
Green et al. (2019)	109 pupils	5-8 years	Kindergarten and Grade 1	Combinations	USA	Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Intervention design	Other
Guan et al. (2020)	246 students	M=13.09 years	Grade 7-8	Other	USA	Junior high school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Haapala et al. (2014)	1463 students	Not stated	Grades 4, 5, 7 and 8	Combinations	Finland	Primary school and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Hall-López et al. (2017)	1765 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	Mexico	Elementary school	Primary	Physical activity observation (SOFIT)	Other
Hargreaves et al. (2022)	23 pupils	7-8 years	Year 3	1 & 2	UK	Primary school	Primary	Interview and lesson observation	Combinations
Harris et al. (2022)	10 students	Not stated	Grade 8	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Focus groups	Interview/FG
Haruna et al. (2018)	120 students	11-15 years	Not stated	Other	Tanzania	Secondary school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
Haruna et al. (2021)	120 students	11-15 years	Not stated	Other	Tanzania	Secondary school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
Hirvonen et al. (2015)	377 pupils	Not stated	Pupils followed from Kindergarten to Grade 4 (346)	Combinations	Finland	Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Housman et al. (2018)	100 pupils	2-6 years	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Private child development centre	Other	Psychometric testing	Scales/Measures
Hraste et al. (2018)	36 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Finland	Elementary	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Hubley et al. (2020)	121 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Elementary and Middle school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Hussain et al. (2015)	328 boys	9-13 years	Grades 6-8	3 & 4	Pakistan	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
Iizuka et al. (2015)	160 pupils 23 teachers	Not stated	Grades 6-7	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Pre-test, post-test	Questionnaires
Ilyasova and Erzhanov (2014)	102 pupils	8-9 years	Grades 2-3	3 & 4	Kazakhstan	Primary school	Primary	Experimental	Experiments
In et al. (2019)	873 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Survey and measures	Case Study
Iuga and Turda (2022)	24 pupils	3-5 years	Early childhood	Other	Romania	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Survey	Questionnaires
Jacquez et al. (2020)	111 pupils	M=10.21 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	USA	Montessori Elementary school	Primary	Non-randomised control test	Other
Johnson et al. (2014)	5 classroom teachers	Not stated	Years 5-6	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
Kartowagiran et al. (2021)	654 pupils 100 teachers	Not stated	Grades 5-8	3 & 4	Indonesia	Elementary school	Primary	Scale	Scales/Measures
Kautz et al. (2021)	30462 pupils 4273 teachers 12216 parents	Not stated	Grades 3-12	Combinations	USA	Elementary school, Middle school, High school	Combinations	Questionnaire and school administrative records	Combinations
Kell and Harney (2019)	98 pupils	Not stated	Grades 4-9	Combinations	USA	Elementary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Kim and Hong (2019)	70 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	Hong Kong/USA	Elementary, Middle and High school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Kingston et al. (2020)	43 pupils	M=9.95 (4th class) M=12 (6th class)	4th and 6th class	3 & 4	Ireland	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Kirby et al. (2021)	88 children: 63 primary 25 post-primary	8-14 years	Not stated	Combinations	UK	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
Kiuru et al. (2020)	848 pupils	M=12.3 years	Grades 6-7	Combinations	Finland	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Questionnaire and academic records	Combinations
Kopelman-Rubin et al. (2021)	419 pupils	9-10 years M=9.5 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Israel	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire and school records	Combinations
Krull et al. (2014)	2839 pupils	M=6.47 years	Grade 1	1 & 2	Germany	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: interview and questionnaire	Mixed Methods
Leonenko et al. (2019)	149 pupils	M=12.8 years	Grades 6-7	Other	Ukraine	Middle school	Secondary	Physical health index	Scales/Measures
Lester and Cross (2015)	1800 pupils	11-14 years	Last year of Primary school, first 2 years of Secondary school	Combinations	Australia	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Librianty et al. (2021)	94 children 15 teachers	3-5 years	Early childhood	Other	Indonesia	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Lizuka et al. (2015)	69 pupils 23 teachers	10-12 years	Grades 6-7	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Pre-and post-test	Other
Longaretti (2020)	16 pupils	11-12 years	Year 6	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
Lonigan et al. (2015)	855 children 110 teachers	2-5 years M=4.48 years	Preschool	Other	USA	Preschool	Early Years	Mixed-methods	Mixed Methods
Lopes et al. (2017)	60 pupils	9 years	Grades 3-4	3 & 4	Portugal	Primary school	Primary	Pre- and post-test quasi-experimental design	Experiments
Lou et al. (2013)	30 pupils	Not stated	Grade 5	3 & 4	Taiwan	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Loureiro et al. (2020)	150 pupils	10 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Luxembourg	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire, drawing and open-ended questions	Combinations
Lunga et al. (2022)	8 early childhood educators	Not stated	Not stated	Other	South Africa	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Participatory action learning and research approach	Other
Lynch and Wishart (2021)	11 pupils Teachers Parents Gardener	Not stated	Grades 1-6	1 to 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Ethnographic: photography, interviews, classroom observation, focus groups, and document analysis	Combinations
Macdonald et al. (2021)	75 teachers	Not stated	Kindergarten to Year 2	1 to 4	Australia	Primary School with Kindergarten classes	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
MacEvoy et al. (2016)	499 pupils	8-12 years M=9.88 years	Grades 3-5	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Measures	Scales/Measures
Makuna and Maizere (2022)	5 pupils	13-14 years	Grades 4-5	Other	Zimbabwe	Primary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
Manzano-Sánchez and Valero-Valenzuela (2019)	272 pupils (45 control and 227 experimental) (207 primary pupils and 65 secondary) 29 teachers (20 primary and 9 secondary)	Pupils 9-14 years M=11.13 years Teachers: 28-49 years	4th year primary- 3rd year Secondary	Combinations	Spain	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Mixed methods: quasi-experimental: questionnaire observation and interview	Mixed Methods

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Marsh et al. (2019)	68 students 22 teachers	8-18 years	Not stated	Combinations	USA	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
McCormick et al. (2015)	435 pupils 435 parents 120 teachers	M=5.38 years	Kindergarten and Grade 1	Combinations	USA	Kindergarten and Elementary school	Combinations	Multilevel regression analyses	Other
McCormick et al. (2019)	1634 child records	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Kindergarten and Primary school	Not stated	School records	Other
Menendez and Fernandez-Rio (2017)	12 students 3 PE teachers 1 parent	15-16 years	Grade 9	Other	Spain	Public high school	Secondary	Interview and Focus groups	Interview/FG
Mercier et al. (2022)	948 pupils	11- 14 years	Grades 6-8	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Midgen et al. (2019)	84 pupils (with SEN)	3-16 years	Not stated	Combinations	UK	Nursery-Secondary school	Combinations	Mixed methods: questionnaire, reflection	Mixed Methods
Mihic et al. (2016)	164 children	3-6 years	Preschool	Other	Croatia	Preschool	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Miliffe (2016)	132 pupils	10 years	Years 5-6	3 & 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Mixed method semi-structured discussion and questionnaire	Combinations
Min et al. (2019)	212 children	5 years	Kindergarten	Other	South Korea	Kindergarten	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Mischenko et al. (2021)	40 children	6-7 years M=6.43 years	Preschool	Other	Russia	Preschool	Early Years	Pedagogical experiment Motor tests and Index	Experiments

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Mnubi (2017)	54 student leaders (interviews) 581 student leaders (focus groups) 29 head teachers 35 mentors 24 champions 27 community leaders	Not stated	Not stated	Combinations	Tanzania	Primary school and Secondary school	Combinations	Interview and focus groups	Interview/FG
Mohamed and Thomas (2017)	21 students 3 parents 63 school staff	9-19 years	Not stated	Combinations	UK	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Mixed methods: interview and questionnaire	Mixed Methods
Moore et al. (2021)	2218 pupils	11-12 years	Last year of primary school	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaires	Questionnaires
Morcom (2016)	31 pupils	9-11 years	Year 4-5	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Social and reflective practices including interviews	Combinations
Moreira et al. (2015)	603 students	4-20 years M=13.02 years	Not stated	Combinations	Portugal	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Mori et al. (2022)	125 students	12-13 years	Grades 7-8	Other	Japan	Junior high school	Secondary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
Morris et al. (2018)	300 child/parent dyads 25 teachers	M=4.7 years	Preschool	Other	Australia	Preschool	Early Years	Mixed methods: assessments, questionnaire	Mixed Methods

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Nascimento and De Micheli (2015)	1316 students Control group (n=339) Experimental group (n=907) - Inconsistency unclear from article	Not stated	8th year of Elementary- Year 3 of Secondary	Combinations	Brazil	Elementary and Secondary School	Combinations	Drug Use Screening Inventory	Other
Ng and Fisher (2022)	165 teachers	Not stated	Kindergarten	Other	Hong Kong	Kindergarten	Early Years	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Ní Chorcora and Swords (2022)	356 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Ireland	Primary school	Primary	Vignettes within a questionnaire	Other
Nixon (2016)	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods: art activities and reflection	Mixed Methods
Ntovolis et al. (2015)	241 pupils	M=11.52 years	Grades 5-6	3 & 4	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Oades-Sese et al. (2021)	766 children 157 teachers	35-65 months	Early childhood	Other	USA	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Cluster randomised pre-post-comparison study	RCT
Olive et al. (2019)	821 pupils	Not stated	Grades 2, 3, 6	1 to 4	Australia	Elementary school	Primary	Anthropometric and fitness measures	Scales/Measures
Özgan (2016)	35 pupils	13-14 years	8th class	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Qualitative case study	Case Study
Öztürk et al. (2014)	44 pupils	Not stated	Preschool	Other	Turkey	Preschool	Early Years	Intervention case-control study	Other
Palomino (2017)	26 pupils (with SEN)	7-12 years	Years 1-3	1 to 4	Spain	Primary school	Primary	Multi-dimensional concept scale	Scales/Measures
Palumbo (2020)	281 pupils	6-8 years	Grades 1-2	1 & 2	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Papadopoulos (2020)	120 pupils (gifted)	5-6 years	Not stated	1 & 2	Greece	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment; pre-post-questionnaires	Experiments
Papieska et al. (2019)	339 pupils 16 teachers	8-10 years M=9.30 years	Grade 3	3 & 4	Poland	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Pérez-Ordás et al. (2020)	210 pupils	10-12 years M=11.04 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Spain	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Phan (2017)	258 students	Not stated	Year 8	Other	Fiji	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Phillips et al. (2019)	146 pupils	9-11 years	Upper Elementary	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods: survey, interview, observation	Mixed Methods
Powell et al. (2018)	606 students	Not stated	Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 (Primary)Years 8 and 11 (Secondary)	Combinations	Australia	Primary and Secondary schools	Combinations	Focus groups	Interview/FG
Pryce and Fredrickson (2013)	338 pupils	8-11 years	Year 4	3 & 4	UK	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire and focus groups	Mixed Methods
Pušnik et al. (2014)	189 pupils	8-9 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Slovenia	Primary school	Primary	Accelerometery	Other
Ricketts et al. (2022)	5 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	UK	Black Supplementary School	Other	Case study: semi-structured interview	Case Study
Rickson et al. (2018)	30 pupils	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Case study using action research	Case Study
Rillo-Albert et al. (2021)	222 students	M=14.86 years	Years 3-4	Other	Spain	Secondary school	Secondary	Questionnaire and scales	Combinations
Rix and Bernay (2014)	126 pupils 6 teachers	Not stated	Grades 2-6	1 to 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Mixed methods: Reflection and questionnaire	Mixed Methods

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Robertson et al. (2020)	82 teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	USA	Professional Development Settings (schools and university clinical setting)	Other	Observation and 'debriefing' notes	Combinations
Rochester et al. (2019)	299 pupils	Not stated	Full-day pre-kindergarten programmes	Other	USA	Pre-kindergarten	Early Years	Observation	Other
Rubin et al. (2021)	419 pupils	9-10 years	Grade 4	3 & 4	Israel	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire, scales and school records	Combinations
Samur and Deniz (2014)	44 pupils	6 years	Preschool	Other	Turkey	Preschool	Early Years	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Sanchez et al. (2021)	17 pupils	11-12 years	Not stated	Other	USA	Middle school	Secondary	Photovoice	Other
Sando et al. (2021)	79 pupils	M=4.7 years	Early childhood	Other	Norway	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Video Observations	Other
Sandseter and Seland (2016)	171 pupils	4-6 years	Preschool	Other	Norway	Preschool	Early Years	Mixed methods: Conversations with children based on an electronic questionnaire	Mixed Methods
Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015)	99 pupils	9-11 years M=10.24 years	Grades 4-5	3 & 4	USA	Primary school	Primary	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
Scrimin et al. (2018)	62 pupils	M=6.73 years	1st Class	1 & 2	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Selective attention task	Other
Segal et al. (2017)	9 pupils	Not stated	Grade 6	3 & 4	Israel	Primary school	Primary	Ethnography	Other
Sgro et al. (2019)	100 pupils	10 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Italy	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires

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Sharpe et al. (2017)	14690 pupils	10-13 years	Year 6 and 8	Combinations	UK	Primary and Post-primary schools	Combinations	Randomised controlled trial	RCT
Shavel et al. (2021)	100 pupils	6-10 years	Not stated	1 to 4	Ukraine	Primary school	Primary	Anthropometric measures	Scales/Measures
Shi-Jer et al. (2013)	30 pupils	Not stated	Grade 5	3 & 4	Taiwan	Elementary school	Primary	Pre-post-test	Other
Simmons et al. (2015)	606 pupils 89 teachers	6-17 years	Not stated	Combinations	Australia	Primary and Post-primary schools	Combinations	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
Skrzypek et al. (2020)	90 pupils	10-13 years	Grades 5 and 8	Combinations	USA	Middle school	Combinations	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
Smith et al. (2016)	2079 students	Not stated	Grade 4-5	3 & 4	USA	Middle school	Primary	Questionnaire and scales	Combinations
Sohrabi (2019)	2 classes	Not stated	Grade 5	3 & 4	Iran	Primary school	Primary	Quasi-experiment	Experiments
Sotardi (2017)	16 pupils	Not stated	Grade 3	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Interview	Interview/FG
Stapp and Lambers (2020)	58 pupils	10-12 years	Grade 5	3 & 4	USA	Elementary school	Primary	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
Steed et al. (2022)	805 lead early childhood teachers	Not stated	Not stated	Other	USA	Early childhood setting	Early Years	Mixed methods	Mixed Methods
Su and Chung (2022)	16 children	M=6.2 years	Kindergarten	Other	Taiwan	Kindergarten	Early Years	Mixed methods: interview, drawing, photography and observation	Combinations
Sujarwo et al. (2021)	252 pupils 30 teachers	M=11 years	Not stated	3 & 4	Indonesia	Elementary schools	Primary	Research development method	Other
Tian et al. (2015)	706 pupils	M=11.07 years	Grades 4-6	3 & 4	China	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire and Scales	Combinations
Tudor et al. (2020)	54 students 6 teachers	Students: 13 years	Not stated	Other	UK	Post-primary school	Secondary	Interview and focus groups	Interview/FG

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Twyford (2012)	46 pupils 14 teachers/ teacher aides	5-10 years	Not stated	1 to 4	New Zealand	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Vaquero-Solís et al. (2021)	452 students	M=13.8 years	Not stated	Other	Spain	Secondary school	Secondary	Cross-sectional design	Other
Varol (2018)	590 pupils	M=11.46 years	Not stated	Not stated	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Vaz et al. (2015)	266 pupils	M=11.89 years	Final year of primary school	3 & 4	Australia	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Victorson et al. (2022)	Not stated	Not stated	Kindergarten-Grade 12	Combinations	USA	Elementary school and High school	Combinations	Reflection	Other
Vural and Kirbas (2020)	1600 students	Not stated	Grades 5-8	3 & 4	Turkey	Middle school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Wan et al. (2021)	20000 students	Not stated	Grade 8	Other	China	Junior high school	Secondary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Wikman et al. (2022)	143 pupils	M=8.33 years	Grade 2	3 & 4	Sweden	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Wilson et al. (2012)	577 pupils	11 years	Upper elementary	3 & 4	Canada	Elementary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Wong et al. (2014)	27 pupils	Not stated	Grades 1-3	1 & 2	Hong Kong	Church and Primary school	Other	Scale	Scales/Measures
Yang et al. (2018)	9659 pupils (Elementary school) 9535 students (Middle school) 6702 students (High school)	Not stated	Grades 4-12	Combinations	USA	Elementary, Middle and High school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Yanko and Yap (2020)	Not stated	Not stated	Grade 1	1 & 2	Canada	Primary school	Primary	Autoethnographic storying approach (Case Study)	Case Study

Author	Number of Participants	Age (M=mean)	Grade/Class Level	Stage of Education (in line with Irish system)	Country	Study Setting (School Level)	Adjusted Study Setting (in line with Irish system)	Study Approach/ Data Type	Data Category
Yoon et al. (2021)	6477 students	11-14 years	Grades 6-9	Other	Vietnam	Lower Secondary school	Secondary	Cluster randomised controlled trial	RCT
Yüksel et al. (2019)	281 pupils	Not stated	Grade 4	3 & 4	Turkey	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Zsolnai and Kasik (2014)	1398 pupils 1398 parents 62 teachers	Pupils: 7, 9 and 11 years	Not stated	1 to 4	Hungary	Primary school	Primary	Questionnaire	Questionnaires
Zurbriggen et al. (2021)	518 students	Not stated	Grades 4 and 7	Combinations	Austria	Primary and Secondary school	Combinations	Questionnaire	Questionnaires