



Fresh Little Minds™  
**SUNRISE**

# 2022-2025

## Building Resilient Schools, Celebrating Our Journey



**FME** FRESH MINDS  
EDUCATION  
WHERE CHILDREN LIGHT THE PATH TO HOPE

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## Acknowledgements - Our Journey Together

We are grateful to the school principals who stood behind their staff with trust and belief. Without their vision and support, none of this would have been possible. Principals are the quiet enablers of this beautiful and impactful work; they clear the path so teachers can lead.

**At the heart of every thriving classroom is a leader who chooses, to show up with heart, courage, and hope.**

We are deeply thankful to the educators who have embraced the Fresh Little Minds SUNRISE Programme not just as a curriculum, but as a trauma-informed practice that heals and nurtures children, preparing them for life.

These teachers are not just FLM Approved Coaches; they are changemakers. They connect with children's hearts to transform their minds, for learning, relationships, and life.

Fresh Minds Education created the FLM SUNRISE Programme as a fully prepared scheme of work that comprehensively delivers the PDMU KS1 curriculum. We place powerful tools directly in the hands of those who know children best. This resource empowers teachers to reclaim their time and positions them to lead this joyful, transformative work with confidence.

***"I like it when we do SUNRISE because my teacher has fun, and this helps me feel happy on the inside. My teacher is now one of my Anchor People." – P3 pupil***

As educator and poet William A. Ward said:

***"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."***

Each teacher highlighted in this report has inspired. They have committed to delivery, connection, presence, and emotional leadership, the values at the heart of **The AMBER Approach®**.

As these educators graduate as **FLM SUNRISE Approved Coaches and Leaders in the Classroom**, we celebrate their achievement. Their certification confirms that they have met the high standards required to deliver the programme and embed The AMBER Approach®. They are now fully approved to offer the FLM SUNRISE emotional health, resilience, and wellbeing programme, not only to meet the NI PDMU Curriculum, but to meet children where they are, and help them grow and thrive.

# FRESH LITTLE MINDS RIPPLE RESILIENCE



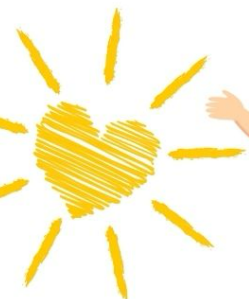
I feel Safe Reading better **Learn**  
Calm Less Worries  
Relaxed Breathe I can Concentrate

111 SCHOOL  
TEACHERS  
GRADUATED

46 Schools



3,330 CHILDREN  
4,440 LESSONS





# A GROWING COMMUNITY OF FRESH LITTLE MINDS SUNRISE RESILIENT SCHOOLS



St Patricks PS  
Loughguile



St Patricks PS  
Glenariffe



St Patricks & St Brigid's PS  
Ballycastle



St Marys PS  
Rathlin Island



St Annes PS  
Corkery



Bushvalley PS  
Ballymoney



Gaelscoil an Chastil PS  
Ballycastle



St Ciaran's PS  
Cushendun



St Olcans PS  
Army



Ballycastle Int PS  
Ballycastle



St Mary's  
Cushendall PS



Saint Joseph's PS  
Antrim



Victoria PS  
Ballyhalbert



St Patrick PS  
Dungannon



St Francis PS  
Lurgan



Round Tower Int PS  
Antrim



Randalstown Central PS  
Randalstown



Our Lady & St Patrick PS  
Downpatrick



Long Tower PS  
L/Derry



Nazareth House  
L/Derry



Knockevin Special School  
Downpatrick



Kilbride Central PS  
Ballyclare



Cliftonville Int PS  
Belfast



Carnlough Int PS  
Carnlough



Ballycraigie PS  
Antrim



Holybank PS  
Newtownabbey



St Eithnes PS  
L/Derry



Sacred Heart PS  
L/Derry



Limavady Central PS  
Limavady



Holy Trinity PS  
Belfast



Holy Family PS  
Belfast



Carryduff PS  
Carryduff



New Row St Patricks PS  
Castledawson



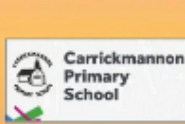
Newcastle PS  
Newcastle



Lislagan PS  
Ballymoney



Carr PS  
Lisburn



Carrickmannon PS  
Ballygowan



Woodlawn PS  
Carrickfergus



Knockmore PS  
Lisburn



St Columba's PS  
L/Derry



Drumachose PS  
Limavady



St Mary's PS  
Dunamore



St Teresa's PS  
Belfast



St Joseph's PS  
Dunloy



Springfield PS  
Belfast



St John's PS  
Carnlough



## A High-Quality, Supported Process of Early Intervention

Fresh Little Minds SUNRISE KS1 curriculum is more than just another programme, it is a carefully supported process of change that places powerful tools directly into the hands of the people who know children best - their teachers.

This is a trauma-informed, emotionally attuned approach to early intervention with young children that begins with professional learning and ends with sustainable, school-led delivery.

From start to finish, the journey spans across multiple school terms and is rooted in reflection, guidance and relational support.



Teachers and classroom staff first engage in professional development where they are introduced to **The AMBER Approach®**, a unique, trauma-informed model of practice that is designed to help educators understand the emotional needs of young children and the tools to support regulation and resilience in the classroom.

Once they have explored the ethos of the AMBER Approach®, teachers receive practical training on how to implement the **FLM SUNRISE** programme in their own classrooms. This includes access to an online platform, teacher guidance manuals, and the **AMBER Emotional Health and Resilience Resource Kit**, all tailored to meet the emotional needs of KS1 children.

## Quality Assurance Steps for Accreditation

These quality assurance steps ensure the consistent delivery of this quality assured evidence-based programme which leads to positive impact and outcomes for children.

The full process typically spans **three school terms**, allowing enough time for teachers to train, plan, deliver and review the programme.

Teachers who complete these steps graduate as **FLM SUNRISE Approved Coaches and Leaders in the Classroom**. Their certification confirms that they have met the high standards required to deliver the programme and embed The AMBER Approach®. They are now fully approved to offer the FLM SUNRISE emotional health, resilience, and wellbeing programme, not only to meet the NI PDMU Curriculum, but to meet children where they are, and help them grow and thrive.



### Step 1 (Sept)

#### Professional Development Training & Programme Delivery Planning

- ☐ The AMBER Approach & FLM SUNRISE 4hr educator training.
- ☐ Plan for the full integration of the FLM SUNRISE Programme into the classroom adhering to programme fidelity between 01<sup>st</sup> Sept – 31<sup>st</sup> March.

### Step 2

#### Programme Delivery (01<sup>st</sup> Sept – 31<sup>st</sup> March).

- ☐ Support pupils to complete the **Children's Baseline Survey** in advance of programme delivery.
- ☐ **Deliver** the full FLM SUNRISE KS1 PDMU curriculum.
- ☐ Attend a scheduled **support phone call** with FME
- ☐ Teachers provide a delivery progress update and seek support for challenges.
- ☐ Support pupils to complete the **Children's Exit Survey** after the programme has been delivered.

### Step 3 (by April)

#### Programme Review & Celebrate

- ☐ Complete **Teacher Feedback Survey** to evaluate and improve the programme.
- ☐ Complete **Principal Feedback Survey** to evaluate and improve the programme.
- ☐ Host a **graduation event**, with participation and support from the school principal and FME.
- ☐ Host a scheduled **debrief meeting** between the school's principal and FME to reflect on the experience, outcomes, and legacy planning enabling schools to deliver the FLM programme independently in future years as part of their whole-school wellbeing strategy.



## ACCREDITED SUNRISE TEACHERS 2024-2025 – Some of our SUNRISE graduates!

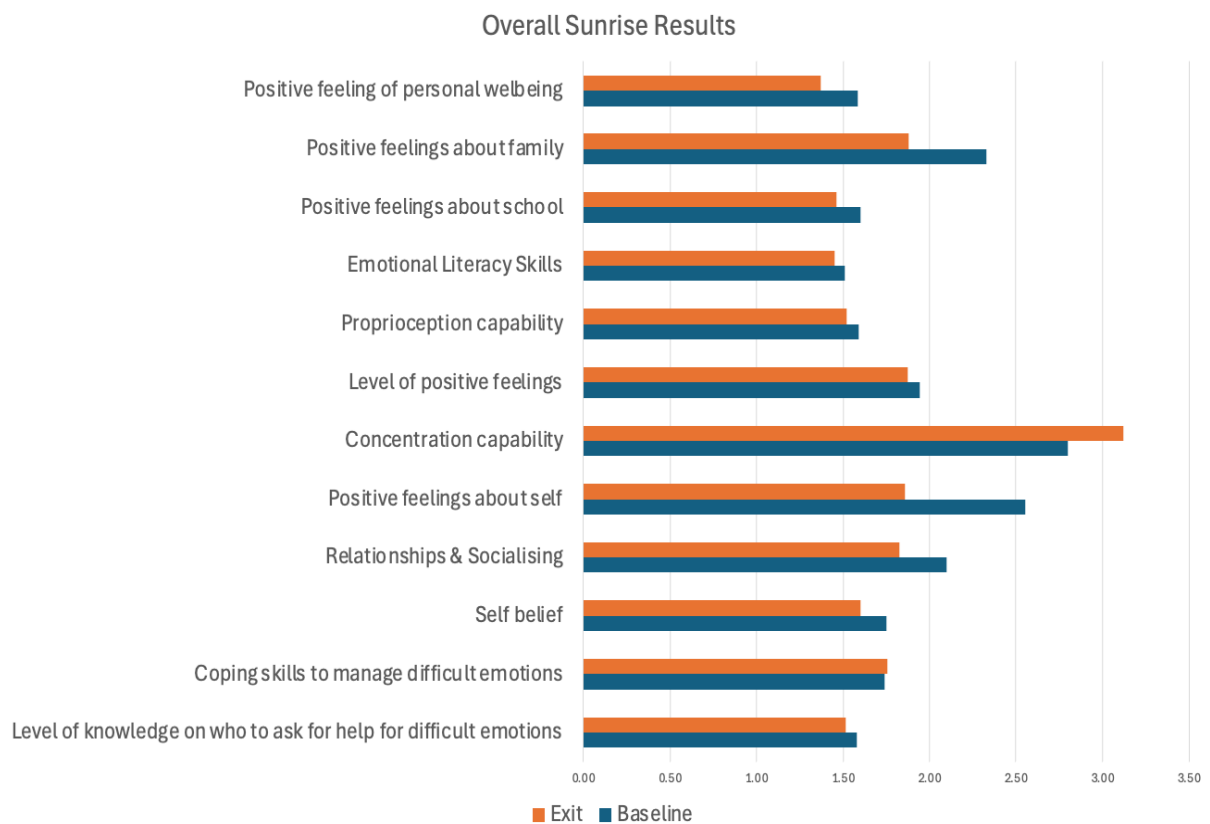








## Measured Impact for Children – Baseline & Exit Survey



| <b>300 Children were asked...What I did not like about the FLM SUNRISE Programme... here are the summative results.</b>                                                           | <b>Children offered this additional unsolicited feedback when asked What I did not like about the FLM SUNRISE Programme...</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Breathing x 11<br>(individual types of breathing techniques were mentioned)                                                                                                       | I loved it all x348                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Songs/Singing x 10                                                                                                                                                                | Longer videos please x 13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Noisy x 6                                                                                                                                                                         | AMBER x 9                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Dancing x 5                                                                                                                                                                       | I wish there were more ambers in different colours.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| The meditation x 5                                                                                                                                                                | I love amber x 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Stop saying over to you x 5<br>energy video                                                                                                                                       | A class set of ambers and Bammers for everyone<br>i want Amber all the time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| The videos x 2                                                                                                                                                                    | We had to share Bamber he is so cute<br>I love it all so much especially cuddling amber<br>I loved Amber, I loved all of it.<br>everything esp getting Bamber to look after                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Hard x 5<br>there are lots of hard steps to do<br>Hard questions<br>it is a bit too hard for me<br>Hard to concentrate<br>some of the words were big and I wasn't what they meant | Rachel & Stephen & being silly x 9<br>I liked it all especially the videos of Rachel and Stephen.<br>I wish that Rachel would come visit us.<br>I liked it all. Stephen and Rachel are funny.<br>I liked it all. I liked Stephen and Rachel.<br>I liked it all. I liked Stephen and Rachel.<br>I liked all the people in the videos. I liked it all.<br>I love when Rachel is silly and want to see more.<br>When they are serious and not silly.<br>I would like there to be more silly behaviour.<br>When they are too serious and not doing funny stuff. |
| Flip Lid x 4<br>I didn't like the brain hug / flip the lid<br>I didn't like the programme when Rachal flips her lid.                                                              | I liked it all and I really liked the songs x 8<br>Make different songs for different moods<br>I would like more music in the lessons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Feelings /Express x 3<br>I did not like having to express bad stuff.<br>being angry<br>I didn't like when it was yellow, I liked the rainbow one                                  | I liked it all and I really liked the songs x 6<br>Make different songs for different moods<br>I would like more music in the lessons.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Being Silly x 4<br>When Rachel tries to saw people open.                                                                                                                          | I got to draw things about myself it was good                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Colouring x 3<br>When I don't get to hold Amber or Bamber<br>That Amber isn't a real dog<br>Didn't like that the dog was called Amber                                             | I liked it all. I really liked the meditation x 2<br>the first time we did the meditating. The second time it was fine and after that good<br>I liked everything especially the breathing x 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| I don't like the movement bit                                                                                                                                                     | I liked the dances                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| worksheets                                                                                                                                                                        | It wasn't long enough! :)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| the Liverpool supporters!                                                                                                                                                         | I would like games we could play.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| It's a little babyish.                                                                                                                                                            | I got to draw things about myself it was good                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                   | I like it I just can't really relax                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                   | Wanted a bigger celebration at the end of the program                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## Children's Feedback Overview

The AMBER Approach is not just felt, it is remembered, used, and loved by the children it supports. When we asked children across multiple schools how AMBER helps them, the volume, warmth, and consistency of their responses were overwhelming.

### What Children Told Us – At a Glance

Across hundreds of responses from children aged 5–11, standout themes emerged again and again:

- **Relaxation & Calm:** The most frequent feedback across every school was that AMBER helps children to *calm down, breathe, and relax* — whether feeling sad, angry, stressed, or overwhelmed.
- **Concentration & Focus:** A significant number of children specifically said that AMBER helps them to *concentrate better* and *stay focused on their learning*, even when they're worried or distracted.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Children described how they use tools like *infinity breathing, brain hugs, anchor people, and movement breaks* to manage difficult feelings and recover quickly.
- **Increased Happiness & Emotional Safety:** Words like *happy, safe, good, joyful, and comfortable* were used repeatedly. Children clearly associate AMBER with feeling better, more supported, and emotionally secure.
- **Self-expression & Help-Seeking:** Many children said that AMBER gives them the confidence to *talk about their feelings, ask adults for help, and understand their emotions*, critical skills for lifelong mental health and resilience.



## Impact of the AMBER Approach at Home: Creating Calm, Connection, and Confidence

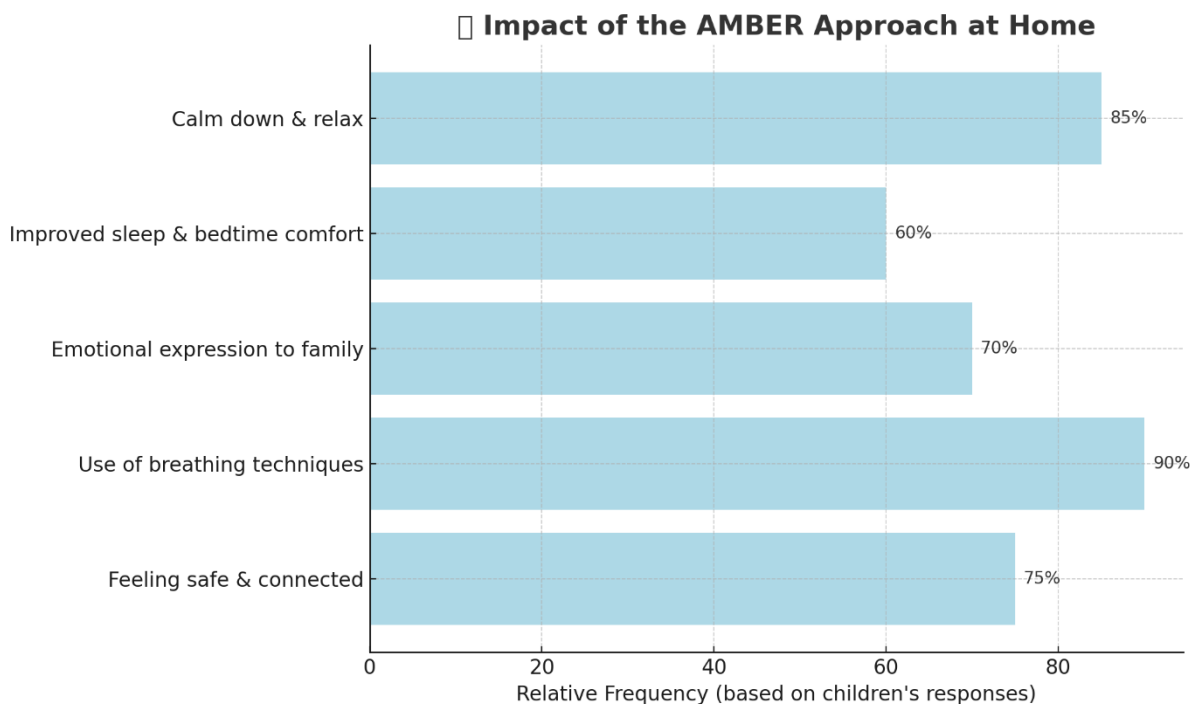
The AMBER Approach doesn't stop at the school gate, it reaches into homes and into children's everyday lives, offering comfort, regulation, and connection at the times when they need it most.

### Top outcomes children reported include:

- **Breathing techniques and calming strategies** were the most frequently used at home.
- Many children also reported **better sleep, feeling safer, and talking more openly to family members** about emotions.

### Frequently Reported Outcomes at Home:

- Emotional calming through breathing, cuddling Amber/Bamber, or quiet time
- Improved sleep routines and bedtime comfort
- Better emotional expression and communication with family
- Use of coping strategies like breathing balls, brain hugs, and finger tapping
- Feeling safe, loved, and less alone



Across all schools, children repeatedly described how AMBER helps them calm down when they are sad or angry, often through familiar routines like cuddling a toy, finding a quiet space, or using breathing techniques. These small but powerful rituals enable children to *self-regulate at home* and *seek comfort from trusted adults*, a vital protective factor for emotional development.

“When I’m sad, I go into my bed and hug my Bamber. It helps me feel happy again.”  
– P2 pupil, Newcastle PS

“I breathe like Amber showed me, then I talk to mummy. That makes me feel safe.”  
– P5 pupil, Drumachose PS

For many families, AMBER offers a shared language of calm, empowering children and carers to manage emotions together. The tools transfer seamlessly from school to home, building *consistency and emotional security*.

This home impact is especially compelling for funders, educators, and public health advocates. It shows that AMBER is not just a classroom intervention, it’s a *whole-child wellbeing programme*, nurturing emotional resilience where it matters most: in the heart of daily life.

## Impact of the AMBER Approach at School: Supporting Emotional Readiness, Learning, and Belonging

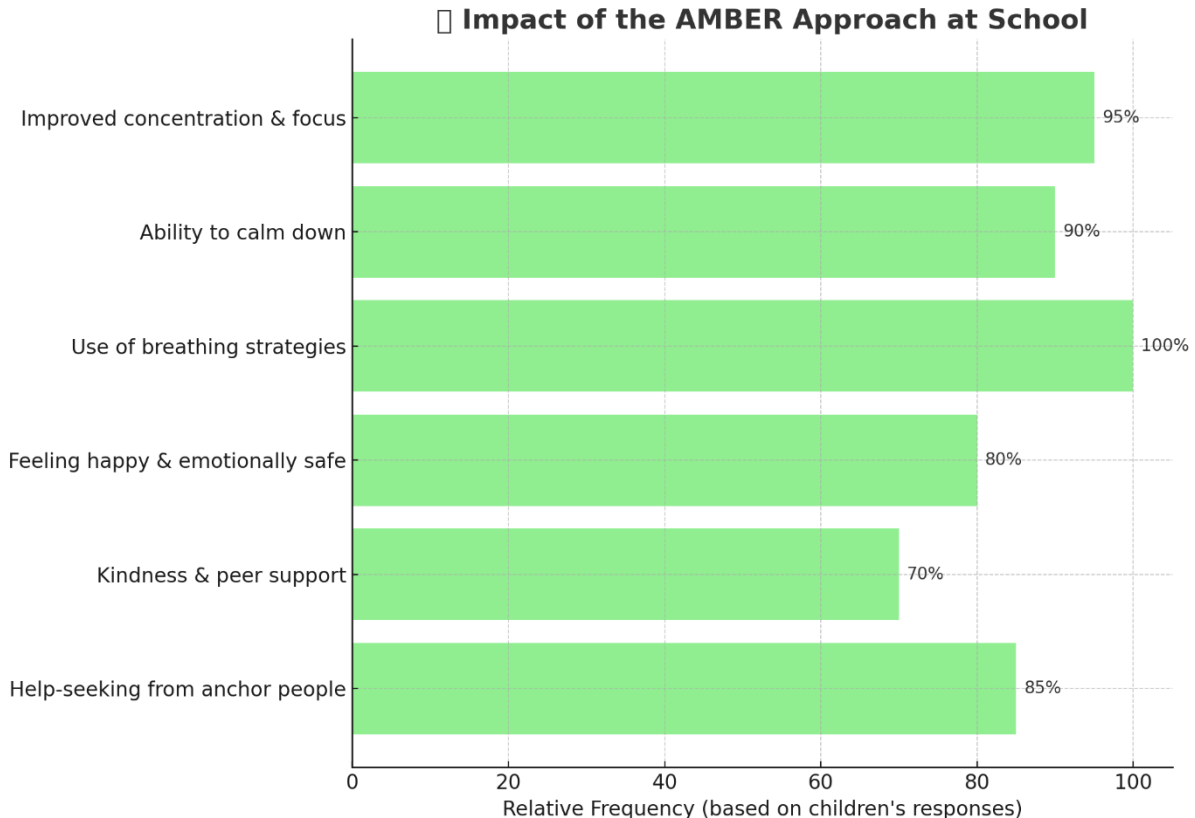
Within the school setting, the AMBER Approach is equipping children with the tools and confidence they need to be *emotionally ready to learn*, interact positively with others, and recover quickly from emotional stress.

### Top outcomes children reported include:

- **Use of breathing strategies** was near-universal.
- A high number of children reported **improved concentration, the ability to calm themselves, and feeling safe and happy.**
- Children frequently identified **anchor people** and described being **kinder and more supportive** with peers.

### Frequently Reported Outcomes at School:

- Improved concentration and learning engagement
- Ability to calm down quickly after frustration, anger, or sadness
- Regular use of breathing strategies to regulate emotions
- Increased happiness, confidence, and emotional safety
- Greater kindness, friendship skills, and peer support
- Recognition of “anchor people” and help-seeking behaviour



The most striking finding? A significant proportion of children spontaneously reported that AMBER helps them to concentrate and stay focused a powerful indicator of the programme's impact on learning outcomes. They also described being more confident asking for help, more able to settle after conflict or stress, and better equipped to engage with their schoolwork.

“When I feel angry, I do my breathing and then I can do my work again.”

– P6 pupil, Springfield PS

“Amber helps me to concentrate and believe I can do it.”

– P5 pupil, Limavady PS

“I do a brain hug when I flip my lid and then I can listen again.”

– P6 pupil, Sacred Heart PS

This consistent feedback across schools confirms that AMBER is more than a wellbeing add-on, it's a *core enabler of classroom learning and inclusion*. Children are being equipped with simple, memorable strategies they can use independently, and the results are visible to staff, peers, and parents.

For schools, funders, and society, this is a win-win: a programme that improves children's mental health *and* their capacity to participate fully in education.

## Standout Testimonials

“When things get too much, I breathe like Amber taught me. Then I can calm down and go back to my work. It makes me feel proud.”

– Age 9

“At home, when I feel sad or mad, I cuddle my Bamber and use my flower breathing. It helps my body feel better inside.”

– Age 7

“I do my brain hug when I flip my lid it helps me to stop shouting and listen again.”

– Age 10

“Amber helps me feel safe and brave. She shows me I can ask for help when I need it.”

– Age 8

“Sometimes I forget my feelings have names. But Amber helps me remember them and tell my mummy.”

– Age 6



## Conclusion Why This Matters

We were amazed by just how many children reported **increased concentration, reduced stress, and better emotional readiness for learning**. In today's education system where emotional wellbeing is directly linked to academic success, this is a major strength.

*“When children feel calm, they can learn. When they feel seen, they can grow. AMBER makes that possible.”*

Not only are children *feeling better*, but they are also *doing better*. They are more focused, more emotionally literate, and more equipped to handle life's challenges. This is not a passive programme it is an *active toolkit for thriving*.

## The Bottom Line: Children Tell Us AMBER Works

This is an intervention that children *remember, love, and apply*, across different schools, different ages, and different challenges. The evidence from children's own voices is clear:

- **Children feel better.**
- **Children focus better.**
- **Children learn better.**

That is what every school wants.  
That is what every funder hopes for.  
That is what every society strives for.  
And that is what **AMBER delivers**.

## Teacher Survey Results

### Teacher Reflection

**“Has the FLM SUNRISE Program been of benefit to the children in my class?”**

*Very beneficial - 72%*

*Somewhat beneficial - 28%*



**“Please select the words that best describes the FLM SUNRISE digital platform...”**



*Easy to use - 86%*

*Just right - 4%*

*Too much - 2%*

*Hard to use - 2%*

*Substantial - 2%*

**“What words that best describe the presentation of the FLM SUNRISE resources you received?”**

*Visually Pleasing - 39%*

*Engaging - 32%*

*Motivational - 15%*

*Encouraging - 2%*

*Attention Grabbing - 2%*

*Bright - 20%*

*Fun - 22%*

*Colourful - 7%*

*Easy to read - 2%*



**“Please select the words that best describe the practicalities of the FLM SUNRISE guidebooks”**



*Easy to use - 78%*

*Too much - 4%*

*Just right - 8%*

*Generous - 4%*

*Substantial - 2%*

## **“Tell us about a difference The FLM SUNRISE program Resource has made for you as a teacher/leader... ”**



“The children have developed a better understanding of their feelings and how to control them . They have thoroughly enjoyed the program and engaged well in all activities. The discussion points that the program created were excellent and the children participated well and enjoyed sharing their own experiences with the class. The children empathise more with each other when they are feeling a certain way and will often use AMBER to help. The children have developed strategies to self-regulate when needed”

“It is a useful on-ramp into PDMU and following a set Program is much more useful and practical. The children enjoyed it and wanted to do it regularly.”

“It has given me all the tools needed to deliver this program at the click of a button and the physical resources have been great, too.  
The children loved AMBER!”

“It has helped me to connect with children better around their emotions and allows me to better support children in their understanding of their emotions and over coming them.”

“Allowed me to see the benefits of giving the children time to have a break for themselves.”



## **“Why do you think The AMBER Approach is a useful teaching tool for teachers for children’s engagement in emotional wellbeing, mental health and resilience?”**

“The videos and resources engaged pupils. They actively used the brain hug and breathing techniques. I often heard 'Don't flip your lid, give your brain a hug'”.

“My class enjoyed the lessons and engaged well with AMBER the dog. The acronym has really stuck with them and they are talking more about emotions.”



“It gives children strategies to deal with their emotions effectively.”



“The songs and activities were age appropriate and explained in a way the children understood what they had to do.”

“It is easy for the children to remember and understand. Each aspect of AMBER has a different approach to helping the children to feel less worried, anxious, etc.”

“It is easy for the children to remember and understand. Each aspect of AMBER has a different approach to helping the children to feel less worried, anxious, etc.”



“The AMBER Approach has been fantastic in my class. I have a class of 12 children but within my class I have a few families that have been through a lot of Trauma and grief. Two sisters in my class, for example have lost their Father. The program has helped the children be more open about their feelings, supporting them to open up more and to express themselves more. I think it is so important to initially have an environment that feels safe, secure and a place of empathy in order for a program like this to be delivered. I have LOVED every moment of the program. The Highlight is of course AMBER and Bamber. They loved the activities and the songs. The videos were excellent. The children and myself loved it and found it so helpful in managing feelings etc.”

**“Tell us about a difference The AMBER Approach has made for a particular child or time in your class/group...”**

“The children loved talking about their anchor person and we used this throughout.”

“One child would often have melt downs. The others remind her to give her brain a hug and she tries. It has helped to regulate her. She also uses the butterfly technique for breathing.”

“A child in my class started the year shutting down anytime they felt any strong emotions. They still struggle with regulation but they are no longer shutting down and are open to suggestions from amber to help”.

“One child who has extreme behaviour needs loves Amber. When he needs to calm down he can be seen doing his breathing and holding Amber to regulate his emotions. He also lifts the books and reads them quietly in the calm corner until he calms down.”

“It has helped a particular child to use the breathing exercises when she is feeling anxious and worried.”

“Allowed them to express emotions and understand feelings that may consume them, e.g. rage.”

“One child had an issue coming into school . Each morning AMBER would greet her at the door. She then took AMBER into the classroom which made her entrance to the class easier.”

“A child going through chemotherapy for leukemia relied heavily on strategies from the AMBER approach. This program has been vital for her in particular.”



# Principal Reflections

### What worked, how did this positively impact the school?

“AMBER was a wonderful addition to our classroom who the children love. The lessons fostered great discussion about how they can use their own superpowers in their daily lives. They loved the videos and the antics of Rachel and Stephen! The anchor unit was particularly powerful in helping them recognise those people in their life who they can go to. The breathing unit was also very powerful in helping them regulate with pupils able to identify what worked well for them. The program helped them listen to and discuss with each other in an open way their worries, concerns, achievements and what is important to them. It helped them identify ways to relax, to cope when in different situations.”

- “The program was bright, colourful and engaging
  - It is pitched at the correct level
- The children especially liked the AMBER dog puppet
  - Teachers embraced the program
  - Program is very well resourced
- Pupils have learned the significance of each letter of AMBER and how it relates to improved mental health and wellbeing.
  - Wonderful graduation ceremony.”

“The SUNRISE program has benefitted our P3 and P4 pupils with understanding their emotions better in an entertaining way through a mix of songs, videos, activities and discussions.

I can see our pupils in both classes more aware of their emotions . I know that when a child in those classes feels overwhelmed they can use breathing techniques to regulate themselves. It also has helped the teachers and myself feel able to assist the pupils with their well being and the training/resources has allowed us to do this.”

# Principal Reflections

“FLM is a fun and engaging program to help and to support children. It has had a huge impact this year with P4. The children will openly and confidently talk about their anchor people and have learned lots of different ways to make their bodies feel relaxed. It fits in very nicely alongside the PATHS programme.”

“AMBER and Bamber proved to be big hits with all the children. They looked forward to their two sessions per week. Overall, the program reduced pupil anxiety, improved self esteem and helped the children learn a diverse array of coping skills- five star breathing, positive self talk and growth mindset.”

“A strong, impactful mental health program such as FME has created a more supportive and inclusive learning environment in our school. The children have loved welcoming AMBER and Bamber into our school and we feel the coping skills and resilience taught in the lessons will enable to be better to navigate challenges that they may face in life.”

“The AMBER approach has been such a benefit to our school. The training was so relevant and practical and both the teacher and the pupils have loved all the sessions. So much so that several parents bought their own little Bamber pups for their children as Christmas presents. Thank you so much for giving us a opportunity to avail of this program- we can't wait to use it again next year!”

“The children just loved AMBER and Bamber and having them in the class. Children enjoyed relaxing and learning different breathing techniques, program is fantastic!”

## Sunrise Programme: Summative Impact Review

### Supporting Emotional Wellbeing, Confidence, and Connection in Primary School Pupils

The Sunrise Programme was delivered across 14 primary schools to strengthen children's emotional wellbeing, self-awareness, and resilience. These schools represented diverse contexts, from urban to rural, from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas to more stable communities. Despite these variations, the programme consistently demonstrated a profound and measurable impact on the emotional literacy and overall wellbeing of participating pupils.

#### A Foundation of Strength – And Room for Growth

Across all schools, pupils entered the programme with encouraging levels of social confidence and positive peer relationships. Most children reported feeling liked, accepted, and capable of getting along well with others. Statements such as *"I am likeable," "I get on with others,"* and *"I know who I can ask for help"* consistently scored positively at baseline.

However, emotional literacy, the capacity to recognise, name, and regulate emotions was an area where many pupils showed significant potential for development. Even where external relationships were strong, pupils often lacked the inner tools to make sense of their emotional experiences or manage difficult feelings. Stress and anxiety were already common experiences, with high baseline responses to items like *"I have felt worried, nervous or stressed lately."*

#### Building Confidence, Language, and Coping Skills

The core strength of the Sunrise Programme lay in its ability to enhance pupils' self-awareness, emotional regulation, and belief in themselves. Repeatedly, post-programme data and qualitative reflections highlighted improvements in:

- Emotional expression: Pupils gained confidence in naming their feelings and recognising emotional states in themselves and others.
- Self-efficacy: Increases in statements like *"I believe I can do things"* indicated growing confidence in their ability to face challenges.
- Help-seeking behaviours: Children became more willing to reach out when they needed support, especially from trusted adults.
- Calm and regulation: Techniques introduced through the programme helped children feel more in control when navigating overwhelming emotions.

These shifts were particularly valuable in settings where children began with low wellbeing scores or signs of stress at home, offering an important early intervention with long-term potential.

## **Children’s Voices: Joy, Comfort, and Emotional Connection**

As part of the evaluation, children were explicitly invited to share what they *did not* like about the programme. However, what emerged was a powerful and unexpected pattern: the vast majority used this opportunity to express enjoyment, affection, and emotional connection.

- 348 children simply wrote “*I loved it all.*”
- 60 children shared additional positive comments or asked for more of what they enjoyed (e.g., longer videos, more breathing techniques, more AMBER and Bamber).
- Only 65 children shared something they didn’t like.

This overwhelming 408:65 ratio of positive to critical feedback suggests not just satisfaction, but deep emotional engagement. Children found joy, comfort, and personal meaning in the characters and activities, a rare level of resonance for an emotional education programme.

## **Multimodality, Individual Preferences, and Peer Influence**

A small number of children noted they didn’t enjoy certain activities such as dancing, meditation, or particular breathing exercises, or found some content “hard” or “babyish.” These reflect individual preferences, consistent with the programme’s intentional multimodal design. Through breathing, movement, music, stories, colour, and touch, the Sunrise Programme offered multiple entry points for engagement. This approach affirmed that not every child will connect with every modality, and that is by design.

Some critical comments appeared to cluster within particular classrooms, pointing to the influence of peer dynamics. In group settings, children may model responses after their peers, which highlights the importance of gathering feedback in a way that allows for individual expression. It also reinforces the role of facilitators in being attentive to class culture.

## **Teacher Facilitation and Language Development**

There were notable differences in how children’s feedback was recorded. Some gave one-word answers like “no” or “nothing,” while others wrote full reflective sentences. This suggests that some teachers used the feedback activity as an opportunity to support sentence formation and expressive writing, an unintended developmental benefit of the programme.

## **AMBER and Bamber: Emotional Companions and Anchors**

Children across participating schools expressed deep emotional attachment to the programme's core characters, AMBER and Bamber. These characters were more than symbols, they became emotional companions, offering consistency, comfort, and connection.

*"I loved it all so much, especially cuddling Amber."  
"When I'm sad, I go into bed and cuddle my Bamber."*

These responses reflect how children find emotional grounding through physical comfort, imaginative play, and relational connection, all of which are embodied in the AMBER characters.

## **Colour-Coded Emotional Language and Internalisation**

One of the programme's most effective symbolic strategies was the use of colour-coded emotional language, designed to give children a visual, age-appropriate vocabulary for expressing emotions.

*"I didn't like yellow. I liked rainbow."*

This child's comment, referencing their emotional experiences during different themed weeks, demonstrates how children internalised this language, even those who may not yet have the verbal tools for complex emotional states.

## **Everyday Impact: Home and School Use**

Children shared how they use AMBER to support their emotional wellbeing both at home and in school:

### **At home:**

- To sleep better
- To express feelings
- To cope with sadness
- To manage sibling conflicts
- To self-soothe using breathing and cuddles



### **At school:**

- To concentrate and complete work
- To calm down when upset or stressed
- To regulate big feelings
- To reach out to adults for help

*“AMBER helps me concentrate when I don't feel like doing work.”*

*“I go to my happy place to relax when I feel sad.”*

*“She helps me do work nice and neatly.”*

These statements confirm that the skills and tools from the programme are sticking, transferring, and making a real difference.

### **What Regulation Really Means & Why It Matters**

Children frequently reported that AMBER helped them focus, concentrate, and feel ready to learn. This affirms an essential educational truth: regulation is not just about being calm, it's about being cognitively available to learn.

*“I do my breathing when I'm stuck on a question.”*

*“It helps me to relax so I can do my work.”*

This insight has major implications for teaching practice. True regulation supports thinking, focus, and engagement, not just quietness. Children who feel safe and supported are more capable learners.

### **And in some of the most poignant feedback:**

*“AMBER relaxes me to be able to talk. The best thing for me is snuggling Amber and Bamber when I have to express about my Daddy in Heaven or my feelings.”*

In this sentence, a child articulated the programme's deepest purpose: to create a safe, nurturing space for emotional expression, grief, and healing. AMBER becomes a bridge between inner experience and outer safety, especially for children living with bereavement, hidden loss, or unspoken hurt.

## Teacher and Principal Reflections

The combined feedback from school staff provides a rich, affirming picture of the programme's impact:

- Teachers observed calmer classrooms, stronger peer relationships, and greater emotional openness.
- Many staff felt better equipped to support pupils' emotional needs.
- Some reflected on how the approach benefited their own wellbeing.
- Principals noted an emerging culture of cohesion and emotional awareness across school communities.

*“The programme helped them listen to and discuss with each other in an open way their worries, concerns, achievements and what is important to them.”*

Rather than being seen as a “bolt-on,” the programme often became a valued and embedded part of school life, integrated into class routines, assemblies, and parent communications.

*“Fresh Little Minds Sunrise encourages positive caring relationships and teaches pupils about how to learn and grow; and what strategies they can use in their everyday lives.”*

There was a shared desire for ongoing access to resources, refreshers, and further training, affirming a view of the programme as a foundation for long-term cultural change.

## Conclusion: Real, Relational, and Ready for More

The Sunrise Programme helped children across a wide range of schools build on their existing strengths while addressing key areas like emotional regulation, resilience, and self-expression. Children left the programme feeling more confident, connected, and emotionally equipped, both at home and in school.

With continued investment and consistent implementation, this work has the power to transform emotional development, equip teachers, and support school cultures that prioritise empathy, safety, and connection.

## Recommendations by children for teachers

### 1. Honour Individual Preferences

Provide choice for children to engage with the elements that suit them best.

### 2. Avoid Imposing Your Preferred Modality

Be mindful of favouring the parts *you* like most. Trust the variety built into the programme to meet diverse needs.

### 3. Celebrate the Power of Silliness and Playfulness

Overall, children loved the silly energy of Stephen and Rachel. Use humour and play to create safety, connection, and joy.

### 4. Create Equitable Access to AMBER and Bamber

Use rotas or systems to ensure all children get time with these beloved emotional anchors.

### 5. Use Feedback as a Literacy Opportunity (Gently)

Encourage sentence building and reflection, but without pressure. Let feedback be expressive, not evaluative.

### 6. Watch for Peer Influence in Group Feedback

Collect feedback individually where possible to ensure authentic responses.

### 7. Strengthen Use of Colour as Emotional Language

Keep using and reinforcing the colour-emotion links. They are helping children articulate feelings they may not have words for.

### 8. Acknowledge When Regulation Feels Vulnerable

Honour when children find certain parts hard or confronting, especially expressive activities. Create safety, not pressure.

### 9. Adapt Delivery Style to Class Culture

Some groups love silliness, others prefer calm. Tune in and flex where needed, while keeping core programme intentions intact.

### 10. Close with Celebration and Reflection

Ensure "AMBER's Rainbow Week" or the programme's ending feels meaningful. Celebrate growth and give children a sense of closure.

The Sunrise Programme is more than a wellbeing intervention. It is a developmental framework that gently scaffolds children's emotional growth, learning readiness, and capacity for self-expression. The children's voices show us that they don't just enjoy AMBER, they *trust AMBER*, and in that trust lies the heart of the programme's success.

## Recommendations by Teachers & Principals

### ***Strategic & Curriculum Integration:***

- **Cross-Curricular AMBER:** Systematically identify and integrate AMBER principles and activities into the school day e.g., “Anchor” with the teacher on arrival, “Move” breaks during literacy, “Breathe” before math tests, “Express” emotions through art or character analysis in reading, “Relax” during quiet reading time)
- **Policy Integration:** Incorporate the AMBER approach explicitly into school well-being policies, behaviour management plans, and strategic development documents.

### ***Foster a Whole-School AMBER Culture:***

- **Consistent Language:** Ensure all staff, from teachers to support staff, use consistent AMBER language and cues when discussing emotions and coping strategies with students.
- **Staff Well-being & Training:** Provide ongoing professional development for all staff on the AMBER approach, and trauma-informed practices, emphasising the importance of staff modelling AMBER principles for their own well-being.
- **Dedicated “Calm Corners”:** Establish and equip designated “AMBER reset zones” in every classroom and outdoor areas, providing resources for students to independently utilise AMBER strategies (e.g., sensory tools, breathing cue cards).

### ***Empower Pupil Ownership:***

- **Student AMBER Leaders:** Train older students to become “AMBER Ambassadors” who can lead activities, model strategies, and support younger peers in applying the approach.
- **Student-Led Activities:** Encourage and support student-led initiatives, such as mindful movement sessions, gratitude sharing, or peer-led “Express” circles.

### ***Enhance Home-School Connection:***

- **Parent Workshops & Resources:** Host workshops for parents to introduce them to the AMBER approach and provide practical tips and resources for reinforcing these strategies at home (e.g., “AMBER at Home” newsletters, simple printable guides).
- **Share AMBER Successes:** Regularly communicate with parents about how students are using AMBER in school, celebrating successes and sharing examples of resilience.

### ***Develop Accessible Resources:***

- **Visual Cues & Tools:** Create and widely display visual aids (posters, charts, cue cards) illustrating each AMBER step.

## Conclusion

The Sunrise Programme has demonstrated meaningful and measurable impact, not only in how children feel and function in the classroom, but in how they carry emotional regulation strategies into their everyday lives. This is more than curriculum compliance; it is deep developmental change.

The evidence affirms that when children are given trusted emotional tools, like AMBER, Bamber, colour symbolism, and breathing strategies, they begin to internalise emotional safety, resilience, and agency. Teachers observed more regulated, reflective learners. Children described finding joy, calm, and connection in their daily experiences.

Perhaps most powerfully, the overwhelming positive feedback from children including 348 who simply wrote “I loved it all”, speaks to a rare emotional resonance with a structured programme. The Sunrise approach is not only enjoyable; it is effective, empowering, and remembered.

This report also reveals important insights for future delivery:

- Emotional literacy and physical self-awareness remain areas for growth.
- Peer dynamics can shape feedback, reminding us to create space for authentic individual voice.
- Symbolic and sensory tools like AMBER and Bamber are not just nice-to-haves; they are anchors for emotional regulation and expression.

Above all, this work confirms a fundamental truth: emotional safety is the foundation for learning. The Sunrise Programme creates classrooms where children are not just present, they are ready. Ready to learn, to feel, to express, and to grow.

Sustained investment in early emotional education is not only strategic, but also essential. To embed these gains long term, continued support for teachers, resource availability, and school-wide integration of the AMBER Approach will be key.

In the words of one pupil:

*“AMBER helps me talk when I’m sad.  
I go to my happy place and then I can do my work.”*

That is the impact we must continue to build upon.

The Sunrise Programme is more than a wellbeing intervention. It is a developmental framework that gently scaffolds children’s emotional growth, learning readiness, and capacity for self-expression. The children’s voices show us that they don’t just enjoy AMBER - they trust AMBER. And in that trust lies the heart of the programme’s success.



