

## Research Briefing N° 66

### EPPE project: findings on social-behavioural outcomes at age 10

The Effective Pre-School and Primary Education project (EPPE 3-11:2003-2008) is the second phase of the original Effective Provision of Pre-school Education project (EPPE 3-7: 1997-2003 subsequently extended to 2014). It focuses on the relationships between various child, family, home, pre-school and primary school characteristics and measures of children's social/behavioural development age 10 in Year 5 during Key Stage 2 (KS2). It compares these findings to the impact of the same factors when the children were younger.

**Key words:** EPPE; primary education; Key Stage 2; longitudinal; mixed-method; child development; social-behavioural development; UK



This Research Briefing is related to others on the **Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education project (EPPE/EPPSE)**: N°s 64, 65, 67, 68 and 69.

### Key findings at age 10

The full report describes three main sets of influences studied: child/family; evidence of continuing pre-school influence; the contribution of the primary school attended; and the interaction between these three influences. Only selected findings are presented here, for more detailed findings see: ['Influences on Children's Development and Progress in Key Stage 2: Social/behavioural outcomes in Year 5'](#) (pdf 1.2mb)

- The factors with strongest effects across the set of four social-behavioural outcomes are gender, early health and behavioural problems as reported by parents at entry to the study, need for support with English as an additional language (EAL) and the early years home learning environment (HLE).
- Higher levels of 'self-regulation' (by children) were associated with higher levels of attainment, particularly in reading, suggesting that 'self-regulation' has a strong academic aspect.
- Attending a pre-school of high quality increased 'self-regulation' and 'pro-social' behaviour and decreased 'hyperactivity' in children (especially boys) at age 10. High quality pre-school can act as a protective factor against the disadvantage of later attendance at a low academically effective primary school.
- Attending a more academically effective primary school reduced 'anti-social' behaviour at age 10.

## What we did

The original Effective Provision of Pre-School Education study (1997 to 2003) monitored children's intellectual and social-behavioural development between the ages of 3–7 years. The EPPE 3-11 extension follows up the sample to the end of primary school (age 11 years). Funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the second phase explored factors that predict children's later adjustment in four main dimensions of social-behavioural development: 'self-regulation', 'pro-social' behaviour 'hyperactivity' and 'antisocial' behaviour.

In addition to exploring the influence of background characteristics and any continuing pre-school effects, the study investigates the influence of primary school on children's outcomes at age 10, and the way primary school and pre-school jointly influences children's social-behavioural development.

## Implications

Overall a child who has a good early years HLE, a high quality pre-school and who goes on to attend a medium or high academically effective primary school is more likely to show improved social-behavioural outcomes compared with children that have two, one or none of these experiences. The combination of these three aspects is important for promoting positive social-behavioural development in the longer term during KS2 and the three taken together produce a combination of 'protective' experiences that are likely to benefit all round social-behavioural development.

## Impact

The EPPE project has contributed widely to 'evidence based policy' in early years education and care. Its findings are robust because they are based on sound and innovative research methods and have been used to inform policy development by successive governments. Findings from the case studies have informed the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum guidelines and are used extensively by practitioners who are concerned with issues of quality, learning and social justice.

## Further information

For more detail on implications, methods, analyses and references, see the full report: ['Influences on Children's Development and Progress in Key Stage 2'](#) (pdf 1.2mb)

Also see the [project website](#) for information on this and other project phases.

The research has been extended to follow the same sample to their post compulsory school destinations (age 16+) to investigate how early experiences influence long term trajectories: see [project website](#)

## How we did it

The EPPE 3-11 project contains a series of three 'nested' studies or 'tiers' which help answer specific research questions.

**Tier 1** answers the research question about the effectiveness of the 950+ primary schools the EPPE 3-11 children attended. It used statistical data (matched Key Stage 1 (KS1) and KS2 national assessment results) for successive pupil cohorts derived from every primary school in the country (over three consecutive years 2002-2004) for English and maths to provide value added estimates of the academic effectiveness of each school.

**Tier 2** involved the collection of information on academic and social-behavioural development for every child in the sample in the Spring Term of Year 5, during 2003- 2006.

**Tier 3** explored classroom practice through two different but complementary classroom observation schedules, with follow up analysis of qualitative findings

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