

Executive Summary

1. The Entrepreneurial Spirit micro student group (selection, predictability, retention etc)

- The groups selected for the programme are highly variable, both in their internal composition and across the schools. Most groups combine a wide spread of students in terms of achievement and reported behaviour, and the percentage of young people in the year group potentially showing entrepreneurial characteristics ranges from 13 to 28% across the schools. Group composition is fairly representative of the school population of their individual schools (with the exception of Wester Hailes and Castlebrae). This has surprised some teachers who expected the pattern of selection to favour 'challenged' pupils. Consequently, the Entrepreneurial Spirit Programme can no longer be perceived as being solely 'for the disaffected' pupil. There are therefore some questions about the general positioning of the Programme – who is it for? What is its ethos? How should it be promoted to schools and staff? Is it primarily for the challenged or for any pupil reflecting the necessary entrepreneurial characteristics?
- Although the groups are fairly representative of their school population in attainment, attendance and motivation, girls and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are under-represented in those who entered the programme (the 'ES micro group'). An earlier proposal to screen young people for dyslexia and similar learning difficulties was not taken forward, but evidence from the six schools suggests that such learning difficulties are not over-represented in those identified as having attitudes and behaviours that match the profile of adult entrepreneurs.
- While school staff might have predicted some of the ES micro group, there were many surprises in those young people emerging as 'successful' from the screening process. Some of this surprise came from an expectation that many of the group would be disaffected or disengaged; but neither had teachers seen evidence that several other students might have entrepreneurial characteristics.
- Evidence still requires to be gathered about retention. A minority has dropped out from most schools, most of these at an initial point. But the level of drop-out varies across the schools, and this needs more investigation. Of particular interest is the impact on the small number of disengaged and disaffected young people in the four schools where the group is more varied: are they less likely to stick with the programme if they are in the minority?

2. Views and experiences of the Entrepreneurial Spirit programme by the young people participating in it

Young people reported a range of positive results from being part of the ES programme. These included:

- Increased confidence and ability to work as a team (the comparison being made was with others in the year group who had *not* been part of the programme)
- Students felt more confident about the future since starting the programme, and the majority could see themselves starting their own business in the future
- A small number noted improvements in attendance, but for most there had been no change
- Most reported valuing their schooling and seeing its relevance for the future, particularly because good school qualifications would help in running a business. Specifically, young people by the final session of the year were putting increased value on English and maths, particularly with respect to form filling and working out figures and costs. One student noted that he had realised that even modern languages could be useful for selling goods in Europe.
- Running a business was thought by a small majority to be likely to be harder than expected.
- Across the groups observed, the degree of focus and attention during the sessions varied. At some points in the sessions maintaining control and keeping attention was demanding for the facilitators. At other times, the students were impressively productive. When a real business idea, i.e. the bulk purchase and sale of goods, was discussed, student attention was certainly held. Students were somewhat critical about the behaviour of the group and most suggested that if this had been improved they might have got even more out of the sessions. Observation of the sessions suggests that there seems to be an 'out of control' phase that each of the groups go through early on in the programme. The facilitators have tried to use this as an opportunity to find a way of establishing a form of self-regulating discipline within the group. This issue bears upon how the sessions have been run by Mindscreen. The approach has been deliberately 'non interventionist' with very limited direct control of the group. Had this been different we need to consider what the impact would have been on winning the confidence of the students and the process of self discovery and responsibility that they have experienced.

3. Impact on the macro pupil group

In each school the whole S2 year group completed the Entrepreneurial Spirit screening questionnaire. The Mindscreen team had recognised the potential benefits across the year group of using this tool, but the practical implementation raised challenges. Some of these challenges included:

- The language and comprehension required in answering the questions and in feeding back the profiles. In some schools the process worked best when a 'trained' teacher was at hand to take the students through it question by question. This had resource implications for schools.
- While it was clear that most pupils were keen to make use of the profile, and did indeed recognise much of what it said about them as individuals, once they understood it, many needed some help in interpreting it.

A key issue was therefore how the language and approach might be changed to make materials more user-friendly without losing the reliability and validity of the instrument. The Mindscreen team has started work on changing the language level of the screening questionnaire, and work on the profile will follow.

- Initial plans had been to link the profiles into the S2/S3 subject choice process, but this link was made in only a minority of schools, due to time pressures. Schools, young people and parents could see the potential for the profile to be useful to the whole year group for subject choice, personal development and guidance and career development. How can guidance and other staff make use of the profile in an appropriate way in the future, and how can these staff be supported to do this?
- Links with career education and Careers Scotland varied across the schools, and these need to be developed in order to maximise impact. There are also issues about the 'career list' produced by the screening process and whether this is needed when other computerised career interest guides are already available

4. School staff issues (including training, views of enterprising etc)

- Some evidence on the attitudes and expectations of staff in the schools was gathered. 37% of staff felt they had teaching experience that would be relevant to the Entrepreneurial Spirit initiative – 11% Enterprise, 10 % Work Experience or industry links in the curriculum, 16% other (eg project work, school clubs, business

placements). Only 11% would classify themselves as fairly or very experienced in school based enterprise education. 14% had previously received training in school based enterprise education.

- 17% had previously (or were currently) running their own businesses. These businesses included:
- 15% of teachers thought their school's learning environment was very suited to the development of entrepreneurial skills; 50% thought it was moderately suited.
- 65% of teachers thought that only 10% or less of pupils had the potential to start their own businesses (within this, 41% thought the figure would be less than 5%)
- Teachers were asked what adjectives they would use to describe an entrepreneur. 71% used terms which were all or mostly positive; 8% were mixed; and 3% were all or mostly negative.
- The involvement of guidance staff in the Entrepreneurial Spirit programme varied across the schools. This included the extent to which guidance staff were involved in: undertaking training to administer and interpret the screening tool; taking the examination for accreditation in the use of the tool; the actual administration of the tool to the S2 year group and interpreting the profile with pupils in groups or individually. It had originally been hoped that feedback to the macro group would be done by school staff (with support from Mindscreen) on a 1:1 basis, with the ideal model being the involvement of all guidance staff in this process. This proved impractical in terms of school resources and senior managers or community based staff often did most of this work. As a result the use of the profile in subject choice, guidance and PSE/PSD was limited in most schools. The impact of the McCrone agreement on guidance in the short term may mean continuing difficulties of this kind.
- The training programme was well regarded by staff who had undertaken it, and there was evidence that what they had learned was beginning to impact on their dealings with colleagues. There was also interest in applying what they had learned about pupils to dealing with the full year group of pupils. How might these positives be built on?

5. Parent issues

- Parents attending the final session of the year were asked about their views and experiences of their child's involvement in the ES programme, and questionnaires were provided for schools for issue to all S2 parents. A low response rate requires caution in interpreting the data, but there are nonetheless questions that need to be considered. Firstly, the profile clearly had many benefits in encouraging and supporting parent/child conversations and helping young people and their parents be a bit more objective about themselves. How can the profile's value in this respect be enhanced?
- There is a clear danger of a 'backlash' from the parents of those who are not chosen for the programme. The parent body as a whole needs effective communication to understand the nature of the programme, how it fits into the rest of school provision (including the other opportunities available to pupils) and the benefits for both the macro and the micro group. While parents of both the macro and micro group of pupils needed more information, for the micro group the balance between involving parents and respecting the independence of young people requires care.
- Parents were concerned and interested to link the programme and the profile into the overall school experience of the school for their children.
- There were many positives from the Entrepreneurial Spirit Programme reported from the parents of the micro group. These included noticeably improved confidence and an increased orientation to self-employment as a possible career option.

6. Implementation issues

- Schools' commitment to the programme was clear and considerable flexibility was shown in most [all, Andy?] schools in order to start and maintain the programme. The timing of the decision to get involved varied across the schools, and it was clear that those who were able to make a decision and prepare well ahead had fewer difficulties. A long lead-in time is required, starting no later than the January prior to the introduction of the programme to students, and certainly before finalising the school Development Plan.
- Contrary to expectation in the schools, the selected Entrepreneurial Spirit pupil group included young people with a full range of academic attainment in four of the

schools. Accommodating the ES programme *within* the school timetable in S3 where there are more able students involved may create both challenges for timetablers and also stresses in the relationship of the programme with academic subjects. What are the implications if the ES programme has to become extra-curricular as a result?

- A general and perhaps very important observation is that neither of the facilitators of the Entrepreneurial Spirit were teachers. It was difficult for observers to envisage that a teacher known to the students could relate to them in the way that the ES facilitators were doing, particularly in relation to the energy levels shown and the group discipline issues arising. This would require a considerable culture and expectation shift (both for pupils and for staff).
- The above point seems to be a key issue if we are thinking about embedding a programme like this into schools across the board. It raises questions about the supply of facilitation staff, the training of facilitation staff, whether or not they need to be teachers, and the possibility of teachers from one school delivering the programme in a school where they are not known to the students. It is worth noting that a very strong message coming from the students is that other teachers could learn from the Mindscreen facilitators' teaching style.