

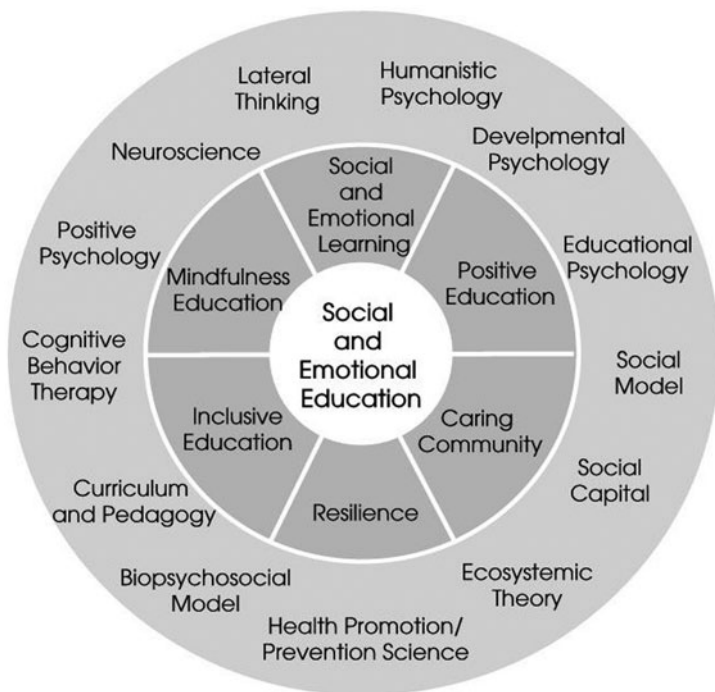
## Chapter 2

# Social and Emotional Education: A Framework for Primary Schools

There have been various terms and definitions of social and emotional education (SEE), such as social and emotional learning (SEL), social and emotional literacy, social and emotional well-being and mental health amongst others. This chapter presents social and emotional education as a multidisciplinary, integrative construct drawing from six major perspectives in children's health and well-being, namely social and emotional learning, positive education, mindfulness, resilience, inclusive education and caring communities. It then reviews the literature on the effective processes underlying SEE in schools and presents a whole-school, multilevel and evidence-based framework for the promotion of social and emotional education in primary school.

### 2.1 Social and Emotional Education: An Integrated Well-Being and Resilience Perspective

‘Social and emotional education’ (Cefai and Cooper 2009) as used in this book, is defined as *the educational process by which an individual develops intrapersonal and interpersonal competence and resilience skills in social, emotional and academic domains through curricular, embedded, relational and contextual approaches*. The definition implies awareness, understanding and management of self and of others through social, emotional and cognitive processes. This includes understanding of self and of others, regulating emotions and enhancing positive ones, developing healthy and caring relationships, making good and responsible decisions, making use of one's own strengths and overcoming difficulties and adversity in social and academic tasks. The term ‘education’ places the emphasis on the conditions and processes, which contribute to the development of social and emotional competence and resilience, including both a curricular and cross-curricular-based approach, as well as an embedded classroom and whole-school climate perspective. SEE is concerned with the broad, multidimensional nature of learning and teaching, including the biological, emotional, cognitive and social aspects of learning and teaching (Cooper et al. 2011). It underlines a pedagogy for building social, emotional and



**Fig. 2.1** The SEE framework

resilience skills as well as an ‘intervention structure which supports the internalisation and generalisation of the skills over time and across contexts’ according to the child’s development and with the contribution of educators, parents, peers and other significant people (Elias and Moceris 2012, p. 427).

SEE draws upon such disparate fields as humanistic psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, teaching and learning perspectives, cognitive behaviour therapy, neuroscience, positive psychology, resilience, health promotion, prevention science, social capital, social model and the ecosystemic model of development (e.g. Weare 2010; Greenberg et al. 2003; Roffey 2010; Seligman et al. 2009; Benard 2004; Bernard 2006; Oliver 1996; Bronfenbrenner 1989). More specifically, it is based on the integration of six strands in the field of health and well-being in children, namely, social and emotional learning (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2005; Mayer and Salovey 1997), positive psychology and education (Seligman 2011; Seligman et al. 2009), mindfulness education (Kabat-Zinn 2004; Siegel 2007), resilience in education (Benard 2004; Masten 2001), inclusive education (Booth and Ainscow 1998; Oliver 1996) and caring community perspectives (Sergiovanni 1994; Battistich et al. 2004; Cefai 2008; see Fig. 2.1). These six perspectives are underpinned by the theory and practice of teaching and learning, with a focus on the twin processes of curriculum and

pedagogy (see Chap. 4), and the use of social and emotional skills in the learning process such as persistence, goal setting, monitoring and academic regulation (Bernard 2012; Seligman et al. 2009; Noble and McGrath 2008).

### ***2.1.1 The Six Perspectives Informing the SEE Framework***

#### **Social and Emotional Learning: ‘The Heart of Education’**

Over the past decades, social and emotional learning has been introduced in various schools at local, regional and national levels in various countries and regions in the world, with the help of initiatives such as the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in the USA, KidsMatter and MindMatters in Australia, the European Network for Social and Emotional Competence (ENSEC) and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) in the UK. The CASEL identifies the key competencies required by children and young people in social and emotional learning, as ‘...the skills to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively. These skills provide the foundation for academic achievement, maintenance of good health, resilience and civic engagement in a democratic society’ (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2005, p. 7). CASEL groups these skills into five major areas, namely self-awareness (ability to recognise emotions, describe interests and values and accurately assess strengths), self-management (ability to manage emotions and behaviour, manage stress, control impulses and persevere in overcoming obstacles), social awareness (ability to take the perspective of and empathise with others and recognise and appreciate similarities and differences), social management (ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships based on co-operation) and responsible decision making. The CASEL framework incorporates the five domains of the SEAL programme in the UK (DfES 2005b), namely self-awareness, managing feelings and motivation (self) and social skills and empathy (others). The KidsMatter and MindMatters SEL components ([www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au), [www.mindmatters.edu.au](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au)) are also based on the five CASEL domains, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. SEL programmes and their effectiveness in school are discussed in Sect. 2.2.

#### **Positive Education: ‘A Fresh Perspective in SEL’ (Roffey 2010)**

More recently, the positive psychology movement has been making deep inroads in the area of well-being and mental health promotion in schools (Seligman et al. 2009; Noble and McGrath 2008; Gilman et al. 2009) and has helped to develop and broaden the SEL perspective. The roots of positive education go back to the work of John Dewey, Maria Montessori and Elisabeth Hurlock amongst others,

but the current emergence of the movement in education has been largely owing to the work of Martin Seligman who underlined the need for an evidence-based approach to health and well-being in education (Seligman 2011; Seligman et al. 2009). Positive psychology has shifted the erstwhile focus on deficit and mental health problems of traditional psychology towards wellness and health perspective. In education, it underlines the experience and expression of positive emotions and becoming aware and utilising individual strengths in achieving own and collective goals. It focuses on ‘enabling’ factors such as positive emotions, which facilitate adjustment, resilience, growth and well-being and prevent or reduce depression, anxiety and hopelessness (Seligman et al. 2009). Seligman (2011) underlines five key areas of well-being to be taught in school, namely, positive emotions, engagement through strengths/flow, meaning and sense of purpose, positive relationships and accomplishments (Seligman et al. 2009). Noble and McGrath’s (2008) framework suggests 11 key foundations in positive education, namely:

1. Social and emotional competence, consisting of prosocial skills (respect, cooperation, acceptance of differences, compassion, honesty, inclusion and friendliness)
  - resilience skills (optimism, courage, coping, humour, and helpful thinking skills), social skills (sharing, cooperation, conflict resolution)
  - emotional literacy skills (eg managing negative feelings and amplifying positive ones, empathy)
  - personal achievement skills (identifying own strengths and limitations, persistence, goal setting)
  - meta cognitive skills
  - problem solving skills
2. Positive emotions: experiencing feelings of belonging, satisfaction and pride, safety, excitement and joy and optimism
3. Positive relationships, particularly classroom relationships
4. Engagement through strengths
5. A sense of meaning and purpose.

The new century challenges psychology to shift more of its intellectual energy to the study of the positive aspects of human experience. A science of positive subjective experience, of positive individual traits and of positive institutions, promises to improve the quality of life. (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p. 5)

### **Mindfulness Education—‘The Missing Piece to SEL’ (Weare 2010)**

Mindfulness education is an offshoot of positive psychology but it draws from other fields such as neuroscience, contemplative practices and SEL itself. Mindful-

ness is a state of self-awareness and attention, particularly related to the present reality (Kabat-Zinn 2004; Siegel 2007) that can induce plastic changes in the brain (Lutz et al. 2008). It has been linked to positive outcomes such as positive affect, optimism and self-actualisation as well as to reduced negative affect, anxiety and depression (Brown and Ryan 2003; Burke 2009). Mindfulness education is a universal classroom intervention, which seeks to promote social and emotional learning through mindful attention training, where pupils learn to become more mindful and aware of their present thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Pupils learn to focus on and live in the present by practicing such skills as breathing and sensation, mindful walking, sitting and movement. The consequent focused attention and enhanced awareness is then set to facilitate self-regulation and positive emotions such as happiness and optimism, engagement in learning process, as well empathy, perspective taking and prosocial behaviour. Rigorous research on the effectiveness of mindfulness education in schools, however, is still scarce and more evidence is required, particularly on the basis of randomised clinical trials, to substantiate the claims of this emerging field in education (Davidson et al 2012; Jennings et al. 2012). There are some indications, however, that it leads to decreased negative affect and increased calmness, emotional regulation and attention (Broderick and Metz 2009; Flook et al. 2010; Roeser and Peck 2009; Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor 2010; Huppert and Johnson 2010). In a recent quasi-experimental study involving 4th–7th-grade students, Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010) found improved optimism, social competence and positive self-concept for mindfulness classes, particularly for the primary-school-age children, when compared to control groups. In a non randomised controlled study with 522 students aged 12–16 years in 12 secondary schools in the UK, Kuyken et al. (2013) found that the students who participated in the Mindfulness in Schools programme reported fewer symptoms of depression, lower stress levels and enhanced well-being when compared to controls. Another important issue in the use of the mindfulness education in schools in view of its origin is that it will be free of any religious connotations and presented as a secular and culturally sensitive and responsive tool (Davidson et al. 2012). Finally, mindfulness education with primary-school-age children needs to be developmentally appropriate for it to maximise the window of opportunity provided by the developing brain in emotional regulation and executive functioning (Jennings et al. 2012).

Any use of contemplative practices in schools must necessarily be thoroughly secular, developmentally and culturally appropriate, and predicated on evidence-based practices. (Davidson et al. 2012, p. 153)

### **Resilience: ‘Ordinary Magic’ Within a Universal Perspective**

The fourth perspective, which has contributed significantly to the mental health and well-being of children and young people, particularly those considered at risk, is

that of resilience. Resilience has been defined as successful adaptation in the face of risk or adversity, but it is 'more about ordinary "magic" focusing on strengths rather than extraordinary processes' (Masten 2001, p. 228). It is a quality that can be nurtured and developed from a very young age and the systems impinging on the child's life, such as the school, have a crucial and determining role in directing the child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development towards healthy trajectories even in the face of risk (Pianta and Walsh 1998; Dent and Cameron 2003; Masten 2007).

The literature identified two broad sets of factors that have been found to protect vulnerable children and facilitate their development into competent and autonomous young adults, namely individual qualities and characteristics and supportive social contexts in the child's life; children with high levels of these personal and social protective factors are more effective in coping with adversity than individuals with lower levels of protection (Benard 2004). The individual dispositional attributes, which have been found to contribute to successful outcomes in the face of adversity include problem-solving skills, flexibility, autonomy, sense of purpose, positive outlook of self and others, ability to recognise and express feelings constructively, being connected with, and seeking help from, others, sociability, humour, persistence, confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Werner and Smith 1992; Masten et al. 1990; Rutter and the English and Romanian Adoptees Study Team 1998). These qualities may be an integral part of a universal, social and emotional education curriculum as they are essential not only for children at risk but also for normally developing children. Contextual protective factors at school include caring and supportive relationships between teachers and pupils and amongst pupils themselves, active pupil engagement in meaningful learning activities and positive belief and high academic expectations on the part of the teachers for all their pupils, particularly those at risk (Werner and Smith 1992; Masten et al. 1990; Rutter and the English and Romanian Adoptees Study Team 1998).

The resilience perspective coincides with and overlaps to a considerable degree with both SEL and positive psychology/mindfulness movements. It is concerned with developing competence and strengths as in SEL, but with a focus on children facing difficulties in their development. It is also closely related to positive psychology with its focus on strength, wellness and health, rather than deficits and remediation. Cefai (2007) has proposed a universal framework of resilience, which resonates with both the social and emotional learning and the positive psychology conceptualisation of wellness. It underlines the need to organise the curriculum and other aspects of the classroom and school contexts in a way that they address the developmental needs of all the pupils and to adopt processes that will promote social, emotional and academic development of all pupils in the classroom. These processes are grounded in the typical mechanisms involved in the development of social, emotional and academic competence. Self-awareness, strengths development, emotional literacy, social and prosocial skills, problem-solving skills, confidence, self-efficacy and persistence are key skills in the healthy development of both normally developing children and children at risk. This perspective also

reflects on the current realities and challenges faced by our children today. Increasing economic, social and psychological stresses and developmental and situational challenges in children's lives today, underline the need for supportive contexts and systems for all children and a universal curriculum providing students with the skills to develop their strengths, overcome obstacles and be resourceful in problem solving (see Layard and Dunn 2009). Rather than just focusing on the impact of cumulative risks, a universal perspective of resilience underlines the value of cumulative protective and promotive factors in healthy development (Coleman and Hagell 2007).

**Inclusive Education: 'A Nonpathologising, Nonothering Stance'**  
(Watson et al. 2012)

Inclusive education provides for the creation of a supportive community to which all can belong and are enabled to participate. It is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion and discrimination within and from education (Booth and Ainscow 1998; Oliver 1996). It is based on the right of all learners to a quality education that meets their needs, vulnerable and marginalised groups and individuals in particular, and develops the full potential of every individual. It underlines that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs and education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account such needs (UNESCO 2005; United Nations 2006). Acknowledging and modelling the rights of pupils through an inclusive pedagogy underline issues of justice and entitlement, and enhance pupils' well-being by strengthening their identity and empowering them to become self- and others' advocates in learning and social-emotional processes (Watson et al. 2010; UNICEF 2007).

The principles of inclusive education may be transmitted through the promotion of such values, attitudes and behaviours as appreciation and celebration of diversity and multiculturalism, collaboration and equal participation, social justice and solidarity, human rights, equity and moral and social responsibility. Rather than serving as an instrument of exclusion and in turn, severing the link between learning and well-being and leading to disaffection and ill-being (Watson et al. 2012), the curriculum would thus become a 'hammer of justice and freedom' (Oliver 2004) for all pupils, the vulnerable and marginalised ones in particular. This stance is embedded in the social awareness dimension of the proposed curriculum framework, broadening the conceptualisation of one's well-being to that of others' as well, not only as an end in itself (social justice and human rights perspectives) but also as a creation of inclusive, caring, equitable and democratic communities having an added value to the well-being of all the individuals within those communities (e.g. Battistich et al. 1997; Cefai 2008).

### **Caring Classroom Community: A Safe, Empowering Base**

The importance of community building as a basis for learning and well-being was already advocated a century ago by John Dewey, who wrote extensively on the relational and interpersonal aspect of education. In the 1930s, John Macmurray challenged the depersonalisation in education and argued for schools as inclusive and caring communities promoting communal or intersubjective knowledge (Fielding 2012). More recently, other researchers and educationalists have underlined the contribution of caring school communities to pupils' learning and social competence (e.g. Battistich et al. 1997; Noddings 1992, 2012; Sergiovanni 1994). Caring communities are defined by their caring relationships, active and influential participation and shared beliefs and goals. Community members care about each other, work together collaboratively and are actively engaged in the life of the community (Sergiovanni 1994). They share values and norms focused on pupils' well-being and learning and on prosocial values and behaviours. As Westheimer (1998, p. 142) put it, 'shared beliefs in...getting people together and acting in concert...in ensuring that marginalized voices are heard, are important not only for the fact that they are shared, but also that they reflect ideals of participation and egalitarian communities'. When pupils experience contexts focused on improving rather than proving competence, on sharing and supporting one other, they are more likely to feel connected to their group, become engaged in the classroom activities and consequently, improve their learning and behaviour (Battistich et al. 2004).

The importance of community as the means and the end of human flourishing has been opportunistically co-opted and betrayed by the increasingly visible hand of neo-liberal market economics. (Fielding 2012, p. 687)

Caring classroom communities provide a dual pathway to social and emotional education. They provide an ethic of care through caring, supportive, prosocial and collaborative values, while they support pupils' social and emotional learning and resilience. Pupils with a sense of community are more likely to develop positive academic attitudes and behaviours. They participate in learning and other activities, engage in prosocial and collaborative behaviour and have a sense of competence and responsibility (Battistich et al. 1997, 2004; Cefai 2008). In an evaluation study in five elementary schools in the USA, Solomon et al. (2000) reported that the schools operating as caring communities showed gains, relative to the control schools, in pupils' motivation and engagement, personal and interpersonal concerns and skills and prosocial values and behaviours. Significant effects held for a broad variety of pupils, including those from low socioeconomic groups, urban areas and ethnic minorities. In a study with a number of primary schools, Cefai (2008) developed a framework of classrooms as caring and inclusive communities promoting social and emotional well-being and resilience. The communities were character-



ised by processes such as caring relationships; an ethic of support and solidarity; active and meaningful pupil engagement; collaboration; inclusion of all pupils in the learning and social processes; positive beliefs and high expectations and pupil autonomy and participation in decision making.

Although the caring community perspective puts particular emphasis on creating a classroom and school climate, which facilitates and promotes social and emotional well-being and learning (see Chap. 5), the curriculum itself can be a vehicle for creating and supporting such a context. ‘Other’ skills, such as pro-social behaviour, collaboration, inclusion, personal and social responsibility, healthy relationships and respecting and valuing the rights of others are key elements of SEE.

The curriculum framework and how it may be implemented in the primary schools are discussed in Chap. 4.

If education is to be concerned with learning to be human, the challenge remains to reimagine socio-technical practices in education in ways that can be expressive of relations of friendship and mutuality, relations that are premised upon heterocentric contemplation of and care for others. (Facer 2012, p. 710)

## **2.2 Evidence Base: It Is Not Just Magic, Mystery and Imagination**

Various reviews of studies have found consistent evidence on the positive impact of school-based SEE programmes on children of diverse backgrounds and cultures from kindergarten to secondary school in both academic achievement and social and emotional health (Greenberg et al. 2003; Zins et al. 2004; Hoagwood et al. 2007; Payton et al. 2008; Slee et al. 2009; Askell-Williams et al. 2010; Wilson and Lipsey 2007; Weare and Nind 2011; Durlak et al. 2011; Kimber 2011; Slee et al. 2012; Sklad et al. 2012). The largest average effect sizes appear to be in social and emotional learning, but the programmes also enhanced academic achievement and reduced internalised and externalised conditions, such as anxiety, depression, substance use and aggressive and antisocial behaviour (Durlak et al. 2011; Payton et al. 2008; Wilson and Lipsey 2007; Weare and Nind 2011; Sklad et al. 2012).

In their review of what works in social and emotional competence initiatives at school, Weare and Gray (2003) reported a wide range of academic, social and emotional benefits, such as improved positive behaviour, better learning and academic progress, improved social cohesion and inclusion and better mental health. In another review from the 52 reviews and meta-analyses of mental health in schools, Weare and Nind (2011) reported that overall, most of the interventions had positive effects, including positive mental health and well-being and social and emotional learning, externalising and internalising of problems and a positive attitude towards

school and academic achievement. The authors identified various characteristics of the more effective interventions, such as teaching SEE skills, balancing universal with targeted interventions, starting early with young children and taking a multi-modal and whole-school approach. In another recent metanalytical review of 75 experimental or quasi-experimental studies on the effectiveness of universal school-based SEE programmes both in the USA and other parts of the world, including Europe, Sklad et al. (2012) reported the overall impact on all the seven outcomes measured, namely, enhanced social skills, positive self-image, academic achievement, mental health, prosocial behaviour, reduced antisocial behaviour and substance abuse. The largest immediate effects were for social and emotional learning, positive self-image and prosocial behaviour, followed by academic achievement and antisocial behaviour. At follow-up, the programmes still showed positive effects on all outcomes, but there was a substantial reduced effect for some of the outcomes.

In a metaanalysis of more than 200 studies of universal, school-based SEL programmes from kindergarten to secondary school, Durlak et al. (2011) found clear evidence for the multiple benefits of SEL programmes. Students who participated in such programmes showed significant improvements in their social and emotional literacy, attitudes towards school, classroom behaviour, academic performance and social relationships as well as a decrease in conduct-related problems and emotional distress. These benefits persisted over time. Payton et al. (2008) provide results from three large-scale reviews of research on the impact of universal and indicated SEL programmes on primary and middle-school students in the USA. They reported a substantial increase in students' average academic test scores, in social and emotional literacy skills, an improvement in students' behaviour and a decrease in both externalised and internalised behaviour difficulties. And, in another review, Zins et al. (2004) report consistent evidence that SEL programmes in school lead to more prosocial and less antisocial behaviour, more positive attitudes and behaviours in learning, including motivation and engagement and higher academic achievement.

A recent evaluation of KidsMatter, a framework for the promotion of mental health in primary schools in Australia, reported a significant reduction in students' mental health difficulties with the greatest impact on students with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. The evaluation also found improvement in student mental health such as optimism and coping skills as well as improved school work and academic achievement (Slee et al. 2009; Askell-Williams et al. 2010; Dix et al. 2012). Similar findings were found in an evaluation of KidsMatter in the early years, including closer relationships between staff and children, improved child temperament, and reduced mental health difficulties, with about 3% fewer children exhibiting mental health difficulties (Slee et al. 2012). Evaluation of the SEAL primary programme in the UK indicated overall positive impact on pupils' well-being and behaviour (Morrison Guttman et al. 2010; Humphrey et al. 2008; Hallam et al. 2006). The national evaluation of the primary SEAL curriculum by Hallam et al. (2006) found that the programme had a significant impact on pupils' well-being, confidence, social and communication skills, relationships, prosocial

behaviour and positive attitudes towards school. A report by a group of researchers from the Institute of Education at the University of London in the UK (Morrison Gutman et al. 2010) underlined the value of the programme in primary schools, particularly for young children facing adverse circumstances in their developmental years, and the need to start such programmes as early in the child's school life as possible. Humphrey et al.'s (2008) evaluation of the primary SEAL small group work element reported a positive impact for some of the interventions. However, a number of issues about the effectiveness of the programme, particularly in secondary schools, have been raised, such as lack of consistent whole school approach and problems in implementation and monitoring owing to lack of staff training and school resources (Humphrey et al. 2008, 2010; Cooper and Jacobs 2011; Lendrum, Humphrey and Wignall 2013).

In conclusion, our findings (based on 317 studies and involving 324,303 children) demonstrate that SEL programs implemented by school staff members improve children's behavior, attitudes toward school, and academic achievement. Given these broad positive impacts, we recommend that well-designed programs that simultaneously foster students' social, emotional, and academic growth be widely implemented in schools. (Durlak et al. 2011, p. 306; Payton et al. 2008, p. 6)

### ***2.2.1 'Meta-Abilities' for Academic Learning***

Neuroscience is providing hard evidence for the earlier 'softer' underpinnings of psychodynamic and humanistic theories linking emotions to academic learning. When a child feels afraid, anxious or angry, the lower areas of the brain controlling basic functions and fight and flight responses take over, neutralising the mediation of the cortex, which is responsible for higher-order thinking and processing. S/he will find it difficult to learn effectively if his or her basic needs for safety, security, belonging and self-esteem are not addressed adequately or has problems regulating emotions (Geake and Cooper 2003; Graziano et al. 2007; Greenberg et al. 2007). On the other hand, a sense of security and state of calmness facilitate learning, helping the child to remain focused on task, attend to instructions and put all his or her mental energy into solving problems and constructing knowledge (Greenberg and Rhoades 2008). Positive emotions such as pleasure and fun in learning, as well as intrinsic motivation where the activity is perceived as meaningful and relevant, also facilitate the operation of the working memory, including attention, information processing and recall (Greenberg et al. 2007; Greenberg 2010; Fredrickson and Branigan 2005). Emotionally literate children would be better able to regulate their emotions, cope better with classroom demands and frustration and solve problems more effectively. They will be able to relate better and work more collaboratively

with others, which will not only help them to avoid entering into unnecessary conflicting situations, but also to synergise their learning potential through collaborative learning. They would also enjoy better relationships with the classroom teacher, which widens their opportunities for learning (Howse et al. 2003; Libbey 2004; Zins et al. 2004; Durlak et al. 2011). In this respect, they become ‘meta-abilities’ for academic learning as well (Goleman 1996).

Brain science tells us that a child’s brain goes through major growth that does not end until the mid-twenties. Neuroplasticity means that the sculpting of the brain’s circuitry during this period of growth depends to a great degree on a child’s daily experiences. Environmental influences on brain development are particularly powerful in shaping a child’s social and emotional neural circuits. (Lantieri 2010)

In their meta-analysis of over 200 studies, Durlak et al. (2011) found that students who participated in universal social and emotional learning programmes, had a significant increase in their academic performance, scoring significantly higher on standardised achievement tests when compared to peers not participating in the programmes. The study clearly indicates that SEE does not hinder academic progress, and that any perceived ‘extra work’ on the part of the teacher with the introduction of SEE, is thus likely to be rewarded with enhanced learning and achievement. In a study in Australian schools, Dix et al. (2012) investigated the change in standardised academic performance across the 2-year implementation of an initiative to improve social and emotional learning in 96 Australian primary schools. They found a significant positive relationship between quality of implementation and academic performance, equivalent to 6 months of schooling. The study concluded that teachers’ views also suggested an increase in academic performance as a result of SEL programming.

As Weare (2004) put it, it is crucial that those who seek to promote academic learning and achievement and those who seek SEE, realise that they are actually ‘on the same side’. By underlining the inextricable link between SEE and academic achievement, we are more likely to see SEE becoming an integral part of education (Elias and Moceris 2012).

There’s a huge push for well-being in our school, and that’s what really underlines everything. I think children, if they are not happy, if they are not mentally right, they are not going to be in the right frame for learning. Our idea is to give them the strategies, help them and focus on their well-being to improve their learning. (Ms Grace, early years teacher)

**Box 2.1 The benefits of social and emotional education (DfES 2005b, p. 7)**  
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Where children have good social and emotional skills and are educated within an environment supportive to emotional health and well-being, they will be motivated and equipped to:

- Be effective and successful learners.
- Make and sustain friendships.
- Deal with and resolve conflict effectively and fairly.
- Solve problems with others or by themselves.
- Manage strong feelings such as frustration, anger and anxiety.
- Achieve calm and optimistic states that promote the achievement of goals.
- Recover from setbacks and persist in the face of difficulties.
- Work and play cooperatively.
- Compete fairly and win and lose with dignity and respect for competitors.
- Recognise and stand up for their rights and the rights of others.
- Understand and value the differences and commonalities between people, respect the right of others to have beliefs and values different from their own.

## 2.3 A School-Based, Whole School Approach to SEE

The WHO framework for health promotion in schools recommends a whole school approach to social and emotional education, which includes addressing social and emotional issues in the curriculum and in the organisation of teaching and learning, the development of a supportive school ethos and environment and partnerships with the wider school community (WHO 2007). Such an integrative approach leads to improved well-being and mental health and sense of belonging and connectedness (Battistich et al. 2004; Weare and Nind 2011; Adi et al. 2007; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence 2008; Weissberg et al. 2003; Bywater and Sharples 2012). SEE programmes need to be embedded within safe, caring and collaborative classroom and whole school communities where pupils have a sense of belonging and are actively engaged and empowered to practice SEE skills. Long-term effectiveness does not simply result from isolated programmes in schools, but from an integrated whole-school approach making use of interpersonal, instructional and contextual supports, sustained over time (Zins et al. 2004; DfES, 2007; Fundacion Marcellino Botin, 2008; KidsMatter 2012a).

In a systematic review of the effectiveness of promoting social and emotional well-being in primary school, Adi et al. (2007) reported that the most effective interventions were multicomponent programmes, which covered classroom curricula

and school environment, together with programmes for parents. Children received a comprehensive curriculum in the development of social and emotional learning while the teachers were trained both in the new curriculum to be offered and in behaviour management. Similarly, the National Health Service Clinical Report on the well-being of primary school children in the UK (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence 2008) underlined the need for a supportive school environment with both universal and targeted interventions for pupils in difficulty. Such an approach also helps to avoid inappropriate referrals to intervention and support services, while identifying the needs of children who may need within-school support as early as possible.

SEE has greater impact when it is integrated into the primary school curriculum at taught-and-caught levels, with teachers teaching and reinforcing the curriculum in their interactions with the pupils (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence 2008; Greenberg 2010; Weare and Nind 2011; Cooper and Jacobs 2011; Greenberg et al. 2003; Durlak et al. 2011; Seligman 2009). Schools are more likely to be effective in promoting well-being, health and resilience if there is an emphasis on universal interventions for all children, supported by targeted interventions for children at risk or with additional needs (Adi et al. 2007; Diekstra 2008a, 2008b; Greenberg, 2010; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010; Cooper and Jacobs, 2011; Vostanis et al. 2013). Fragmented one-off, add-on SEE programmes are not likely to work in the long term (Ofsted 2007; Greenberg 2010; Durlack et al. 2011; Weare and Nind 2011). In a scoping survey of 599 primary and 137 secondary schools in England on mental health provision in schools, Vostanis et al. (2013) reported that most of the provisions were reactive, targeting students with mental health difficulties, were largely non evidence based and there was inadequate teacher education and support.

In their review of evaluations of the SEAL programme in the UK, Cooper and Jacobs (2011) attribute the lack of success of the programme owing to it not being embedded directly in the formal curriculum and the teaching staff not involved in its delivery and reinforcement. Hoagwood et al. (2007) reported that ecological and collaborative approaches, which included the classroom teachers amongst others, were the most effective in the promotion of both social and emotional learning and academic achievement. Sklad et al. (2012) found that the majority of the programmes in their review of studies were conducted by classroom teachers, and that teachers could deliver SEE programmes without compromising their effectiveness, concluding that the involvement of experts and specialists was not necessary for ensuring programme effectiveness. In their metaanalysis of over 200 studies, Durlak et al. (2011) found that when classroom programmes were conducted by the school staff, they were found to be effective in both academic and social and emotional literacy, and that only when school staff conducted the programmes did the students' academic performance improve. On the basis of the review, they recommend that SEE programmes 'do not require outside personnel for their effective delivery' (p. 417) and are more effective when delivered by school than nonschool staff. Similarly, in another metaanalysis, Weissberg (2008) reported that only when school staff delivered the programmes themselves did the students' academic performance improve significantly, not only because teachers are involved in the delivery of the

mainstream curriculum and thus more likely to infuse the skills in their daily classroom practice but also as this is a reflection of an SEL-supportive whole-school culture.

One of the benefits of having classroom teachers delivering the SEE curriculum is that they are more likely to integrate and infuse the skills into the general classroom curriculum and daily activities. SEE has greater long-term impact when it is delivered in this way (Rones and Hoagwood 2000; Adi et al. 2007; Diekstra 2008). An evaluation of SEAL by (2007) in the UK, similarly reported that the greatest impact of the programme was when it was embedded in the curriculum, with the classroom teachers developing an understanding of students' social and emotional literacy skills, and consequently, using that understanding to develop healthier relationships with the students in their teaching and classroom management and to adjust their pedagogy according to the students' needs. Such an approach was found to be particularly useful in promoting prosocial behaviour amongst all students in the classroom as well as resilience amongst students considered at risk (Ofsted 2007).

Although classroom teachers are not expected to become surrogate psychologists or mental health workers, they can still take responsibility for the social and emotional well-being of their pupils. It has been the traditional remit of primary classroom teachers to provide pastoral care and nurturance as caring educators to their young pupils (Spratt 2006; Noddings 1992; Nias 1999). This position resonates with the demedicalisation and depathologising of mental health and well-being in education, and the integration of academic learning and social and emotional learning (cf. Watson et al. 2010; Noddings 1992). The compartmentalisation of education and well-being does not only lead to deskilling of teachers and short-changing of pupils, but also has been found to be fraught with difficulties in terms of implementation, service delivery, multidisciplinary collaboration and particularly effectiveness (Spratt 2006; Noddings 1995; Greenberg et al. 2003). It also reinforces students' stigma of mental health, the largest barrier to accessing mental health services in school (Bowers et al. 2012). Specialists and professionals still have a key role to play in the promotion of well-being at school but more at targeted interventions. Even here, however, the more the interventions are school-based and carried out by school-based personnel or by professionals with close contact with the children and the school, the more likely they are to be effective (see Chap. 7). As Zins (2001, p. 445) puts it, 'now that we know more about SEL interventions, the shift must be done towards school-based personnel'.

I have argued over the past 20 years that the explicit teaching of social-emotional learning dispositions and behaviours is the missing link in schools' efforts to promoting school adjustment and achievement. (Bernard 2006)

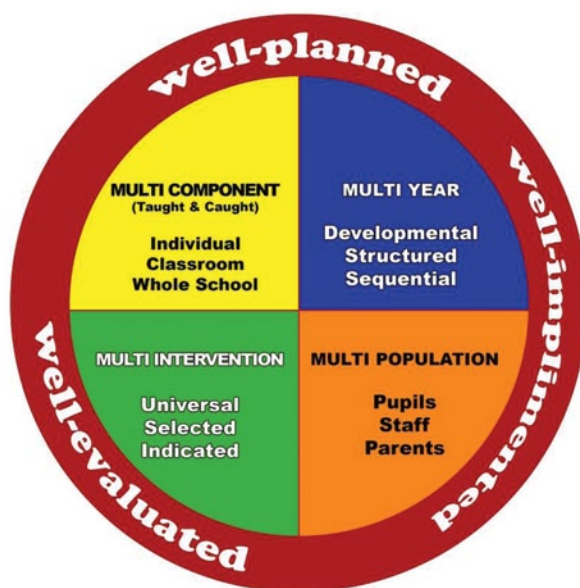
Both universal and targeted approaches have their place in a comprehensive whole-school approach to SEE, and an integrated, universal and targeted approach is more likely to be effective than one focusing on one form of intervention alone

(Adi et al. 2007; Greenberg 2010; Weare and Nind 2011). Although universal interventions are highly beneficial for pupils experiencing social and emotional behaviour difficulties (Weare and Nind 2011; Cooper and Jacobs 2011), targeted interventions are necessary for pupils who are not responding to universal education or who need extra support in view of the risks or difficulties they are experiencing (Greenberg 2010; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence 2008; Payton et al. 2008; Weare and Nind 2011). The greater conceptual precision, intensity and focus of targeted interventions may be particularly effective in this regard (Greenberg 2010). Targeted interventions are also particularly essential in preschool and primary school years to reduce the development of more severe difficulties in secondary school, at which stage it is more difficult to change behaviour (Essex et al. 2006; Domitrich et al. 2007; Merrell and Gueldner 2010). As well put by Lantieri (2009b, p. 15), 'If children learn to express emotions constructively and engage in caring and respectful relationships before and while they are in the lower elementary grades, they are more likely to avoid depression, violence, and other serious mental health problems as they grow older'.

A curriculum, classroom-based approach to SEE needs to be accompanied and supported by a whole-school approach with the whole school community in collaboration with parents and the local community supporting and reinforcing a climate conducive to SEE for all the school members (Adi et al. 2007; Weare and Nind 2011; Greenberg 2010). A positive school climate underlining caring and supportive relationships, inclusion, solidarity and prosocial behaviour, while supporting the well-being of all pupils, staff and parents, will help to support and reinforce the work being undertaken in the classrooms, thus providing a complementary, value-added approach (Adi et al. 2007; Weare and Nind 2011; Farrington and Ttofi 2009). The school ecology becomes a pervasive medium for the promotion of SEE throughout the school (Wells et al. 2003; Payton et al. 2008; Weare 2010). An evaluation of the KidsMatter framework in primary schools in Australia suggested that the framework was associated with a systematic pattern of positive changes to schools, teachers, parents and students, consistent with the international literature that a 'whole school' approach helps to enhance academic and social competencies through more positive interactions amongst all members of the school (Askill Williams et al. 2010).

The social and emotional well-being of the staff and parents themselves also needs to be addressed within a whole-school approach (Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Weare and Nind 2011; Roffey 2011; Sisak et al. 2013). For adults to be able to teach, role model and reinforce SEE, they would first need to be socially and emotionally literate themselves. This requires support structures, which provide information and education for staff and parents in developing and maintaining their own social and emotional learning, well-being and health. The focus is on the whole school community operating as an emotionally literate community, with each system connecting to, and supporting, the others (cf. Bronfenbrenner 1989). Primary school teachers would thus need to be provided with basic and ongoing training on how to teach and reinforce SEE in their classroom (Durlack et al. 2011; Lane et al.





**Fig. 2.2** A comprehensive, multidimensional SEE framework for primary schools

2006), support and guidance in the implementation of SEE (Jennings and Greenberg 2008). Parental collaboration and education in promoting and reinforcing the key skills being promoted at school are critical to the success of school-based programmes. In their evaluation of family SEAL, Downey and Williams (2010) found that both teachers and parents reported increases in the children's social and emotional learning as a result of the home programme implementation. Staff's and parents' well-being is discussed in more detail in Part 3.

## 2.4 A Roadmap for SEE in Primary School

SEE is a basic, fundamental educational goal directly related to learning, well-being and mental health of all pupils at school. It needs to be firm in theory and research, based on sound theories of child development, including approaches which have been found to be effective in bringing about long-term targeted outcomes. On the basis of the SEE curriculum framework described earlier and the evidence on the effective approaches for the promotion of SEE in primary schools, a multilayered, comprehensive, whole-school SEE framework is proposed for primary schools (Fig. 2.2). It consists of five elements: (i) multidimensional, (ii) multistage, (iii) multitarget, (iv) multiintervention and (v) well-planned, well-implemented and well-evaluated.

### **2.4.1 Multidimensional**

SEE is organised as a comprehensive, universal approach at individual, classroom and whole-school levels. Explicit and regular teaching of SEE as a core competence by the classroom teacher is one of the key components of the framework. Direct teaching of evidence-based and developmentally and culturally appropriate SEE with application to real-life situations is required in the classroom. This necessitates a set curriculum and available resources to support consistency of delivery, one of the key criteria of programme effectiveness (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2008; Durlak et al. 2011). One-off, pull-out, add-on programmes are unlikely to have any long-term effect on pupils' behaviour (see Chap. 4).

The teaching of SEE may follow the SAFE approach, that is, it is sequenced, active, focused and explicit. Research on the effectiveness of SEE programmes provides consistent evidence that effective programmes adopt sequenced step-by-step approach, make use of experiential and participative learning, focus on skills development and have explicit learning goals (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2005; Durlak et al. 2010, 2011; see Chap. 4).

SEE is infused in the other academic subjects in the curriculum in a structured way. Opportunities are provided by the classroom teacher for the pupils to practice and apply the skills learned both in the classroom and outside, such as the playground and whole-school activities (cf. Elias 2003; Elias and Synder 2008; Greenberg 2010; see Chap. 4).

A positive classroom climate where pupils feel safe and cared for, and where they have the opportunity to practice the SEE skills being learned, is another component of SEE in school. Indicators for the classroom teacher and the pupils may help the teacher to evaluate the classroom community and make any changes necessary to make it more conducive to SEE (see Chap. 5).

A whole-school approach where the school community, together with parents and the local community, promotes SEE in all aspects of school life and where the skills addressed in the classroom are promoted and reinforced at the whole-school level in a structured and complementary way, helps to organise the school as a caring community for all its members (see Chap. 6). Such an approach helps to create supportive whole-school context and ethos through entire staff's collaboration, contribution and education, peer education and mentoring, parental involvement and education and community participation, leading to more effective SEE outcomes (Weare and Nind 2011; Greenberg 2010; Bond et al. 2007; Askell Williams et al. 2010).

### **2.4.2 Multistage**

The structured and developmental teaching and promotion of SEE at individual, classroom and whole-school levels take place throughout the kindergarten and primary school years. Weissberg and Greenberg (1998) argue that social and emo-

tional learning involves a similar process to that of other academic skills, with increasing complexity of behaviour and social contexts requiring particular skills at each developmental level. A developmental approach strengthens and builds on basic SEE skills from one year to the next, building on what pupils have already learned and equipping them with skills needed for different stages in their development. Four major areas of SEE relating to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills, form the basis of the curriculum from kindergarten to the final year of primary education, but with different learning objectives, standards, benchmarks and indicators for each stage in each of the four areas. A spiral curriculum, straddling the kindergarten and primary school years, revisits each of the four areas at developmentally appropriate levels, which are also adapted according to the individual needs of the pupils (Chap. 4). Early intervention is necessary to support children's social and emotional well-being and prevent serious difficulties from developing later on during school life (Shaw et al. 2006; Merrell and Gueldner 2010; Weare and Nind 2001).

SEE is evaluated at individual pupil level through a number of formative assessment strategies. A checklist of competencies for each stage and year is completed by the classroom teacher and the pupils themselves (the younger pupils will use other expressive strategies such as drawings and role plays). The focus of the checklists, however, is formative and developmental, providing the classroom teacher and the pupils with an indication of the strengths and needs of the pupils in the various areas of SEE. This is followed by a classroom discussion of the feedback during circle time. Pupils will also keep a weekly SEE learning journal, which is also discussed during circle time (Chap. 4).

### **2.4.3 *Multitarget***

Although SEE is primarily targeted at pupils, the training, education and well-being of both staff and parents are critical for its success. A whole-school approach includes education programmes in social and emotional literacy and well-being for both staff and parents (see Chaps. 7–9).

### **2.4.4 *Multiintervention***

SEE is implemented through a universal approach for all pupils, but it also includes targeted interventions for pupils facing difficulties in their social and emotional development at small group and individual levels. A staged, school-based approach puts the onus on the school, in partnership with professionals, parents, services and the community, to provide the necessary support for pupils experiencing difficulties in their social and emotional development. This prevents unnecessary referrals to mental health services and directs those services to the school as much as possible (Chap. 6).

### ***2.4.5 Well-Planned, Well-Implemented and Well-Evaluated***

A needs assessment of the school community to match interventions according to the needs of the school is another component of the framework. This includes identifying those practices and policies that the school has been doing well in SEE, and incorporating them into the initiative. Schools are provided with guidelines on how to choose available programmes, which might work best for them, underlining programmes, which have been found to be based on a sound theoretical and research basis, with evidence for their effectiveness (cf. Askill-Williams et al. 2010; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2008; Chap. 4). All school staff involved receives specific training in delivering the SEE curriculum as well as mentoring and supervision by colleagues and specialised staff. The school makes provision for organisational supports and policies to safeguard the success and sustainability of the initiative, including supportive management, active participation in planning and implementation of the whole school community, provision of adequate resources and alignment with regional, district and school policies.

SEE is monitored, evaluated and improved regularly at individual, classroom and whole-school levels. Pre- and postinitiative pupil outcomes help to determine the effectiveness of the interventions in terms of pupils' social and emotional learning and academic learning. Data are collected from pupils, staff and parents, assessing pupils' behaviour through scales and checklists as well as pupils', staff's and parents' perceptions. Initiatives that are not adequately co-ordinated, monitored and evaluated are unlikely to work in the long term (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2008; Greenberg 2010; see Chap. 3).

Social and emotional well-being is establishing itself as a permanent fixture rather than a transitory blip on the radar screen of education...Schools are increasingly being held responsible for putting in place plans, programs and practices to promote positive student social and emotional health and to prevent problems of poor mental health. (Bernard et al. 2007, p. 2)

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The evidence is clear and unequivocal. Our children need SEE as a preparation for a successful and fulfilling adult citizenship. To deny them this would be short-changing them by providing an inadequate formation for successful adulthood and denying them a fundamental right to a broad-based, meaningful and relevant education in tune with the demands of the twenty-first century. This book proposes an evidence-based framework on how this could be achieved at various levels. Reading through the book's chapters, however, some practitioners may feel overwhelmed by the multilevel, multitarget and multidimensional initiatives suggested in the book. The commitment, resources and time required to put the various

elements of the framework into practice may appear daunting, and it may be easy for some to just write this off as a romantic, impractical academic exercise. Educational reforms in schools are replete with examples of failed initiatives, which did not take an account of the contexts, cultures and the day-to-day realities of schools and classrooms. Careful reading of this text, however, will show that this book, in fact, is an attempt to promote a bottom-up approach with the whole school participating in the planning and assessment of the needs of the school community, as well as in the implementation and evaluation of the proposed interventions. The book also suggests making use of and integrating the existing strengths, good practices and resources at the school. For instance, there may already be various initiatives taking place at a school to prevent and deal with bullying, to promote positive behaviour in the classroom, to facilitate collaboration and inclusion or to engage pupils actively in the learning process. The school will need to examine how these initiatives may be incorporated in any new SEE initiative. Moreover, the comprehensive and multilevel framework proposed in this book may need to be introduced in a phased approach in line with the school's resources and needs. Schools may feel overwhelmed with the complexity of the approach presented here, particularly if they are already suffering from reform fatigue. A staged approach and a focus on those areas considered to be most important to address the needs of the school are more likely to be sustainable in the long term in such instances. The framework presented in this book, thus, should not be taken as a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all recipe for schools across cultures and contexts. It is more of a road map, providing a framework for schools on their way towards the realisation of SEE, with the schools moving along that pathway according to their needs and realities.




## The Oracle and the Gadfly

*Delphi, Ancient Greece*

*440 BC*

The inscription '*Know Thyself*' at the entrance of the temple welcomed the tired messenger from Athens. As Chaerephon made his way through the double door past the great Doric columns, he was embraced by the warmth and rustic smell of the pine fire tended by the white priestesses. He crossed the temple and walked down to the basement towards a round space below the temple floor. He was greeted by golden Apollo and kneeled to kiss the omphalos sacred stone, the navel of the world from where Zeus released the two eagles. Two priestesses in white led Chaerephon to the curtain hiding the adytum and asked him to make his request to the oracle inside. The laurel-purified and laurel-crowned Pythia on the tripod went into a trance as she inhaled the vapours emerging from the centre of the earth. The shaking, red-garmented messenger of the gods recited verses alien to Chaerephon. The two priestesses repeated to Chaerephon: 'The gods have not bestowed any greater wisdom than on the one who knows that he knows nothing. Go tell your master'.

Back in Athens the great master mused on the paradoxical message from the gods. How could he, the one who only knows that he knows nothing, be wise at all? His wisdom was limited to an awareness of his own ignorance. His only wisdom was to understand the path a lover of wisdom must take in his search for it. Confronted by this paradox, Socrates went round the streets of Athens, approaching the well-known wise men of the city in order to confirm his identity and refute the Oracle's verdict. After his lengthy elenchus with statesmen, poets, artisans and other prominent Athenians, he realised that although they thought they were highly knowledgeable and wise citizens, their wisdom was more conspicuous by its absence. Like Archimedes' eureka, it suddenly dawned on him that the Oracle was, in fact, correct. His fellow Athenians thought that they were wise when they were not. He knew that he was not wise, which thus made him wiser than the others. He was the only one who was aware of his own ignorance, of his own weaknesses and strengths. From that day, Socrates became the gadfly of the state, a social and moral critic pushing the Athenian citizens towards self-awareness and self-realisation. He questioned and attacked accepted traditional notions such as 'might makes right' and the unbridled pursuit of material wealth. Instead, he advocated self-development and the pursuit of goodness, friendship and true community.



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