

## Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire Guidance

A new section has been added to the Oxfordshire e-PEP requesting schools to use the 'Teacher's Copy of the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire' (SDQ) as a tool to evaluate the social, emotional and mental health well-being of 'children we care for' overtime. A link has been provided to the Assessment Section of the PEP Toolkit pages on our Virtual School website with all the SDQ forms and guidance.

Tracking SDQ data is important as unmet SEMH needs are currently one of the key reasons for educational underachievement in children we care for. A teacher that knows the child well is asked to rate 25 attributes (some positive others negative) which are divided randomly between 5 scales on the questionnaire. The scoring sheet is then used to evaluate responses by giving a score out of ten to the 5 questions that related to each of the 5 scales.

- 1. Emotional symptoms**
- 2. Conduct problems**
- 3. Hyperactivity/inattention**
- 4. Peer relationships**
- 5. Prosocial behaviour**

Points 1 to 4 can be added together to generate a Total difficulties score (0 to 40) based on responses to 20 of the questions. Please use the Newer four band categorisation to interpret your scores. Make scores meaningful by reporting the breakdown of scores for all 5 scales and detailing which ones are raised or lowered (pro-social scale only). The Teacher's impact score is an additional measure to help identify the extent to which difficulties cause the child upset and impact on their day to day classroom learning and peer relationships.

Best practice is to use the SDQ to identify triggers for referrals to other agencies (e.g. CAMHS) target support and PP funding requests to the identified area of need and monitor the impact and effectiveness of SEMH interventions over-time. Findings should also inform teacher's future planning by identifying e.g. whether internalising factors (emotional and peer relationships) or externalising factors (conduct problems and hyperactivity/inattention) are a child's main area of need.

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