



# HAPPEN Wales

The Health and Attainment of Pupils  
in a Primary Evaluation Network

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# What is HAPPEN?

HAPPEN is a network which brings together education, health and research in line with the new curriculum proposals for health and wellbeing in Wales.



## Headteachers told us...

- Increasing need to meet literacy and numeracy targets – ‘core business’
- Felt overburdened with initiatives
- Importance of health and wellbeing - emerging Curriculum for Wales
- Called for a better understanding of school needs
- Greater autonomy and involvement for schools
- Advocated for a more collaborative approach to improving school health

Christian et al. *BMC Public Health* (2015) 15:238  
DOI 10.1186/s12889-015-1557-0



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

Community led active schools programme (CLASP) exploring the implementation of health interventions in primary schools: headteachers' perspectives

Danielle Christian<sup>1\*</sup>, Charlotte Todd<sup>2</sup>, Helen Davies<sup>2</sup>, Jaynie Rance<sup>1</sup>, Gareth Stratton<sup>3</sup>, Frances Rapport<sup>2</sup> and Sinead Brophy<sup>2</sup>

Todd et al. *BMC Research Notes* (2015) 8:161  
DOI 10.1186/s13104-015-1091-2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

Headteachers' prior beliefs on child health and their engagement in school based health interventions: a qualitative study

Charlotte Todd<sup>1\*</sup>, Danielle Christian<sup>2</sup>, Helen Davies<sup>1</sup>, Jaynie Rance<sup>2</sup>, Gareth Stratton<sup>3</sup>, Frances Rapport<sup>1</sup> and Sinead Brophy<sup>1</sup>

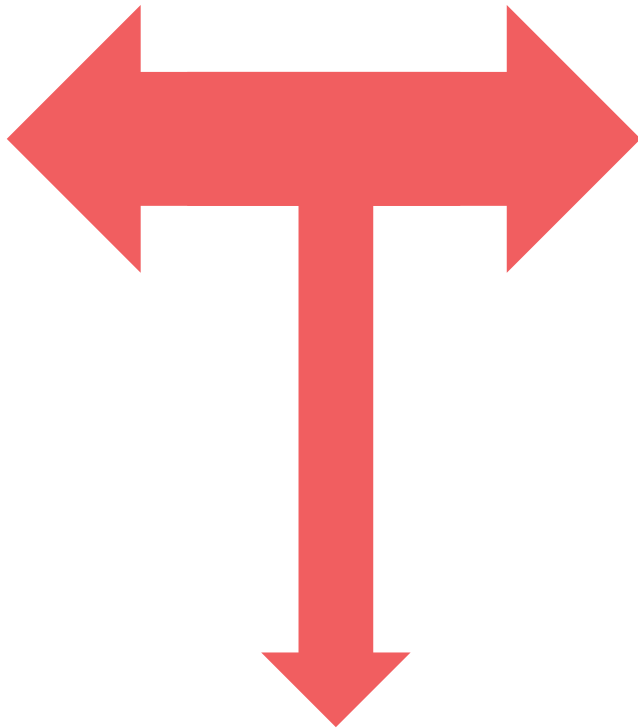


## The Research

Relationship between child health and wellbeing, educational attainment, longer term health and employment outcomes

## School Practice

School staff feeling overburdened, lack of collaboration. Advocated for autonomy and involvement to promote health and wellbeing in schools



**Bridge the gap between research and practice**

**= HAPPEN!**

# The HAPPEN Model

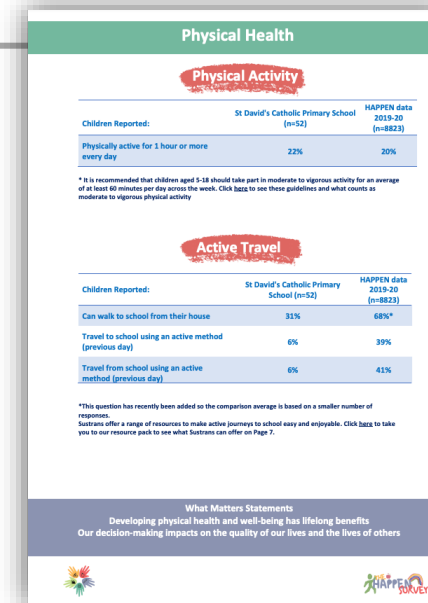
1.



Pupils in Years 4 – 6 (currently piloting Y3) complete our online health and wellbeing survey...

- This collects a range of information about typical health behaviours (e.g. physical activity, nutrition, sleep, wellbeing, safety, local area)

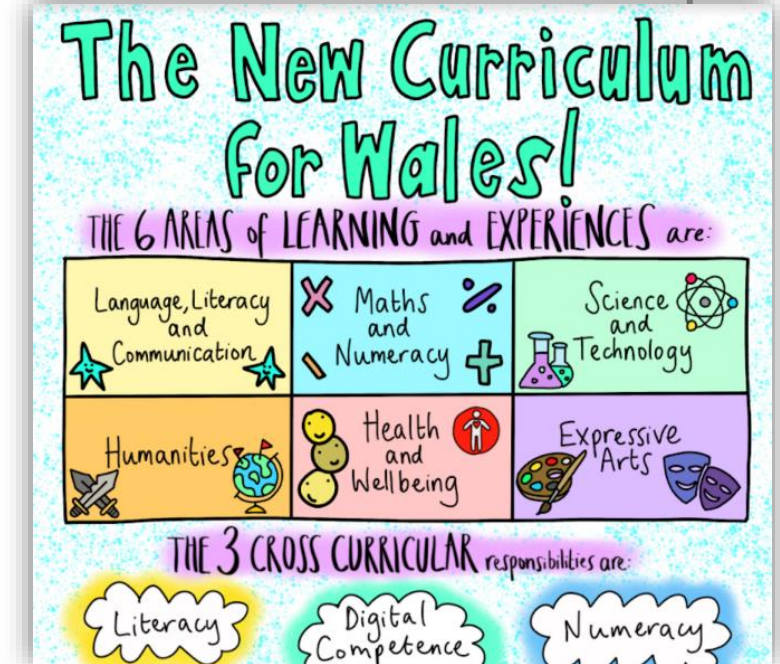
2.



Schools receive a report tailored to the new Curriculum for Wales...

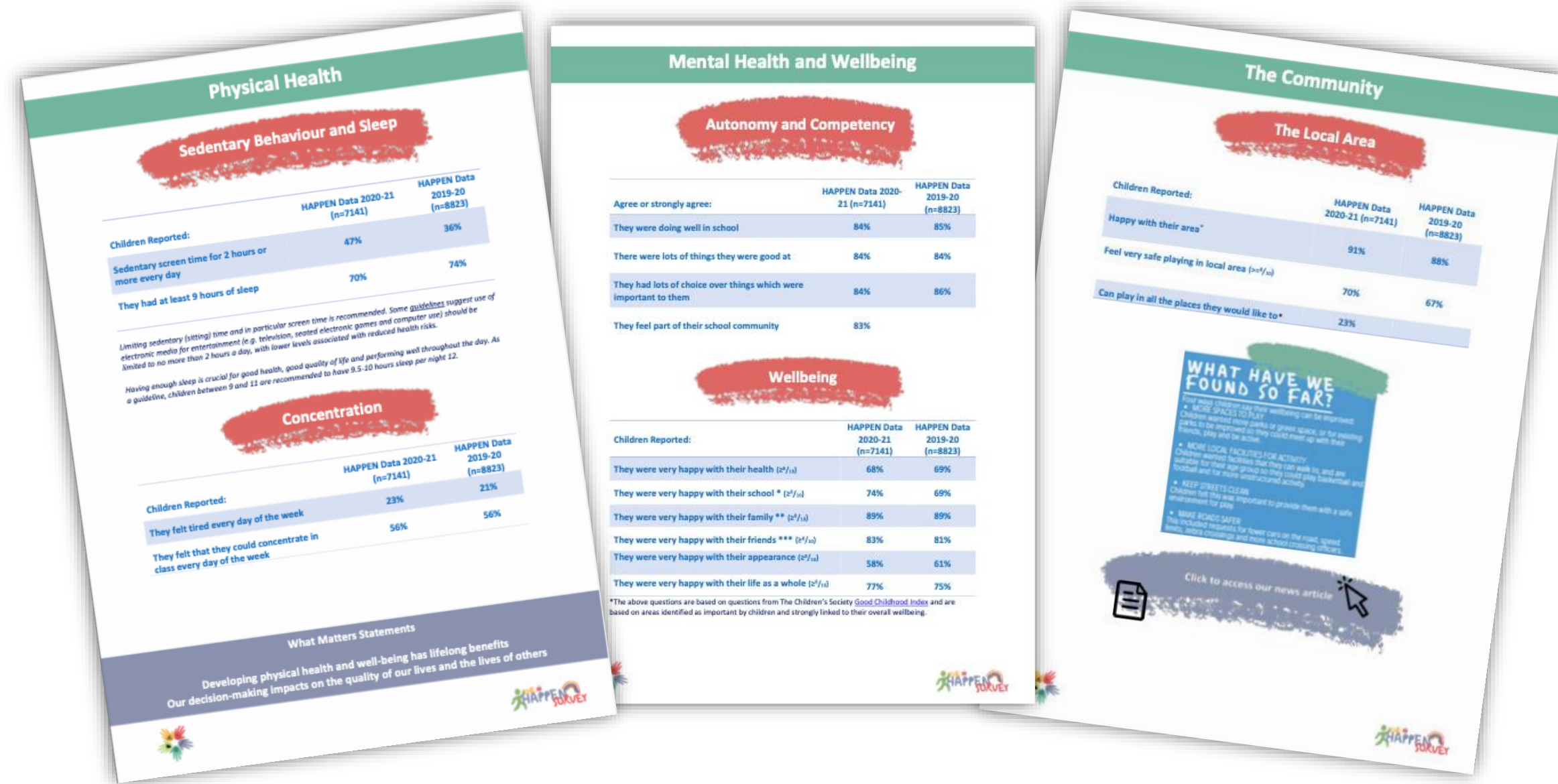
- Presents school level average results compared to national averages and allows schools to identify and prioritise aspects within school report

3.



The HAPPEN school report can inform school curriculum design tailored to Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning and Experience.





**HAPPEN presents the opportunity for pupils to learn and make informed decisions about different aspects of health and wellbeing. The report can be used in school programmes such as Pupil Voice to allow children to be ambitious and creative to improve their health.**

**Over 400 schools have registered to take part in HAPPEN and over 19000 pupils have taken part.**

# Our Research Aims

- Empower pupils to have their say on what matters to them.
- Empower schools to implement interventions/wellbeing approaches and plans that are backed by evidence.
- Develop a dataset of children and young people across Wales which can be used to better understand the relationship between health, wellbeing and educational attainment.

# Our Latest Research Questions

## HAPPEN Led Research

**How did school closures impact the health and wellbeing of primary children in Wales?**

**What were primary school staff reflections on school closures and their recommendations for the future?**

## Research Using HAPPEN Data via the SAIL Databank

- HAPPEN data included in factors influencing wellbeing during Covid study
- HAPPEN data included in COVID-19 mitigation measures in primary schools and association with infection and school staff wellbeing
- HAPPEN data included in factors associated with a positive COVID test in children (aged 8-11) study



# Impact of School Closures

*A rapid response research study as a result of school closures in March 2020.*

**We launched our 'HAPPEN At Home' Survey across Wales in April 2020:**

- We had 1333 responses from 8 – 11 year olds.
- We compared this data with data we had collected in 2018 and 2019 from the same months (April – June)

**What did we measure?**

- Typical health behaviours of children.
  - A. Physical activity
  - B. Sedentary time
  - C. Diet and dental health
  - D. Wellbeing

*We also included the free school meal status of each participant as a way of knowing deprivation levels.*



# The Data

We used the data to look at trends (increases/decreases from year to year).

To do this:

1. As soon as we get the data, we anonymise it so that we are unable to identify any individuals.
2. We then 'clean' the data (e.g., remove any duplicate responses).
3. The data is then coded. This means that we give responses numbers instead of "Yes" or "No" etc. This means that we can generate a %.
4. This dataset is then uploaded into the SAIL Databank and an analyst can link our data with other datasets. For this study we only needed free school meal status which is obtained via Welsh Electronic Cohort for Children (WECC).



# The Data

**This final linked dataset is kept within the SAIL Databank and we have to access SAIL to be able to analyse it.**

**As we were working from home, we are able to connect remotely to SAIL.**

**If we need to use the data outside of SAIL, we have to request to have it extracted.**



# Impact of School Closures

During lockdown, we noticed there were improvements in physical activity, sleep, happiness and general wellbeing compared to previous years.

However, children on FSM:

- **Ate fewer fruits and vegetables**
  - 21% less ate five or more portions of fruits and vegetables
- **Had lower self-assessed school competence**
  - 21% less felt confident with school
- **They spent less time doing physical activity**
  - 13% less did the recommended physical activity
- **They consumed more takeaways during school closures**
  - 16% more reported eating takeaways

# Impact of School Closures

**This study suggests that schools are important in reducing inequalities in physical health.**

**The physical health (e.g., physical activity and diet) of children on FSM may be affected by prolonged school closures.**



# Impact

Findings from our latest research have been presented to the Welsh Government's TAG and UK Government's SAGE groups to inform their education response to national school closures and reopening.

HAPPEN is also collaborating on an international research study through the global Covid-19 Health Literacy network to examine the impact of the pandemic on headteachers and school staff.

**Our existing work allows schools across Wales to implement health and wellbeing approaches that are specific to their needs via the HAPPEN Report and HAPPEN Action Plan.**

- i. This also allows HAPPEN to evaluate school-based interventions (e.g., Daily Mile, Outdoor Learning).**





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