Fagus offers Brooke School a new perspective on pupils’ social and emotional needs and helps them overcome some of their barriers to learning.

**Summary**
Fagus supports a new nurture provision at Brooke School by implementing a systematic developmental approach:

- Employing a better understanding of pupils’ social and emotional well-being.

- Helping to pinpoint the causes of a pupil’s behaviour by analysing their levels of emotional development.

- Setting SMART social and emotional targets to track a pupil’s progress.

- Providing data to benchmark the success of the programme and its interventions.

**Introduction**
Brooke School in Rugby, Warwickshire is a special school supporting pupils that have additional learning needs. As well as providing individual specialist educational provision, it ensures pupils feel safe, happy, are educationally confident as well as developing life and independence skills.

In her role as Deputy Head, Jane Hinton also has responsibility for learning improvement and partnerships at the school and has been using the Fagus resource for over a year.

Jane explains the reasoning behind embedding Fagus into their school setting and the benefits it has brought.

**Why the Fagus Toolkit?**
“Running nurturing groups in the past we have used tried and tested social and emotional measurements such as the Boxall Profile and SDQ to support our practice. However, we took the decision that we wanted to extend our nurture provision and as such required a new system to understand the complexities of social and emotional functioning, pinpoint our pupils’ needs effectively and set and review SMART social and emotional targets to track progress.

I heard of Fagus through a colleague at about the same time that we had the green light to go ahead with our new ‘Nurture Plus’ programme. This would be a full-time provision for 8 or so pupils which would have a therapeutic core and be supported by a child psychotherapist and senior teachers. All the children needed extra support in developing their social and emotional well-being to enhance learning and ensure they felt safe and confident at school.

By taking a more developmental approach we could focus on their barriers to learning rather than on academic targets which were more appropriate to this cohort of children.

After investigating and reviewing the resource with my Senior Leadership Team, I was delighted to find that Fagus ticked all our requirement boxes. It enabled us to analyse a pupil’s actual behaviour against their expected chronological age range of behaviours in many social emotional areas, and from there we could work out their actual stage of development and see underlying developmental reasons for certain patterns of behaviour.”

**Customising the toolkit**
“We invested some time in getting to grips with Fagus and it was clear that all the pupils’ needs were different, so we customised the way we used the checklist tool depending on the support required. For some pupils we used a narrow range of checklists as their needs were more obvious.

If a child doesn’t feel valued, safe or confident in a setting, they will never be able to access the academic side of learning.”
and we could easily isolate the areas of concern. For others we wanted to unpick their challenges in more detail to reveal the full extent of their needs, so we used a wider range of checklists to decipher what was going on with them developmentally in numerous social and emotional domains.”

**Numerous benefits**

“Setting up a new provision with an injection of money, Fagus gave us an evidence-based approach to objectively measure the programme’s success and have some benchmark for assessing value for money rather than relying on subjective and anecdotal observations.

The Fagus framework lets us look at a broader range of social and emotional parameters than any other tool we had previously used and set more focused targets with some sort of analytical component built-in. It enables us to evaluate and review these goals and track their progress over time.

The Fagus output informs practice, helps evidence the impact and success of chosen interventions and demonstrates that our resources and funding are being put to good use. These findings can be shared across all the teaching staff as well as parents and our external partners such as governors and trustees.”

**Extended and future use**

“We are already using Fagus on an additional set of pupils who spend time in our partner mainstream schools. It provides us with a method to objectively observe these pupils progress in a specific social and emotional parameter such as self-esteem, which helps us understand how well they are getting on and make adjustments to their learning environment if necessary.”

**Conclusion**

“For some children their social and emotional well-being must take priority before they begin to access the academic curriculum and with mental health services in decline, schools may have to start to take on the mantle of supporting and understanding their pupils’ emotional and social capabilities.

At Brooke School we are passionate about improving our appreciation of social and emotional functioning in our children, and the role that it plays in their ability to engage in learning. We have found that for some pupils giving careful attention to understanding their current stage of emotional development helps us put plans in place to help reduce any developmental delay and encourage them to feel valued, safe and confident and be in the perfect place to learn.”

“**At Brooke School we are passionate about improving our appreciation of social and emotional functioning in our children.**”

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