



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Transport Research Series

Peer Road Safety Education in Scottish Secondary Schools

Transport Research
Planning Group



social
research

**PEER ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION IN SCOTTISH
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Susan Pringle and Diane Sudlow/East House Research

**Scottish Executive Social Research
2005**

This report is available on the Scottish Executive Social Research website only www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch.

The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not necessarily represent those of the Department or Scottish Ministers.

© Crown Copyright 2005

Limited extracts from the text may be produced provided the source is acknowledged. For more extensive reproduction, please write to the Chief Researcher at Office of Chief Researcher, 4th Floor West Rear, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh EH1 3DG

1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND	1
1.3 AIMS & OBJECTIVES	1
1.4 METHODOLOGY	2
1.4.1 Literature review	2
1.4.2 Contact with Road Safety Officers	2
1.4.3 Interviews with Local Authority Advisers	3
1.4.4 Interviews with teachers and pupils	3
1.4.5 Interviews with peer education specialists	3
2.1 WHAT IS PEER EDUCATION?	4
2.2 EXAMPLES OF PEER EDUCATION	4
2.2.1 Projects administered in schools by external bodies	4
2.2.2 Advisers' experience of peer education	5
2.2.3 Schools' experience of peer education	6
2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF PEER EDUCATION	7
2.3.1 Recruitment of peer educators	8
2.3.2 Training of peer educators	8
2.3.3 Support for peer educators	10
2.3.4 Management of peer education	12
2.4 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF PEER EDUCATION	13
2.4.1 Perceived strengths	13
2.4.2 Perceived weaknesses	15
2.5 THE VIABILITY OF PEER EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS	16
2.6 EXAMPLES OF PEER EDUCATION AND ROAD SAFETY	16
2.7 FEASIBILITY OF PEER EDUCATION IN RSE	18
2.7.1 Advisers' perspective	18
2.7.2 Teachers' perspective	18
2.7.3 RSOs' perspective	18
2.7.4 Time allocation	19
2.7.5 Potential links with JRSO work already going on in primary schools	21
2.7.6 Training and support required for participants in peer education schemes	21
RSOs' requirements	21
Teaching Staff	21
Pupils	22
2.7.7 Expected response and take-up from schools and pupils	23
2.7.8 Introduction and management of road safety peer education schemes	23
2.7.9 Support for peer education schemes	24
2.7.10 Summary of findings	24
3.1 PEER EDUCATION SCHEMES	26

3.1.1	Elements of peer education	26
3.1.2	Sustainability of peer education schemes	26
	Role of RSS in peer education	27
	S2-S4 pupils as road safety peer educators	28
	S5-S6 pupils as peer educators	29
	ANNEX 1: DATABASES CONSULTED FOR LITERATURE SEARCH	30
	ANNEX 2: RSO INTERVIEWS	31
	ANNEX 3: ADVISER INTERVIEWS	32
	ANNEX 4: PUPIL AND TEACHER INTERVIEWS	33
	ANNEX 5: SCHOOL CASE STUDIES	36
5.1	School A	36
5.2	School B	39
5.3	School C	42
5.4	School D	44

SUMMARY

The Scottish Executive commissioned East House Research to undertake research to explore the feasibility of using peer education in road safety education (RSE) in secondary schools in Scotland. A range of methodologies was used: these comprised structured interviews (with road safety personnel, teachers, pupils, peer education specialists and other education personnel), case studies in four schools and a literature review.

Peer Education was defined as young people imparting information to others of a similar age. Peer Education was found to be used with considerable variation in a number of educational contexts. Peer education in secondary schools was used to cover topics in health and personal education, and was also used to help younger pupils with specific academic subjects or with behavioural problems. Some schools ran their own peer education programmes while other schools hosted peer education programmes that were run by outside agencies. A range of pre-requisites of successful peer education programmes was identified.

Peer education made demands on teachers' and pupils' time, and issues of training, timetabling and management of the scheme were highlighted as potential problems in the initiation of any new scheme. Evaluations of peer education schemes identified that the educators were the main beneficiaries of such programmes. The educators were seen to increase in knowledge and confidence as a result of taking part. Benefits to the target group of pupils were harder to quantify and no research had indicated that peer education was more effective than traditional educational methods at informing the target group of pupils.

Most interviewees felt that it would be possible to integrate RSE into existing peer education programmes, although it was felt that this would be difficult where schemes were voluntary and content was driven by the target pupils' needs. Given that peer education was not demonstrably more effective than other forms of transmitting knowledge to a target group, it is questionable whether peer education would have added value in contexts where resources and programmes already exist for covering RSE. However, the finding that peer education holds benefits for the educators suggests that it might be a useful means of engaging involvement of those groups of pupils identified as hard to target in road safety programmes. In secondary schools, the stages S3-S6 and their teachers have been recognised as hard to reach by those engaged in RSE, and it is suggested that pupils from these stages might be recruited as peer educators. Interviewees agreed that, to succeed, peer education RSE should be linked to existing programmes, rather than developed as a discrete one-issue package. For example, it might be covered within a programme that dealt with a range of issues to do with risk assessment and personal safety. All teacher interviewees indicated a willingness to include RS in existing peer education schemes. This suggests enthusiasm in those who are already involved in peer education to accommodate another topic in the programme.

It is recommended that Road Safety Scotland (RSS) (formerly the Scottish Road Safety Campaign) develop a pilot peer education programme, using S3-S6 pupils as educators of younger pupils. Training, resources and support frameworks for participants would all have to be developed. Issues of recruitment and timetabling would also have to be addressed. RSS should attempt to link with some peer education schemes already in operation to integrate RSE as an element of existing programmes. This would allow road safety materials and systems to be used and evaluated as part of established peer education schemes. Evaluations should explore benefits to both the educators and the target groups of pupils.

CHAPTER 1: THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

The Transport and Planning Research Team, on behalf of Road Safety Scotland (RSS) (formerly the Scottish Road Safety Campaign), commissioned East House Research to explore, the application of peer education in road safety education (RSE) in Scottish secondary schools.

1.2 Background

RSS was founded in 1985. Funded by the Scottish Executive, its remit is to develop and co-ordinate road safety (RS) initiatives and campaigns across Scotland. The RSS works closely with all local authority and police road safety units in an attempt to ensure a co-ordinated approach to road safety in Scotland.

RSS produces a range of educational resources targeted at primary, secondary and pre-school pupils as well as those pupils with Additional Support (or Special Educational) Needs. Many of these resources are linked to national educational guidelines making it easier for teachers to incorporate RSE into the classroom.

Research carried out in 2002¹ concluded that:

For many pupils and teachers “Road Safety” was not seen as relevant, raising as it did memories of primary school and learning the Green Cross Code by rote

One of its recommendations was that peer education, whereby older pupils might work with younger ones, could benefit all participants. Peer education would help present road safety as relevant if older pupils could endorse some of its messages and help younger pupils recognise these as useful and appropriate.

Peer education has been used in secondary schools when dealing with topics such as bullying, drugs education and Health Education. It has been suggested that some young people are more receptive to these messages when they come from their peers or equals. The website of the former Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) contains many examples of peer education.² Peer education relies on shared understandings and a willingness to learn.

1.3 Aims & Objectives

¹ Pringle, S. *Research into RSE in S3 to S6 in Scottish Secondary Schools* , unpublished report for the RSS

² www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk

Three main objectives underpinned the research:

- To conduct a review of current research evidence relating to peer education in secondary schools.
- To highlight good practice in the use of peer education in Scottish secondary schools.
- To provide recommendations to RSS on developing road safety peer education in Scottish secondary schools.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology adopted is set out below:

1.4.1 Literature review

A literature review was conducted using a range of sources. Three interviewees provided hard copies of documents that they had used or developed in conjunction with their own peer education work. The Scottish Executive provided an extensive list of sources of data on peer education and finally, a trawl was carried out of electronic databases, using a search engine. Annex 1 lists the sources that were used in the literature search.

1.4.2 Contact with Road Safety Officers

Telephone interviews were held with Road Safety Officers (RSOs) in nine local authorities. The locations served by the Road Safety (RS) units were: four predominantly urban, two rural and three combining rural and urban. The local authorities were distributed throughout Scotland, from industrial conurbations to small isolated communities.

All participating RSOs were contacted and informed about the research and given an outline of points to be covered in a pre-arranged telephone interview. Six of the nine RSOs stated that they would be discussing the peer education situation with their colleagues prior to the telephone interview.

One RSO requested that the interview take place immediately.

The *aide-memoire* for the interviews and list of areas from which the interviewees were drawn is given in Annex 2.

1.4.3 Interviews with Local Authority Advisers

Five local authority Education Advisers were approached and invited to take part in the research. The Advisers were chosen from authorities to reflect a range of geographic and demographic features in Scotland. One was based on one of the Scottish Island authorities, one was based in a large rural community; and three were based in urban authorities. Pre-arranged telephone interviews were carried out. A copy of the *aide-memoire* that was used for these interviews is attached as Annex 2, as is a list of the local authority areas represented.

1.4.4 Interviews with teachers and pupils

On the basis of recommendations made by Advisers and/or RSOs, four secondary schools with a history of peer education were approached and asked if they would take part in the research. This involved researchers conducting focus groups with pupils and interviewing appropriate members of staff in connection with peer education. Four schools were selected and agreed to take part. The schools were chosen so that the sample would cover a range of geographic settings and socio-economic factors. A copy of the interview schedules for interviewees is attached as Annex 3.

School A was a city centre school, with 978 pupils on its roll. It had been operating a peer education scheme for four years, through its city council peer education project.

School B was located in the suburbs of a northern Scottish city. It drew a mix of pupils from rural and urban backgrounds. At the time of the research, it had a roll of 835 students.

School C, in the heart of the former Strathclyde region, had a roll of 760 pupils and a catchment that drew from areas of social deprivation.

School D was a mixed secondary school in a Scottish University town. With a roll of 1,850, it drew its pupils from a mix of urban and rural communities, representing a wide range of socio-economic conditions. The school was split-site.

1.4.5 Interviews with peer education specialists

During the research, four different peer education specialists were identified who were willing to share their knowledge and experience. Three of these specialists had involvement on a day-to-day basis with peer educators, through training of peer educators or facilitation of peer education programmes. One of these, a community education professional, worked for a council-run project, which supported peer education in two secondary schools and some of their cluster primaries. Another peer educator managed a national peer education programme on behalf of the Scottish Executive. The third had set up and run a regional peer education health project. The fourth member of this group of interviewees was involved in peer education through administration and oversight of peer education schemes. His work in the education department of his authority involved him in developing a city-wide peer support project, which covered a range of contexts. Open-ended interviews were held with the peer education specialists.

CHAPTER 2: FINDINGS

2.1 What is peer education?

There is a range of understandings of peer education.

A useful definition is provided by the NHS Health Development Agency, which has been involved in peer education projects in social education.

In simple terms, peer education is young people imparting information to others of a similar age. It is not a new approach and there is considerable variation in the ways that it is used - one-off sessions, theatre presentations, conferences and a series of sessions. Peer education approaches can be adopted for a range of issues, including bullying, drugs education and sex education³.

2.2 Examples of peer education

Many examples of peer education were found in PSE and Health Education settings.

2.2.1 Projects administered in schools by external bodies

The Peer Education Project, based in Dundee, set out to reduce the risk to young people through alcohol and drug abuse. It involved S2 pupils working with P7 pupils in cluster primary schools, informing the younger pupils about the risks involved with drugs and alcohol. The project was subjected to an evaluation by an independent agency⁴. The findings were that participant schools and the schools' neighbouring communities valued the project. It was found that there was potential for increasing the scope of the project to cover wider community issues. In addition, it was established that the peer educators benefitted in a range of ways from their involvement in the project. Their role as volunteers and active citizens had been recognised by others. The evaluation found that there were benefits to the pupils who had been targets in the peer education programme. They were found to be more confident and to have a greater awareness of the risks of drugs and alcohol. It was also concluded that they were better at handling and resisting peer pressure than were pupils of their age who had not been involved in the process of peer education.

Forth Valley's Health Promotion Department developed programmes of peer support in secondary schools across the Board area. It chose smoking prevention as the theme of its peer education programme. An evaluation of the programme, where senior (S5/S6) pupils worked with junior (S1/S2 pupils) found that the peer-led smoking programme had been successful from the point of view of both the educators and key members of school staff. However, it concluded that⁵:

³ NHS Health Development Agency *Wired for Health* website <http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/home>

⁴ Connor, A. (2005) *Learning what works: Young people, Well-being and Citizenship. Review of the model developed by the Peer Education project in Dundee*, Glasgow

⁵ T.A.S.C. Agency (2000) *Evaluation of a peer-led smoking education programme for schools*, Edinburgh

Despite the belief that a peer led programme would improve the quality of the smoking education offered, junior pupils do not indicate the kinds of shift in attitudes or beliefs in smoking that the programme set out to achieve.

The project did not compare traditional teacher-led with peer-led education but noted that:

In terms of Health Promotion staff perspectives on more traditional forms of delivering Health Education, there is recognition that there may be little difference in terms of material/content of both “traditional” or “peer-led” initiatives, but that the key issue in the method of delivering the message and the ability of younger pupils to engage with the issue in ways which might impact on knowledge, attitude or beliefs.

Both projects described above had the aim of peer educating younger pupils about dangers to their health through drugs, smoking or alcohol. The Dundee project was judged to have achieved its aims, while the Forth Valley project had not. It is not known whether it was the subject matter, the age group targeted or another aspect of the programme that led to this difference.

2.2.2 Advisers' experience of peer education

Interviews held with local authority Advisers yielded a range of information on peer education projects. In one of the authorities, peer education was taking place mostly within PHSE, in informal settings, often in partnership with Community Education. This authority had eight mainstream secondary schools, one of which had developed a peer led health education programme, and there were plans to take this forward in three other secondary schools.

In another authority, peer education was part of its developing health programme, taking place in both secondary and primary schools, with one scheme per “cluster” group. Some initiatives were unique to P7, such as mediation and transition to secondary. In some initiatives, links were set up between S1 and P7. Some long established work in this authority such as drug education took place using peer support. In this authority, one of the aims of peer education was to “convert bystander apathy to bystander empathy”. Emotional wellbeing was taken as the central theme to cover a range of issues. The adviser from this authority cautioned against confusing peer education with peer support.

An Adviser in a third authority believed that peer education could range from informal settings, such as drop in lunchtime clubs, through to formal schemes such as paired reading. These could support and then educate young people as required, with the potential to help both educators and their target group. This Adviser believed that peer education centred on a need for approval and acceptance so it would be important to involve educators who had credibility with other pupils. In this authority, there was no scheme that ran across the authority but one secondary school had implemented its own peer education programme. This involved senior pupils (S6) working with younger pupils in the school. This school was followed up and a case study carried out.

Adviser interviewees identified the following benefits of peer education:

- It helped the youngsters trained as peer educators to develop confidence. This would support pupils in work on citizenship, and provide skills and provide opportunities for growth.
- Youngsters at the receiving end had a wider knowledge base from which to tackle problems.
- Teaching staff found it helpful particularly in areas that they were unsure about, as input from pupils could enhance teachers' current knowledge of a topic.

Advisers identified some potential problems in the implementation of peer education programmes. The main problems centred round time available in schools, and these would have an impact on issues such as:

- Training of participants
- Providing peer educators with the skills to deal with potentially sensitive areas
- Good practice guidelines
- Timetabling and articulation with curriculum
- Adaptation of staff members to roles of pupils as "teachers"
- Monitoring or supervision
- Perception of peer education as equally important as orthodox school activities
- Costs involved

The advisers interviewed provided an overview of the main issues connected with peer education. A range of benefits was identified, accruing to all participants (pupil educators, their teachers and the pupils in receipt of the peer education). In the Advisers' experience, there were a number of pre-requisites of successful peer education, and these would make demands on staff and pupil time. Training and adequate supervision or monitoring were the main issues identified. The Advisers saw no reason why peer education should not be applied to RSE but recommended that it should not be developed as a single issue peer education programme, but instead covered within a programme that dealt with a range of issues to do with risk assessment and personal safety.

2.2.3 Schools' experience of peer education

Four schools where peer education was practised were visited in connection with the project. Each school used peer education in different ways. Details of the schools and visits to them are given in Annex 5, but the main features are summarised below.

In School A, the scheme involved pupils from S2 visiting cluster primary schools and working with the P7 pupils in a drug and alcohol education programme. The scheme was managed by a group of community education professionals and the schools had no direct involvement with training and administration of the peer education scheme.

School B operated a number of peer involvement schemes, which covered:

- Peer Support
- Peer Assessment

- Buddying
- Paired Learning
- Peer Education

Buddying, paired learning and peer education took place on a regular basis, and the scheme was administered and managed from within the school.

School C operated both paired reading and buddying systems. The buddying system involved S6 pupils befriending S1 pupils through a formal scheme. Its schemes were managed and administered by teaching staff within the school, but pupils were taken outwith the school to be given initial training and the training team included members of this authority's Educational Psychology Department. The paired reading scheme extended to the large number of pupils in the school who had literacy problems. It was found that even 15 minutes' supported reading per week was beneficial. Older pupils, from S4 upward supported poor readers. This scheme could also be extended to support in other areas, and other academic subjects.

In School D, the peer education scheme under review had been running since 1993 when the Principal Teacher of Behaviour Support had initiated it. In her work with pupils with behavioural support needs, she had discovered that many of them had learning problems and that if they were given appropriate help with their problem subjects, their behaviour improved. As she was not equipped to teach all of the academic subjects (such as Physics, Maths, Latin, English and French) with which her pupils had problems, she recruited pupils with strengths in these subjects to support their learning. S5 pupils were recruited at the end of the summer term and taken for a day's training at the start of their sixth year.

Many examples of peer education were found to exist: their functions, target groups and recruitment varied, and none of the schemes identified by Advisers or operating in schools covered road safety. The following sections explore the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of generic peer education schemes. Section 3 below explores the potential for, and desirability of, tackling RSE through peer education.

2.3 Characteristics of peer education

Certain elements were found to be common to all successful peer education schemes.

The manager of a Scotland-wide peer education project set out the following pre-requisites of any successful peer education scheme:

- Conduct a needs analysis or needs assessment, to make sure that the need is real and not assumed.
- Establish aims and objectives of the programme.
- Develop appropriate selection and recruitment procedures for participants.
- Establish a framework for involvement of all participants.
- Devise an appropriate training programme.
- Assess support needs and cost implications.
- Establish where the main lead will come from and provide appropriate support.
- Monitor and evaluate the project.

- Develop a framework for deployment of peer educators and their roles.

This interviewee also observed that it was important for the momentum for peer education to have come from the pupils working as educators.

As reported above, the Advisers who were interviewed provided an overview of the main issues connected with peer education. They identified a number of pre-requisites of successful peer education, which would make demands on staff and pupil time. Training and adequate supervision or monitoring were the main issues identified by Advisers.

Teachers agreed that issues of recruitment, training and timetabling were important to schools taking part in peer education.

This section will now explore the following issues identified as key to successful peer education:

- Recruitment of peer educators
- Training of peer educators
- Support for peer educators
- Management of scheme

2.3.1 Recruitment of peer educators

The schemes encountered in the schools visited varied in their recruitment practices. In one school, potential peer educators were asked to volunteer to take part and were then subject to a selection procedure. In the remaining three schools, all pupils who volunteered to take part were accepted as peer educators.

The school in which peer educators were selected was the only school to offer a specific programme (drugs and alcohol education) to be covered by the educators. In the other three schools, programmes were offered on an *ad hoc* basis, the content depending on the needs of the target pupils and the strengths of the educators.

There was found to be no difference in educator dropout rates between the two types of scheme. In three of the four schemes, there were more female than male pupils involved as peer educators.

2.3.2 Training of peer educators

The NHS Development Agency noted:

*Successful peer educators need effective training.*⁶

Fast Forward, another agency involved in promoting health (through education by, with and for young people) has and made use of peer education. Its ethos runs:

⁶ NHS Health Development Agency *Wired for Health* website <http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/home>

When defining Peer Education a number of elements and values need to be considered so that peers fully inform the process and do not just spout a set adult agenda.

Peer education is an approach which empowers young people to work with other young people, and which draws on the positive strength of the peer group. By means of appropriate training and support, the young people become active players in the educational process rather than passive recipients of a set message. Central to this work is the collaboration between young people and adults.⁷

Some peer education projects have involved the development of resources, and involvement in this process, while time consuming for all participants, would allow more ownership of the materials produced for use by peer educators.

Make sure that when you are planning to involve young people, their participation is not “token” or manipulated by adults. With growing requirements for user involvement in research, there is a danger that young people’s participation could be undertaken simply as a tick box exercise. Meaningful involvement requires thought and consideration for those who will be involved to ensure they are able to usefully contribute to, and benefit from, the research process. If participation is done badly, this may have negative consequences, including cynicism from young people about the value of taking part in future initiatives.⁸

Three of the four schools taking part in this research involved outside agencies in the peer educator training programme, and all three of these schools held peer educator training outwith the school premises. This formalisation of the training process was felt to give it more weight: by distancing it from the school buildings and having it delivered by outsiders to the school, teachers believed that it had more impact on the peer educators, and made the process more effective. In the fourth school, training and time management issues involved guidance staff. A previous member of staff had been seconded for a period to look at various relevant training issues. A Depute Head Teacher conducted buddy training in this school.

In two of the three schools where pupils had peer education training delivered outwith school premises, outsiders to the school were involved. For one school, these outsiders were members of the Community Education Department and for another, they were part of the local authority’s Educational Psychology department. In the school whose training input involved educational psychologists, members of the Guidance department also made some contribution. Pupils in both of these schools were given advice about handling sensitive issues and dealing with disturbing disclosures that the younger target group of pupils might make.

In the school where peer education involved alcohol and drug education, pupils were given specialist information about these topics, suitable for the age group that they would be working with, as well as advice on how to work with younger pupils. The training covered not just factual information to be passed on, but ways of interacting with other pupils. The

⁷ <http://www.fastforward.org.uk>

⁸ Kirby, P *A Guide to Actively Involving Young People in Research* (www.invo.org.uk)

object of this was to ensure that the peer educators could be seen as friends, and therefore a source of information that could be trusted. The peer educators in this school also had weekly meetings with the agency that ran the peer education programme, thus gaining back-up and an additional source of support as required.

Training sources varied in the four schools from exclusively internal, through to exclusively external, with one school combining internal with external. Even in the schools where it was conducted externally, training requirements for peer education would make some demands on the time of staff, in terms of the timetabling issues that would have to be taken into account to provide time for training.

Whether school staff, outsiders to the school, or a combination of both is used, training procedures require to be acceptable to the schools involved, and timetabling of training to fit in with both the pupils' and their trainers' (whether or not these are teachers) other commitments. It is important that peer educators be given both the factual subject matter that they need to be useful and credible sources of information to their target group, and also that they should have the social skills to develop relationships with those pupils whom they are educating.

In addition to sensitive issues that may be covered, it is important to consider support required to build up a body of information about a topic. It is unlikely that schools would have sufficient information about RSE to enable them to run their own training programmes, and so sources of information on this would have to be identified to enable comprehensive training to be provided to participants and appropriate training resources developed. It was felt by some commentators (particularly teachers and pupils interviewed) that information passed on to peer educators by a source outside the school had more authenticity and currency than information passed on by teachers. It is likely that RSOs would be an appropriate source of information on RSE.

2.3.3 *Support for peer educators*

Support was essential for all participants in the peer education process. Within the schools taking part in the research, different support mechanisms were in place for the pupils working as peer educators. Teachers and members of external agencies involved in supporting buddying schemes were aware that the peer educators or "buddies" might, albeit rarely, come across some sensitive information about another pupil in the course of their work with them. In two schools, there were structures in place (contact with an educational psychologist in one case, with Community Education staff in another) to enable the peer educators to discuss issues of this sort. It is unlikely that this type of situation would arise where neutral topics, such as RSE, were being covered. However, it is important to recognise that peer educators may be placed in a position of trust by their target group of pupils, and be exposed to situations where they may require support from adults.

As described in the section above, some peer education projects are administered from within schools: others have input from external bodies. No standard programme exists for peer educators, but it would be important to consider support needs that could be addressed in developing a standard programme, such as might happen for RSE. Rather than working in

isolation, or reinventing procedures that had been developed by other practitioners, a network would provide the means of sharing and supporting good practice between peer educators.

Writing from the Department of Child Health, University of Exeter, John Rees carried out a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of Peer Education networks, capable of being used for sharing good practice. A summary of his analysis of the strengths of such a network is:

A network's strengths lie in the opportunities to share, learn from and develop good practice, which could be hugely supportive to newcomers to the work and to help the more experienced to refine and improve their practice.⁹

The Scottish Schools Ethos Network, a Scottish Executive funded project, has promoted the importance of developing a positive school ethos. A positive ethos has been identified in many school improvement studies as being fundamental to raising achievement and was linked to the development of anti-bullying, peer support and other whole school strategies. The Network has developed themes such as positive discipline, pupil participation and inclusion through events and publications. Teachers and other professionals with an interest in Scottish education have been invited to register with the Network, which has acted as a forum for the exchange of experiences. It has hosted the Ethosnet¹⁰ website. The Ethosnet website has provided links to case studies and reports examples of peer education within schools. In many of these, peer education was one aspect of the educational process being described.

Following recognition that there were a number of peer education projects in Scotland, many of which were isolated, lacking necessary support and resources to reach their full potential, Fast Forward launched the Scottish Peer Education Network (SPEN). SPEN helps communication between, and offers support to, anyone involved and interested in peer education¹¹. It was funded by the Scottish Executive to address the issues of support and promotion of good practice in peer education. Its main aims are to:

- Support new and existing initiatives.
- Improve communication and the sharing of experiences.
- Devise and deliver training.
- Develop capacity building and sustainability opportunities.
- Support young people and local workers to influence the development of best practice in the way peer education is delivered.

The peer education network site provides links to a number of peer education websites and acts to facilitate contact between peer educators. SPEN now runs conferences and workshops to help peer educators.

⁹ Rees, J. *Developing a National Peer Education Network* <http://webnews.textalk.com/en/article.phtml?id=23062>

¹⁰ <http://www.ethosnet.co.uk>

¹¹ <http://www.fastforward.org.uk/peer-education/scottish-peer-education-network.php>

Europeer¹² is a Europe wide peer education network. Set up to support health education peer educators, mainly in sexual health, its website reinforces the links that exist between, and offers support to, practitioners working on the same topic in different countries.

2.3.4 Management of peer education

Management of peer education schemes was found to be critical to their success, and would affect the sustainability of any peer education programme.

Teaching staff identified management issues as core to the success of peer education, arguing that any problems would centre round sustainability and organisational problems. The following key issues were identified:

- Administrative issues would involve additional timetabling, as it would be necessary to make sure peer educators were available and that peer education demands did not interfere with their studies.
- Some supervision by teaching staff would be required to support peer education schemes. In one school, supervision of peer education fell to the head of the relevant department, putting more time pressure on individual teachers.
- A lack of continuity that might be caused by senior pupils on exam leave,
- There might be inconsistencies between the ways in which different pupils in the school carried out peer education.
- Where peer education was run on a voluntary basis, there was the possibility that educators might withdraw from the programme and the school have no means of enforcing their participation.

Whether a peer education scheme was run from within the school or by an agency from outwith the school, the following issues would have to be addressed by the team or individual responsible for managing the project(s)

- Pupil recruitment (by selection or an open process)
- Training (of all participants)
- Timetabling for pupils who became involved as peer educators
- Resource development, as the resources used by the peer educators had to be suitable for this kind of use and to be materials which the peer educators felt comfortable using.
- Evaluation: an evaluation of the peer education scheme should be carried out regularly, involving the pupil targets of such a scheme, teachers and peer educators themselves.
- Potential for development: the peer education programme should be flexible and capable of development to accommodate new issues and new treatments of existing topics.

¹² www.europeer.lu.se

2.4 Strengths and weaknesses of peer education

Some of the literature points to the difficulties of evaluating peer education. Mellanby *et al*¹³ found:

The identified studies indicated that peer leaders were at least as, or more, effective than adults. Although this suggests that peer-led programmes can be effective, methodological difficulties and analytical problems indicate that this is not an easy area to investigate, and research so far has not provided a definitive answer.

Little research had been carried out as to whether peer educators were more effective than adult educators were. Only one relevant study was identified and its findings were that both adult and peer educators had unique strengths but that neither group was comprehensively better at educating than the other was.

2.4.1 Perceived strengths

A review of peer-led sex education¹⁴ found that peers were an important influence on young people's health behaviours, and were considered credible role models and disseminators of social information. Fennell¹⁵ found that young people had been used to deliver a number of health promotion activities. The Social Exclusion Unit in England recommended peer led approaches for delivering sex education in schools.¹⁶

Some attempts to evaluate peer education initiatives have differentiated between the impact of the programme on the peer educators themselves and the impact on their targets. Parkin and McKegany¹⁷ summarised a number of initiatives that have noted changes in the behaviour and attitudes of the peer educators. Participating as a peer educator was found to increase the educators' self-esteem and self-confidence, and to improve their communication skills. However, the authors identified the need to develop a model of peer education evaluation that could identify effectiveness of peer education in the short, medium and long term.

Advocates for Youth, an organisation based in the United States researched the impact of peer education:

Research suggests that people are more likely to hear and personalise messages, and thus to change their attitudes and behaviours, if they believe the messenger is similar to them and faces the same concerns and pressures.

¹³. Mellanby, A. R. Rees J. B and. Tripp J. H. *Peer-led and adult-led school health education: a critical review of available comparative research*. Health Education Research, Vol. 15, No. 5, 533-545, October 2000

¹⁴ Supporting Paper 4: Sexual Health and Relationships Education for Young People Enhancing Sexual Wellbeing in Scotland: A Sexual Health and Relationships Strategy

¹⁵ Fennell, R. (1993). *A review of evaluations of peer education programs not focused on sex education or pregnancy prevention* Journal of American College Health 41(6): 251-3.

¹⁶ Social Exclusion Unit (1999). *Teenage Pregnancy: Report by the Social Exclusion Unit*. London, Stationary Office.

¹⁷ Parkin S. and McKegnaey, N. *The Rise and Rise of Peer Education Approaches, Drugs: Education, prevention and policy* ISSN 0968-7637 www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Peer education draws on the credibility that young people have with their peers, leverages the power of role modelling, and provides flexibility in meeting the diverse needs of today's youth¹⁸

Within schools, peer education was found to have the potential to change the relationship between teachers and pupils. The National Children's Bureau reported that:

The relationship between teachers and peer educators is often much improved by the [peer education] experience. Teachers respect the peer educators for taking it on, and both get to see the other side of the coin¹⁹.

Few studies have compared the effectiveness of different forms of delivering the same programme. Two comparisons (Jemmott²⁰ and Mellanby²¹) of peer-led and adult-led education found that both adult and peer led education had an important place in effective sex and relationships education. Peer leaders were found to be more effective at establishing conservative norms and attitudes to sexual behaviour than adults. Peer educators were found to be less effective at imparting factual information and involving students in classroom activities. Both of these studies focused on health and relationship education, but there is no evidence that the findings could be transferred to an area such as road safety education.

Local authority Advisers who were interviewed set out the following benefits of peer education:

- It helped the youngsters trained as peer educators to develop confidence. This would support pupils in work on citizenship, and provide skills and provide opportunities for growth.
- Youngsters at receiving end had a wider knowledge base from which to tackle problems.
- Teaching staff found it helpful particularly in areas that they were unsure about, as peer educators might helped them to build their own knowledge.

Within the schools taking part in case studies, teaching staff provided a review of the perceived strengths of peer education. These were:

- Pupils developing in confidence and maturity.
- Development of pupil awareness of risk and unsafe behaviours that were transferable to other areas.
- Peer educators becoming equipped to deal with the negative influences of peer pressure.
- Competition of pupils to become peer educators meant that pupils of a wide range of abilities and backgrounds were included. This worked where teachers, rather than selecting only the brightest and most popular children as peer educators, selected children from different social backgrounds and the cohort represented pupils with varying academic abilities.

¹⁸ <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/factsheet/fspeered.htm>

¹⁹ National Children's Bureau *Sex Education Forum Factsheet 20*, London, EC1V 7QE

²⁰ Jemmott, J. et al. (1998). *Abstinence and safer sex HIV reduction. Interventions for African American adolescents: a randomised controlled trial* Journal of American Medical Association 279(19): 1529-1536.

²¹ Mellanby, A. R., et al. (2001). *A comparative study of peer-led and adult-led school sex education.* Health Education Research 16(4): 481-92.

- Empowerment of pupils who took part as buddies, some of whom had had learning or behavioural problems of their own.
- A means for the peer educators themselves of developing important skills in an alternative to the formal curriculum.
- A means of reducing stress on younger pupils and helping improve their learning environment.
- Pupils learn most by teaching, so peer education was good for the pupil educators.
- ‘Learners’ often have more in common with peer educators and are willing to discuss with, and learn from, people nearer their own age.
- There were credibility advantages with peers (as long as the person was credible to other pupils).
- A broad recruitment base enabled pupils to recognise perhaps unsuspected strengths in dealing with others.
- Peer education could benefit teachers who may not have been able to interact with some of their pupils in the way that best suited those pupils.
- Peer education could provide support to pupils with behavioural or learning problems who saw their peer educators as positive role models.
- Pupils who were being taught by older pupils seemed to pay more attention to what their peer educators were saying than they did to what teachers said.

Both the literature review and anecdotal sources identified greater benefits to the educators than could be claimed for the target groups of the education process.

2.4.2 *Perceived weaknesses*

In the schools where peer education was practised, and where interviewees had spoken positively of the strengths of peer education, problems were seen to centre round administrative issues. The Assistant Rector of the school where the peer education scheme was administered by an outside agency recognised that running a similar peer education programme without the external support that they had would be very hard. She believed that schools would not have time to develop such a scheme, with its training and support requirements.

In another school, any weaknesses were believed to centre on sustainability and organisational problems. Interviewees in School B felt that administrative issues would involve additional timetabling, as it would be necessary to make sure peer educators were available and that peer education demands did not interfere with their studies. In addition, this school felt that supervision by teaching staff, required to support peer education schemes, ate into teachers’ time.

Other concerns to do with peer education included a lack of continuity that might be caused by senior pupils on exam leave, and the fact that there might be inconsistencies between the ways in which peer education was carried out by different pupils in the school. The fact that peer education was a voluntary programme also meant that educators’ time might be committed elsewhere.

2.5 The viability of peer education in secondary schools

The sections above have explored current understandings and applications of peer education, and summarised the strengths and weaknesses of peer education approaches. Before moving on to explore possible applications of peer education in road safety, it is worthwhile comparing the effectiveness of peer education with other methods of educating secondary pupils.

Findings from the research so far indicate that peer education is demanding of teachers' and other trainers' time, that its effectiveness is hard to evaluate, and that where it has been evaluated, greater benefits are found to accrue to the educators than to the target group.

Setting up peer education schemes requires planning, training of educators and support for all participants. The sustainability of such schemes would require continued input and monitoring along the lines set out in Section 2.3 above. Peer education is labour intensive

The value of a peer education scheme would depend on the extent to which it could improve an existing education programme or introduce an element of education where none already existed.

Both the Forth Valley Health Project referred to above, and two comparisons (Jemmott²² and Mellanby²³) of peer-led and adult-led education found that both adult and peer led education had an important place in effective sex and relationships education, but that neither could be said to be better than the other.

2.6 Examples of peer education and road safety

There is little research on the use of peer education in road safety. RSS commissioned a feasibility study of JRSO²⁴ schemes before setting up its own one but no longitudinal evaluations of the effectiveness of any JRSO schemes have been found. One of the few studies making any reference to peer education was an evaluation of Safer Routes to School²⁵, conducted for the Scottish Executive. This study found that peer education could have a role to play in some aspects of road safety:

Most informants recognised that children and young people should be involved in the development of Safer Routes To School initiatives and in the peer education of younger children. Young people themselves indicated that they prefer inter-active approaches to road safety education.

²² Jemmott, J. et al. (1998). *Abstinence and safer sex HIV reduction*. Interventions for African American adolescents: a randomised controlled trial Journal of American Medical Association 279(19): 1529-1536.

²³ Mellanby, A. R., et al. (2001). *A comparative study of peer-led and adult-led school sex education*. Health Education Research 16(4): 481-92.

²⁴ Pringle, S. (1999) *An evaluation of Junior Road Safety Officer Schemes*, unpublished report for Road Safety Scotland, Edinburgh

²⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/srstc-01.asp>

However, it should be borne in mind that peer pressure does not always act to make pupils more sensible and responsible. Recent research found that²⁶

The most negative influence that parents saw on their teenage children in relation to their road safety skills was that of their friends and peers, with 44% citing this. [Fewer] than one in twelve parents of teenage children (8%) indicated that "education" (i.e. school related activities) had the most positive influence.

.....a significant proportion of parents of teenagers suggested that it was when they were in the company of their friends and peers that their road safety behaviour was at its worst. This ranged from the increased tendency to be distracted and pre-occupied by the company of friends through to "horsing around" and on to "deliberately acting up in front of their friends".

Approaches to teaching road safety have been discussed in a number of reports prepared for RSS, and it has been recommended that road safety issues be tackled in the same way as other personal safety and health issues that might be covered by PSE. Given that the examples of successful peer education programmes given above (Section 2.2) are drawn from the field of Health Education, this suggests that peer education might usefully be adopted for road safety.

26 Market Research UK and ODS Ltd (2004) *Parental Attitudes to Road Safety Education Final Report* Edinburgh
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/transport/pars-03.asp>

2.7 Feasibility of peer education in RSE

2.7.1 Advisers' perspective

The Advisers who were interviewed saw no reason why peer education should not be applied to RSE. They recommended, however, that it should not be developed as a single issue peer education programme, but instead covered within a programme that dealt with a range of issues to do with risk assessment and personal safety. Using an “umbrella approach” rather than issue based would allow RSE to be covered as one of many issues.

It was agreed that, to succeed, peer education RSE should be linked to existing programmes, rather than developed as a discrete one issue package.

2.7.2. Teachers' perspective

When asked about extending peer education to road safety, teacher interviewees thought that peer educators were almost certain to have recent useful experiences and would understand the problems and concerns of those being educated. Training for pupils was thought to be essential. Training for RS topics might well involve outside speakers such as RSOs. Resources would be required and these should, if possible, remain at the school.

In two schools, teachers felt that it might be difficult to include RSE as a standard part of the peer education schemes, as what was covered was voluntary, and the school could not oblige pupils to cover RSE if they did not want to. However, the teacher interviewees said that they would be willing to try to include RSE in the programme, if there was some formal structure to the road safety element, and training could be given. This would work as long as it was recognised that the course was voluntary and that peer educators should be able to choose what they covered. One teacher interviewee noted that it would also require good resources and training to be made available to the peer educators, and should involve someone from outwith the school carrying out the training.

2.7.3 RSOs' perspective

Feedback from the RSOs interviewed in connection with this research was largely positive. Many RSOs thought a peer education scheme would benefit both educator and “pupil”, as there would be close relationships developed and pupils would speak the same language. If localised RS messages were used it was felt that these would more relevant to pupils. It was felt that peer education would allow more RSE coverage in schools. Potentially, there would be a larger audience for RSE and participating senior pupils would be more likely to set a good example. A small number of RSOs said that strength of the scheme was the possibility of identifying local road safety problems, through the peer educators, which could then be addressed in individual areas.

However, RSOs had a mixed perspective on the feasibility of introducing a peer education scheme into secondary schools. Two RSOs considered there was a good possibility for introducing peer education in RSE in secondary schools. Six RSOs thought the idea worthwhile and five would like to see a scheme introduced, all five had considerable doubts about the feasibility of sustaining a peer education scheme in secondary schools.

Doubts were attributed to lack of time available, exam and curriculum pressures in addition to the nature of road safety issues selected. One RSO was unsure of the likely success of such a scheme, mainly because of the problems of obtaining access to pupils in secondary schools. This RSO found it was possible to meet only with S1 pupils for transition work S5/S6 pupils for driver courses. Another RSO thought that if some relevant peer education was already taking place, it might be feasible to slot RSE in. One RSO stated that it would also depend on how the older ones were educated to put things across. In this region the main accident problem was with S1/2, so peer education would be most appropriate for this group.

The time commitment required of RSOs could be a problem in supporting a peer education scheme in road safety. One RSO said such a scheme would be expensive in terms of RSO time, as she foresaw visiting all schools individually as part of such a scheme, possibly two days or so a term per school. Two RSOs stated that RSO commitment would depend largely on the objectives. One RSO said that at the inception of a scheme quite a bit of time would be needed, as it would be essential to set up the scheme so that it was sustainable. RSO time during the operation would depend on uptake. As the time involved was envisaged to be as a facilitator/co-ordinator and at times a ‘trouble-shooter’, it was not anticipated to make great demands on RSOs.

Concerns that RSOs had about covering RSE through peer education are listed below:

- One RSO considered that the quality of peer educator ‘teaching’ might not be as good as with a qualified teacher/RSO, and some teachers might perceive some loss of control.
- Four RSOs stated that any resources would have to be **very** good.
- One RSO thought the scheme might be more difficult to organise in secondary due to movement of pupils between classes and different subject teachers.
- Seven RSOs thought a weakness would be the problem of getting older pupils interested in taking part – once they leave primary many think they knew all that there was to know about RS, while some fear making a fool of themselves and not appearing ‘cool’.
- Two RSOs raised the issue of RSO time: if peer education involved extra work for RSOs who are already stretched.

2.7.4 Time allocation

Nearly all RSOs estimated likely demands on their time should they become involved in a peer education scheme, and this varied through: a month’s work at the scheme’s inception, then one full day per week for a year, to a total commitment of 0.5 days per school. In addition, one RSO thought constant retraining would be necessary as pupils moved up the school and that the actual amount of training would depend on role of peer educator. If this role was complex a lot of training would be required, and pupils should follow a standardised programme.

Time allocation for peer education RSE has proved difficult to quantify, but it is an aspect of peer education that should be considered carefully before any commitment is made by the RSS to introduce peer education.

2.7.5 Potential links with JRSO work already going on in primary schools

Different viewpoints emerged in discussion with RSOs. There was a view that peer education in secondary schools could be seen as an extension /adaptation of the JRSO scheme in primary schools, but that this relationship could prove problematic. It was felt that links between road safety work in primary schools and secondary schools could be counter productive, as the involvement of secondary pupils might take away responsibility from primary pupils. Secondary pupils might not like to think that they were covering the same ground in RSE in secondary school as they had done in primary. One interviewee's (minority) perspective was that as the JRSO scheme in his area had not been supported and pushed forward as much as it should have been, any effort should be put into consolidating the JRSO scheme before moving on to introducing a RS peer education scheme for secondary schools.

2.7.6 Training and support required for participants in peer education schemes

RSOs commented on training requirements for themselves and other participants (teachers and pupils) in the peer education process. Teachers and pupils commented only on pupil requirements. It was interesting that none of the teachers interviewed in connection with this research considered that training should be provided for teachers themselves. This suggests that teachers might act as gate keepers of a peer education scheme in road safety, allowing RSE to be covered, but would not be willing to carry out training or support such a scheme once it was up and running. The suggestions of all interviewees are set out below.

RSOs' requirements

For some RSOs it was difficult to estimate their own training and support requirements, as there were so many unknowns. These unknowns included the extent of any involvement and support from local Education departments, whether there would be a central administrator such as RSS. Consideration would also have to be given to how would any scheme would fit with local policy and work already being undertaken.

It was agreed that while most RSOs feel comfortable at primary level, some training would probably be required for a secondary school scheme – possibly a one-day seminar. Suggested inputs involved at least one full day's training, possibly backed up by a follow-up meeting once the scheme was up and running, so RSOs could discuss progress. It was also suggested that the materials should be changed/updated/revise on an annual basis. This would require ongoing work at RSS so that different work could be available each year. It was mooted that there should be an opportunity to adapt resources for local areas.

Teaching Staff

RSOs reviewed the training needs that they perceived teachers would have in conjunction with introducing peer education for secondary pupils.

It was felt that quite a bit of training for secondary school teachers would be advisable because little general RSE was done at most secondary schools. Suggested means of training secondary teachers included a general PowerPoint training presentation for teachers, which could be amended according to local requirements. Estimated training time commitments varied, but it was felt that in rural areas, there would be greater demands on RSO time, because of the need to train teachers in their own schools rather than draw them together in cluster groups. In some areas, it might be necessary to call on outside help to train teachers.

Pupils

Most RSOs agreed that pupils should attend a training session given by RS staff, as it was important to make sure that correct messages were given. One interviewee estimated a whole day, but this could be modified depending on numbers and role. It would be essential that peer educators were good role models. It was also suggested that pupil educators undertake a number of courses e.g. teaching techniques, communication skills etc. It was considered that these would also have the advantage of looking good on CVs of older pupils.

A minority RSO view was that teachers should carry out the training of peer educators, but questioned if one could rely on teachers. All RSOs recognised that this would require a lot of time going to individual schools and suggested that perhaps a distance learning approach could be considered.

Pupils themselves had a number of ideas about the training that they would like to receive as peer educators in road safety. One pupil suggested that road safety should be tied in with drugs and alcohol education, and that pupils should be consulted on, and involved in, the development of a safety resource that could be used by peer educators.

All pupil interviewees in one school thought it was important that peer educators who wanted to cover road safety should be given one day's training from a road safety expert in a location outwith the school. All participants said that they would like facts that they could use. Videos and items for discussion groups would be useful, but they also felt it would be important for all participants in road safety by peer education to have some type of "hands-on" input. They would like to have material that would make pupils care about themselves and other road users.

These pupils recommended that the road safety peer educators should have follow-up workshops to enable them to talk about their experiences, update their skills, and help develop a resource for other users.

In another school, a group of peer educators said that they would like to include road safety in the topics that they covered. They felt that to be effective, road safety peer education would have to be dramatic, and could include:

- Videos or witness testimony of real accidents.
- Reminders of road safety rules in real contexts.
- Case studies of irresponsible road behaviour and consequences that could be discussed by groups of pupils.
- A video based on flashbacks that a road accident victim has from his/her hospital bed, with accompanying resources for discussion points.

Training should be given to help them cover road safety effectively.

In the other two schools in which pupils were interviewed, S6 pupils had enjoyed their experience as peer educators, and felt that they had developed a good relationship with the younger pupils, especially the younger ones who had behavioural problems. They had enjoyed the training workshop provided and felt that they and the younger pupils had benefitted from the experience. They believed that road safety could be covered within their schemes, as long as they were given input on what to cover and how to cover it.

The results of these interviews suggest that teachers and pupils would expect some RS specific input to be given to the pupil educators themselves by a RS specialist. This specialist is most likely to be a RSO, and while time commitment would vary from region to region, this would mean additional demands on RSO time.

2.7.7 Expected response and take-up from schools and pupils

All teacher interviewees indicated a willingness to include RS in existing peer education schemes. This suggests willingness in those who are already involved in peer education to accommodate another topic in the programme.

RSOs gave some thought to the possibility of introducing peer education to their schools where peer education schemes did not necessarily exist, and there was no existing structure for a peer education scheme to “piggy-back” on to.

Some RSOs felt that uptake would depend on the marketing of the scheme and agreed that the success of any peer education scheme would depend on timing and any accommodations that could be made to timetabling. It would also depend on having a ‘champion’ in each school (the liaison teacher or HT) and a ‘champion Adviser/other member of a Local Authority Education Department. One stated that secondary school response was less predictable than primary. It was often difficult to ensure making the best initial contact in a secondary school, where so much of the success of setting up schemes depended on getting a keen member of staff. Several RSOs, recognising that the workload at many schools is considerable and existing commitments might preclude taking on new projects, predicted that take-up would vary a lot from area to area. A minority view was that it would be hard to get a good response from secondary schools in one area. It was felt that secondary schools liked pre driver, but did not want much more and that even transition work materials were little used now. While secondary schools might take RS plays, there was often little real commitment to any work undertaken by the school pre or post the theatre production.

2.7.8 Introduction and management of road safety peer education schemes

RSOs were asked about implementation and management issues implicit in the introduction of road safety peer education schemes in secondary schools.

It was felt that implementation would depend on the content, context and scale of the scheme.

The first stages might be achieved by running courses for teachers to introduce pupil courses. This could be supplemented by having a website with live on-line dialogues, through which information could be added as required. In addition, it was suggested that a pilot be carried out of three or four schools in an area, for the development of a programme similar to that used for JRSO. It was also recommended that strong guidelines would be needed, and ownership of the scheme must lie with the educators. Teachers should select peer educators and RSOs would train teachers and peer educators together

One concern expressed by a number of RSOs was the anticipated problem of getting secondary schools interested and motivated, mainly due to pressures of curriculum. To counteract this, these RSOs would like to see a RS pupil committee/council set up and resource packs provided centrally by RSS and capable of being adapted to their own area. Sources of support were identified as S5/6 pupils who could identify problems, then work with guidance staff to ensure scheme ran well. In addition, it was suggested that the involvement of local Education departments might be useful, as this would help legitimise RSE peer education to schools and teachers.

The feedback on implementation issues varied between RSOs and involved many players. Teachers and schools managers, local authority education departments and pupils were all seen to have a role to play in the introduction of any peer education scheme.

2.7.9 Support for peer education schemes

It was felt that support would depend to a degree on uptake, and that RSOs could provide resources including human resources where possible. If peer education were successful, there would be less need for hands on RSO input. RSOs would be a point of contact, could oversee training of new participants and could keep records. Support mechanisms might draw from those used in the JRSO scheme, but it was felt that there might be serious time issues for RSOs if another similar scheme were to be introduced. Suggestions for pupil support included a help-line; resources, advice and help as necessary and it was felt that regular contact with peer educators would be important. Some form of accreditation/certification for pupil educators, so that they would have something to show for their work, was seen as valuable.

2.7.10 Summary of findings

This section summarises the findings above.

- Peer education was most commonly found in Health and Sex Education programmes
- Road safety could be taught through similar approaches to Health Education
- Peer education was found to be hard to evaluate
- Peer educators were found to benefit more from the peer education process than were the targets of the peer education programme
- Training and appropriate resources were identified as the two main requirements of a peer education programme.
- Where possible, young people should be involved in the development of resources
- Support networks for participants, either virtual or based on real interaction, were important to the success of peer education.

- Peer education is labour-intensive and there is no evidence to suggest that it is any more effective for the target group of pupils than conventional, teacher-led forms of education.

2.8 A role for peer education in RSE?

While, with certain conditions, peer education in RSE might be feasible, it must also be asked to what extent it is necessary. RSS has developed a number of road safety programmes and resources for secondary school pupils in Scotland. However, research conducted in 2002²⁷ found that very little RSE was being taught in S3 to S6 in Scottish secondary schools. The main reason for this was that RSE was not considered appropriate, either by teachers or their pupils, for upper secondary school. “Road safety” carried with it connotations of primary school and of learning rules by rote. In addition, lack of teaching time and lack of good resources were seen as additional problems. If RSE is seen as inappropriate in a formal teaching context, there might be a potential for peer education to make it more appropriate. Chapter 3 below addresses this possibility.

²⁷ Pringle, S. “Research into RSE in S3 to S6 in Scottish Secondary Schools”, unpublished report for the RSS

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Peer Education Schemes

3.1.1 Elements of peer education

Peer education in schools has been shown to be more helpful to the pupils carrying it out (the “educators”) than to the target group. No evidence has been found that suggests that peer education is more effective in transmitting knowledge to the target group than traditional adult teacher/ pupil systems of education. It has been found to be used most commonly in contexts of health and social education, covering issues such as sex, drugs and alcohol. Peer educators in peer education schemes were found to benefit in terms of increased knowledge, confidence and self esteem. In some contexts it was found that pupils in receipt of peer education attached more credibility to information passed to them by their peers than they did to the same information passed on by their parents or teachers.

None of the schemes examined in the course of this research covered road safety, although some participants suggested that road safety might be covered successfully in peer education programmes. Some workers in this area have indicated that once a successful system of peer education has been developed, this can be used to promote and support pupil learning in any subject.

The evidence suggests that peer education requires a commitment from schools to support the educators and others involved in the programme. These others might include teachers and outside experts on the subjects covered by the peer education programme. The peer educators themselves would also require training, support and time allocated to allow them to carry out their activities.

3.1.2 Sustainability of peer education schemes

Even if road safety peer education could be introduced successfully into at least some secondary schools, certain pre-requisites would affect the sustainability of such a scheme.

Teachers interviewed in the course of the research indicated a willingness to include RS in existing peer education schemes. This suggests enthusiasm in those who are already involved in peer education to accommodate another topic in the programme. However, it may be more difficult to recruit teachers not already experienced in peer education to take on a road safety peer education programme, if they have no previous experience of peer education.

Management and structure of any scheme and the production of resources are all issues that would have to be considered in introducing a road safety peer education scheme. Where there are no subject specialists in-house, expertise would have to be brought in, such as happened in the successful peer drugs and alcohol education project (The Peer Education Project), based in Dundee. Community Education workers support the pupils, liaise with participant schools and manage the project. Road Safety Officers would be the nearest equivalent to Community Education staff, but it would be important to evaluate the outcome

that might be expected from a road safety scheme, and the likely demands that would be made of RSOs.

Given the demands of peer education work in terms of timetabling, training and support and the lack of evidence that it benefits the target group, it is not recommended that RSS introduce a large-scale peer education programme in secondary schools across Scotland. It is, however, recommended that RSS consider targeting one particular age group, who would benefit as educators rather than as the target of a peer education programme. While there is not a great deal of research on this aspect of peer education, the literature review for this research and anecdotal evidence referred to above suggest that peer educators can benefit from taking part in the programme.

Adviser and teacher interviewees agreed that, to succeed, peer education RSE should be linked to existing programmes, rather than developed as a discrete one-issue package. For example, RSE might be covered within a peer education programme that dealt with a range of issues to do with risk assessment and personal safety.

The S2-S4 age group is recognised by road safety educators as the most difficult to target and the most encouraging findings from the current piece of research indicated that S2 peer educators engaging with P7 pupils in a peer education programme dealing with drugs and alcohol were effective teachers. They also noted the information that they had acquired to pass on to P7 pupils was equally applicable to themselves. Arguably, peer education would operate as a means of educating the educators while they believed that they were working to inform younger pupils.

Role of RSS in peer education

The role of RSS in S2-S4 peer education would be to facilitate a peer education programme that could be adopted and adapted as appropriate by user schools. It is recommended that RSS work with peer educators and Road Safety Officers to design a generic resource that could be adapted for use in different school settings.

The resource should include:

- Materials developed for use by peer educators. The peer educators themselves should have some input to this.
- Guidelines on training. The most commonly used training has involved non-teachers as trainers. The role of RSOs as trainers should be considered.
- Means of monitoring the project.

The materials and systems thus developed should then be piloted across a small number of schools in Scotland through their integration into existing peer education schemes. They should then be evaluated and recommendations made for their improvement and possible adoption across Scotland.

Not all schools currently use peer education. Given the range of requirements for successful peer education, it is possible that some schools might never introduce such schemes. It is recommended that RSS explore a variety of ways of introducing and supporting peer

education for RSE in secondary schools by “piggy backing” on to existing peer education schemes.

In order to do this, it is suggested that RSS work with two or three schools with existing peer education schemes or “buddy” schemes where some topics are covered voluntarily. The purpose of this would be to examine how RSE could be taught as part of existing peer education schemes. The names of schools who indicated that they would be willing to assist RSS in this work will be passed on to RSS, and contact should be made with these schools to ascertain their willingness to pilot a RSE peer education scheme. This pilot work should be evaluated carefully. It is suggested that the pilot explore the following issues:

- Recruitment of peer educators
- Training required by peer educators
- Role of RS personnel
- Role of teachers
- Resources required by all participants in the scheme
- Effect of peer education programme on educators’ knowledge and attitudes
- Effect of peer education programme on target pupils’ knowledge and attitudes
- Management issues for schools and RSOs involved in running the scheme

It was noted that in three of the schools taking part in the research, more girls than boys worked as peer educators. It is recommended that in pilot schools, an equal number of girls and boys be recruited, as far as possible, to become peer educators.

Using the framework above as a means of evaluating peer education in RSE, it is recommended that RSS set up a working group to monitor a peer education strategy for road safety in Scotland. It is recommended that this group comprise Road Safety Officers, teachers, pupils and peer education practitioners/specialists and that the group has a finite life span of one year maximum.

The issue of the stage at which peer educators should operate must also be addressed. Two main possibilities exist. One is that senior pupils (S5 and S6) cover RSE as part of a peer education programme for younger pupils (S1–S4). The other is that younger pupils (S2–S4) become peer educators for P7–S1. These options are not mutually exclusive, and the rationale for each is presented below. It would be possible to compare, across school sites, the effectiveness of S2-S4 pupils against S5-S6 pupils.

S2-S4 pupils as road safety peer educators

One of the main barriers to peer education is timetabling and time allocation. As pupils move through secondary school, more and more demands are made on their time and the curriculum is a key (some would say the main) consideration. Senior pupils may have very little time to devote to a new topic, such as RSE. Pupils of that age may also be more interested in driving and motor-bike riding than in some of the road safety issues that affect younger pupils.

In one of the peer education schemes described above, S2 pupils were seen to be very effective educators of P7 pupils. In the process, the educators themselves were learning

about the topics of drugs and alcohol, and it was believed that this made them less likely to harm themselves through drink or drug abuse than some of their own peer group. This ties in with some of the literature examined in the literature review above, which found that the peer educators might be the main beneficiaries of the process. Traditionally, road safety educators have found the S3-S4 age group hard to reach and equipping pupils in this age group with information to help younger pupils address issues of road safety could help both age groups.

In addition, the S2-S4 pupils might feasibly support JRSO work already taking place in some primary schools, and the peer educators could link to work taking place through JRSO. By doing this, they might help develop some new resources for primary pupils, as well as supporting RSOs working in this area.

S5-S6 pupils as peer educators

S5 and S6 pupils may have less time to work as peer educators because of the constraints of timetabling teaching for exams. They do, however, have an authority with S1–S4 pupils that reportedly makes them more likely to be listened to by younger pupils. It may be more difficult to engage older pupils in transmitting road safety messages to younger pupils, as the older pupils may be more interested in their role as young drivers and issues connected with driving than with road safety generally. However, if road safety were to be adopted as a theme to be covered under an umbrella peer education programme, featuring as one of many topics to be addressed under Personal Safety, Personal and Social Education or similar, its inclusion might help both the educators and their target audience.

ANNEX 1: DATABASES CONSULTED FOR LITERATURE SEARCH

Databases/sources searched	Keywords used
Childdata Itox Database Campbell Collaboration ERIC Communitywise Social Science Citation Index CERUK	Effectiveness; success; evidence; evaluation peer education peer teaching peer helping peer educators Secondary school; high school; Road safety

Websites visited

Websites visited included:

<http://www.hda.nhs.uk>; www.nfpa.org/riskwatch; <http://www.dfes.gov.uk>;
<http://www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk/search.htm>; <http://www.scottishresearch.com>;
<http://www.wales.gov.uk>; <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/sitertools/search.asp>

Additional material

Additional material was made available from interviewees who had contributed to the research.

ANNEX 2: RSO INTERVIEWS

Aide-memoire for the interviews

Peer Education in RSE: Questions for Road Safety Officers

Interviewer introduces project: we (East House Research) are currently carrying out research into the possibility of introducing a peer education scheme in road safety. This would apply to secondary school pupils and, as RSOs would be involved in introducing and supporting it, we are very keen to discover what Road Safety Officers think about this possibility.

- First of all, what do you think about the possibility of peer education in RSE for secondary school pupils?
- Do you know about any peer education taking place in secondary schools in your area, either in RSE or other subjects?
- What would any strengths of the scheme be?
- Can you think of any weaknesses?
- How might such a scheme be implemented?
- How might such a scheme be supported?
- How much RSO time might need to be devoted to it, both:
 - at its inception and
 - during its operation?
- How, if at all, might this link with JRSO work already going on in primary schools?
- How much training and support might be required for participating:
 - RSOs?
 - Teaching staff?
 - Pupils?
- What do you expect might be the response and take-up from schools and pupils in your area?

If the RSO interviewee has not suggested a school where RSE or other peer education is taking place in the questions above, she/he would also be asked to nominate one secondary school in which he/she is aware of good practice in road safety education.

List of areas from which the interviewees were drawn

Areas represented:

Aberdeen

Argyll and Bute

Scottish Borders

Dumfries and Galloway

Fife

Highland

North Lanarkshire

Tayside

West Lothian

ANNEX 3: ADVISER INTERVIEWS

Peer Education in RSE: Questions for Advisers or Equivalent

East House Research, a small independent research company, is currently carrying out research into the possibility of introducing a peer education scheme in road safety. This is being carried out on behalf of Road Safety Scotland, a body funded by the Scottish Executive. The scheme being explored would, if implemented, apply to secondary school pupils and, through interviews with a sample of Education Advisers (Guidance, Citizenship and Enterprise, or equivalent), we are very keen to discover what is the potential for peer education to be developed for RSE. We should point out that, by road safety education, we are looking beyond topics such as the Green Cross Code. We would hope to extend its application to exploring wider issues such as the risks to the young who might be out and about at night, in cars with friends, risk taking on the road, and the effects of peer pressure, etc.

Please answer, as fully as possible, the questions below:

- Can you tell me about any peer education that is taking place in secondary schools in your area?
- If there is peer education, would you please clarify the type and subjects/topics in which it is being used.
- What do you see as the strengths of peer education?
- What, if any, are the weaknesses?
- Do you think that peer education might be applied to road safety education in the secondary school?
- Are there any frameworks that might be adapted to support peer education in road safety?
- How might a road safety peer education scheme be implemented?
- How might a road safety peer education scheme be supported?
- How much teacher and/or Adviser time might need to be devoted to it, both:
 - at its inception and
 - during its operation?
- How much training and support might be required for participating:
 - teaching staff and
 - pupils?
- What do you expect might be the response and take-up from schools and pupils in your area?

I wonder if you could suggest a school in your area where successful peer education is being carried out and where we might be able to visit and talk to teachers and pupils about peer education.

Many thanks for your help.

List of areas from which the interviewees were drawn

Areas in which interviewees were based:

Central
Fife
Glasgow City
Orkney

An Adviser from North Lanarkshire had agreed to become involved but pressure of work meant that he had to withdraw.

ANNEX 4: PUPIL AND TEACHER INTERVIEWS

***Aide-memoire* for the interviews: schools**

Teaching Staff

- Please tell me about any existing examples of peer education of which you are aware, either confined to the school or in the local authority, in which you take part.
- What do you see as the strengths of this peer education programme?
- What, if any, are the weaknesses of this peer education programme?
- What, if any, would be the scope for extending this model of peer education into the area of road safety?
- What, in the way of resources or training, would be required for teachers and pupils taking part in a road safety peer education programme?
- Are there any additional suggestions or comments that you would like to make about peer education in your school?
- Are there any additional suggestions that you would like to make about peer education generally?

Pupils

- Can you tell me about any times when you have taken part in either learning from, or teaching/helping, other pupils in school?
- What did you think about this?
- Did it help you at all? If it did, how?
- Do you think it helped the pupil who was either learning or teaching? If so, how?
- I would like to know what you think about road safety – what does road safety mean to you?
- Road safety should be more than just what you covered in primary school, which was probably about learning how to cross the road [pedestrian safety] and safe cycling. It can involve safe driving, personal safety as a passenger (cars and buses) and peer pressure. Do you think it would be helpful to learn about these things from someone in school, your own age or older. [Older pupils – ask about teaching this to younger pupils.]

Head teachers (or nominees)

- Can you give me examples of existing peer education programmes of which you are aware within the school and/or the LEA?
- Are any of these used within the school?
- Are you aware of any peer education programmes that you would choose not to use in the school? If not, please say why not.

- What do you think might be the scope for extending peer education into the area of road safety?
- What do you see as the strengths of peer education programmes in practice?
- What do you see as the weaknesses of peer education programmes in practice?
- What are the administrative issues that might be linked to the development of peer education generally or road safety particularly?
- What are the training and time management issues that might be linked to the development of peer education generally or road safety particularly?
- Are there any additional suggestions that you would like to make about peer education generally?

ANNEX 5: SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

5.1 School A

Background

School A was a city centre school, with 978 pupils on its roll. It had been operating a peer education scheme for four years, through its city council peer education project. The scheme involved pupils from S2 visiting cluster primary schools and working with the P7 pupils in a drug and alcohol education programme. The S2 peer educators were chosen each year, at the end of S1. There was keen competition to become a peer educator – out of 150 possible candidates, 25 were selected.

Peer educators were given training, as were the pupils from another secondary school in the city, where the same scheme was adopted. This training involved attendance at initial sessions, followed up by a residential weekend.

The scheme itself involved the S2 pupils visiting P7 pupils over 12 weeks (two lots of six-week visits). The peer educators also committed to attending 25 training/bonding sessions, each Wednesday afternoon, at their school, between 3.30 and 5.00pm.

The RSO for the area had nominated the school as a possible candidate for inclusion in the research. The rector of the school was contacted and gave his agreement to the school's participation. Arrangements were then made through the assistant rector and her colleague in the Peer Education programme. A researcher visited the school to meet with the assistant rector and her Peer Education counterpart, in order to discuss the research, and the history and operation of the Peer Education scheme. A second visit was made to the school to meet with the peer educators themselves. On this second visit, an S3 pupil who had been involved in Work Experience with the Peer Education project was helping in an evaluation of the scheme, which involved interviewing some peer educators and recording them using a video camera. The researcher was allowed to sit in on these interviews. She also met with four senior pupils who had been peer educators and maintained informal links with the pupils with whom they had worked.

It was not possible to meet with any of the P7 pupils who had been exposed to the Peer Education programme, but further information was obtained from the Peer Education project, in a separate visit. Letters from P7 pupils who had been peer educated were shown to the researcher. They were letters of thanks to their peer educators, and all of the letters recorded a high level of P7 pupil interest in, and benefit from, the process of peer education.

Peer Education experience

Teaching Staff

An interview was held with the Assistant Rector of School A. She co-ordinated the peer education scheme but had no “hands-on” involvement with the day-to-day running.

Strengths of scheme

The interviewee saw only strengths in the peer education project. Her dealings were with only the peer educators and she outlined the benefits below:

- Pupils developing in confidence and maturity.
- Development of pupil awareness of risk and unsafe behaviours that were transferable to other areas.
- Peer educators becoming equipped to deal with the negative influences of peer pressure.
- Competition of pupils to become peer educators meant that pupils of a wide range of abilities and backgrounds were included.

The Assistant Rector recognised that running a similar peer education programme without the external support that they had would be very hard. Schools would not have time to develop such a scheme, with its training and support requirements.

The Assistant Rector saw no reason why RSE should not be included in the Peer Education programme, if it could be accommodated by a training and support element of the existing system.

Teachers

The teachers in this school did not have any “hands-on” involvement with running the Peer Education programme, but were reportedly very happy with what they saw as the benefits to the pupils and the school.

Pupils taking part as peer educators were reported to show more confidence and maturity than some of their year group, but peer educators could also be reminded of their role, and its function as a role model, on the odd occasion when they might step out of line.

Peer Educators

A researcher met with the peer educators on one of their weekly sessions. It was held at the end of the academic year, when the programme was complete, and, while there had been a small drop-out, nearly 80% of pupils remained committed to and involved in the scheme.

A pupil from S3 who had been involved as a peer educator the previous year and had been on placement with the Peer Education programme for work experience interviewed six peer educators individually, with the researcher being given permission to sit in on the interviews.

Not all of the peer educators wanted to be filmed but it was noticeable that those who agreed were confident and mature in their answers and in their body language. A consensus view emerged from the peer educators who spoke to camera that they had enjoyed the experience and would be keen to continue this type of work in some capacity. All of those interviewed said that their motivation had been to help pupils younger than themselves, but had found out that being a peer educator helped them as they felt they had developed team-work skills, confidence and had become more responsible.

A group of six peer educators then met with the researcher visiting the school, and gave further details about the scheme itself.

There had been competition to become a peer educator, but two of the girl pupils said that they had been aware of peer pressure not to take part. Some of their friends had tried to put these girls off the idea when it was first presented to them at a school assembly, and these girls were glad that there had been a chance to register interest in confidence.

The programme was described as Peer Education but as the literature review above explores, peer education may slide into “buddying”. The S2 pupils who had been peer educators had introduced themselves to the P7 pupils as friends and had spoken to them about their interests and friends before starting to talk about drugs and alcohol. They would sit and work with the P7 pupils before moving on to the education element of the programme. As the school year moved on, the P7 pupils had spoken about their anxiety about going to secondary school, having heard stories about initiation rites for new secondary pupils and the S2 peer educators were able to reassure them about this. The peer educators would be a familiar and reassuring presence for the new S1 pupils, and their role could be seen as having developed an additional function of buddying.

When asked about the possibility of including road safety in the programme for P7 pupils, the S2 peer educators were enthusiastic about this. They appeared very interested in road safety, seeing it as something that would be very important for P7s to know about, particularly before they moved to secondary school. They had suggestions as to how road safety might be covered and spoke enthusiastically about using videos and the experience of young people who had been involved in road accidents to educate the younger pupils.

Senior pupils

The researcher met with a group of four senior pupils (two S6, one S5 and one S4) who had been peer educators in S2, but who had continued informal links with the P7 pupils whom they had befriended and tutored once they came to secondary school. The senior pupils had not taught road safety but thought that it might be useful to cover it with younger pupils. All members of the group admitted to having friends or to having themselves behaved irresponsibly as road users as drivers, pedestrians or passengers. They saw irresponsible behaviour on the road as a kind of sport, pitting themselves against other road users.

They felt that to be effective, road safety peer education would have to be dramatic, and could include:

- Videos or witness testimony of real accidents.
- Reminders of road safety rules in real contexts.
- Case studies of irresponsible road behaviour and consequences that could be discussed by groups of pupils.
- A video based on flashbacks that a road accident victim has from his/her hospital bed, with accompanying resources for discussion points.

Male: Female ratios

Fewer boys than girls had become peer educators and even the boys recognised that they were less mature than the girls were at S2.

5.2 School B

Background

School B was located in the suburbs of a northern Scottish city with a roll of 835 students at the time of the research. It drew a mix of pupils from rural and urban backgrounds.

The school operated a number of peer involvement schemes, which covered:

- Peer Support
- Peer Assessment
- Buddying
- Paired Learning
- Peer Education

Buddying, paired learning and peer education took place on a regular basis. S5/6 pupils normally volunteered to assist in peer education, but sometimes boys considered to be appropriate candidates were specifically asked by staff to take part to redress the gender balance, as most volunteers were girls.

Buddying involved S5/6 students attending S1 register classes within their house (there were five houses in the school). This was seen as particularly important in the first term to help S1 pupils settle in. The S5/6 buddies also attended and assisted at S1 PSE classes to support young pupils. All these S5/6 buddies had attended a one-day buddying training course.

Paired learning took place in a number of subject areas. It was open to any department and was negotiated between S5/6 students and subject teachers. Paired reading and Maths where S5/6 students helped S1s on a one-to-one basis was a structured programme run by the Support for Learning Department. S1 pupils were 'educated' for regular 20-minute periods by S5/6 outside the main classroom setting. The S5/6 pupils were given specific training for this work. Paired learning and work in the class situation took place in other subject areas, including PE, PSE, History, Music and Geography.

S5/6 students had more time to devote to peer education schemes, although there is a suggestion that involving S3/4s in peer education might be a benefit to these pupils as it would increase their confidence, sense of responsibility, etc.

Peer Education Experience

Senior Management

It was considered that there was scope for extending peer education into RSE, but that it would be competing with other areas of the informal curriculum. One form of RS peer involvement was identified in the current bus monitor system.

The interviewees knew of some other peer education programmes (e.g. sex education) being used in other schools in the region but had not introduced these in their school.

Interviewees perceived the following strengths and weaknesses of peer education:

Strengths:

- Pupils would learn most by teaching, so it was good for the pupil educators.
- 'Learners' often have more in common with peer educators and are willing to discuss with, and learn from, people nearer their own age.
- There were credibility advantages with peers (as long as the person was credible to other pupils).

Weaknesses:

Any weaknesses were believed to centre around sustainability and organisational problems.

- Administrative issues would involve additional timetabling, as it would be necessary to make sure peer educators were available and that peer education demands did not interfere with their studies.
- Some supervision by teaching staff would be required to support peer education schemes. The Depute Rector had an overview of the schemes, but generally supervision fell to the head of the relevant department (e.g. paired reading was overseen by the head of the Support for Learning department.)

Teaching Staff

Teachers emphasised that the S6 students were particularly helpful in S1 guidance when health education and safety topics were being taught.

The perceived strengths of the Peer Education programmes were similar to those identified by senior management, but with the emphasis that both educator and educated gained confidence and better communication skills, whilst the peer educators developed responsibility. No weaknesses could be thought of and peer education was seen as a useful tool. Peer education was considered to provide interesting development opportunities and to be important because of the need to learn in social groups.

When asked about extending peer education to road safety, interviewees thought that peer educators were almost certain to have recent useful experiences and would understand the problems and concerns of those being educated.

Training was thought essential. Training for RS topics might well involve outside speakers such as RSOs. Resources would be required and these should, if possible, remain at the school.

Pupils

Groups of pupils from S2 (five pupils) and S6 (six pupils) were interviewed.

S2 Pupils

S2 pupils had experienced 'registration buddies' and S6 students helping in PSE/Guidance and Geography. Much of the registration buddying and guidance work took place in the first term, registration buddying on a daily basis and PSE weekly. Other subjects were on a less frequent basis. S5/6 were reported as being 'helpful' and led to a better understanding of parts of the work undertaken. One S2 said that it was more 'fun' having the seniors around and that this helped to create a good atmosphere in the classroom. These pupils said it was often good to have "more than one teacher in the classroom" to help. One S2 said it gave the senior pupils 'people skills', whilst another, whose older brother had been a peer educator and buddy commented it was "something to go on their CV and helps if they want to be a teacher when they leave school".

S2s' views on RS centred on a discussion on their own road safety experience (crossing roads "which we did in primary school", bus monitors and Crash Magnets).

S2 pupils thought it would be useful if older pupils were involved in RS because they would remember and understand problems young people face on the road better than teachers. They could also tell younger pupils about their experiences. Two S2s thought horror stories would be a better way of learning about RS. One S2 said he was not really interested about RS at present, but probably would be once he was old enough to drive. The consensus was that RSE had been "done at lot at primary", which pupils still remembered and doing more RS was not particularly interesting to them at present.

S6 Pupils

S6 students thought the strength of peer education was that it was often easier for younger pupils to approach a senior pupil rather than a teacher because they are not 'authority'. It also gave younger pupils confidence around seniors, which was recognised as important. The weakness was mainly to do with administration because peer education work depended on timetabling. There was often too much change in S6 personnel because they could only do certain times due to school work, exams, etc and when they were not available another senior helped out.

The peer education schemes were perceived to be reasonably well organised by S6 and relevant teaching staff. There were buddy leaders (one per house) who organised the buddies in their house – it was felt there could be some improvements in the administration at this level.

The S6 group mentioned informal peer support. This was perceived to be positive. The view of the S6s was that peer education depended on the pupils involved. Some pupils did not want additional help from peer educators. However, it was felt that having seniors in the classroom encouraged the majority of younger pupils. The one-to-one situations and registration buddying were seen to promote trust between pupils. The senior pupils felt the school benefited from the various peer involvement schemes and teachers seemed to be

appreciative of the programmes – they respected the seniors more and the seniors involved have a more responsible attitude. The target pupils' confidence and skill levels increased and there tended to be an improvement in behaviour.

The S6 pupils felt that being peer educators had helped them to be more patient and understanding, made them confident to talk to groups and in some cases renewed some forgotten knowledge. It was useful to put on their CVs, was often very enjoyable and gave them a great sense of satisfaction when the pupil they were mentoring improved.

Male: Female ratios

There were about 40 buddies in the school – more female than male. In the opinion of the S6 focus group, some boys do not get involved because they think it is more difficult for them to talk to younger pupils. Some boys were also considered 'lazy' and it was felt that often young pupils prefer to discuss most issues with girl rather than boy mentors, possibly because girls tend to be more mature and understanding of problems faced by young pupils.

5.3 School C

Background

School C, in the heart of the former Strathclyde region, had a roll of 760 pupils and a catchment that drew from areas of social deprivation. This school operated both paired reading and buddying systems.

Peer Education Experience

Buddying system

The scheme had been running for five years and the training for participants had become more sophisticated as time had passed. Every S6 pupil became a buddy, and the whole year was withdrawn for a half-day training session, run by a psychologist and supported by members of staff. At the start of the new school, year, S6 buddies were allocated three or four pupils in S1, to befriend them and develop support structures. The senior pupils would arrange an open meeting session where their buddies could come and meet them and chat through any issues.

There was a variable take-up by junior pupils, but it was felt that the scheme was beneficial to those pupils who might otherwise experience social or other problems and have no means of support.

Paired reading

Paired reading was a feature of School C. A large number of pupils in the school had literacy problems and even 15 minutes' supported reading per week had been found to be beneficial. The scheme could also be extended to support in other areas, and other academic subjects.

Teaching Staff

Interviews were held with two principal teachers of guidance and pupil support, who were involved in supporting the buddying scheme. An interview was also held with the Principal Teacher of Support for Learning.

Strengths

The strengths of the schemes were seen as:

- Empowerment of pupils who took part as buddies, some of whom had had learning or behavioural problems of their own.
- A means for buddies of developing important skills in an alternative to the formal curriculum.
- A means of reducing stress on younger pupils and helping improve their learning environment.

Weaknesses

Any weaknesses identified by any of the interviewees were administrative. This included a lack on continuity that might be caused by senior pupils on exam leave, and the fact that there might be inconsistencies between the ways in which buddying was carried out by different pupils in the school. The fact that it was a voluntary programme also meant that buddies' time might be committed elsewhere.

Inclusion of RSE

It was felt that it might be difficult to include RSE as a standard part of the buddying scheme, as what was covered was voluntary, and the school could not oblige pupils to cover RSE if they did not want to. However, the interviewees said that they would be willing to try to include RSE in the programme, if there was some formal structure to the road safety element, and training could be given.

Pupils

Interviews were held with a group of S2 pupils who had been buddied and with S6 pupils who had been buddies. The researcher was also given copies of some of the evaluation sheets that had been completed by the S6 buddies.

S2 Pupils

The S2 pupils had enjoyed the experience of being buddied, mainly as a way of getting to know new people in the school. Some of the pupils in this group had also been given paired reading support and had enjoyed this experience.

When asked about road safety, their initial response was to say that they knew all about it, as this had been covered in primary school. However, in discussion, it transpired that more than half of the pupils in the group had either been involved in a road accident at least once, or were related to some one who had been injured in a road accident. The pupils in this group then began to talk about ways in which they could cover road safety with buddies acting as peer educators. They suggested:

- Information on real accidents.
- Videos of real accidents.
- Someone making it “look cool” not to get knocked down.

S6 Pupils

The S6 pupils interviewed had enjoyed their experience as buddies, and felt that they had developed a good relationship with the younger pupils, especially the younger ones who had behavioural problems. They had enjoyed the training workshop provided and felt that they and the younger pupils had benefitted from the experience. They believed that road safety could be covered within their schemes, as long as they were given input on what to cover and how to cover it.

Evaluation forms returned by some of the older pupils who had been buddies were largely positive and any suggestions for improvements focused on administrative issues.

Male: Female ratios

In School C, more boys than girls acted as buddies.

5.4 School D

Background

School D was a mixed secondary school in a Scottish University town. With a roll of 1,850, it drew its pupils from a mix of urban and rural communities, representing a wide range of socio-economic conditions. The school was split-site.

The school had a long history and could trace its peer education programme to practice adopted in India by its founder in 1833. The scheme under review had been running since 1993 when it had been started by the Principal Teacher of Behaviour Support. In her work with pupils with behavioural support needs, she had discovered that many of them had learning problems and that if they were given appropriate help with their problem subjects, their behaviour improved. As she was not equipped to teach all of the academic subjects (such as physics, maths, Latin, English and French) with which her pupils had problems, she recruited pupils with strengths in these subjects to support their learning.

Peer Education Experience

Teaching staff

The Principal Teacher (Behavioural Support) ran the peer education programme, which involved S6 pupils working with pupils from lower in the school who had learning or behavioural problems (or both). All S6 pupils had the chance to become peer educators: S5 pupils were inducted at the end of their summer term when they were given a brief introduction to the peer education scheme and asked if they would like to volunteer. Volunteers were trained after the summer holidays, at the start of sixth year, in a one-day training event hosted by a local business on premises a few miles away from the school. Their role was to support learning of pupils lower down the school who had difficulties with

specific subjects, for any reason. The only pre-requisite was that the peer educators should have strength in one subject area that they could pass on to younger pupils.

Interviews were held with the Deputy Rector and the PT of Behavioural Support. Both interviewees spoke of the strengths of the scheme as being:

- Its broad base, enabling pupils to recognise perhaps unsuspected strengths in dealing with others.
- Of benefit to teachers who may not have been able to interact with some of their pupils in the way that best suited those pupils.
- Supportive of pupils with behavioural or learning problems who saw their peer educators as positive role models.
- Pupils who were being taught by older pupils seemed to pay more attention to what their peer educators were saying than they did to what teachers said.

The interviewees thought that while it might be difficult to accommodate road safety in a programme that was run on the basis of volunteers' subject strengths, it would be possible to offer peer educators the option of including road safety in their subject repertoire. This would work as long as it was recognised that the course was voluntary and that peer educators should be able to choose what they covered. It would also require good resources and training to be made available to the peer educators, and should involve someone from outwith the school carrying out the training.

Pupils

Interviews were held with a group of S2 pupils and a group of S6 pupils who had been peer educators.

S2 pupils

The S2 pupils who took part in the discussion had not received any road safety education, whether formally or through peer education while at secondary school. They believed that they had learned all that they needed to know about road safety while at primary school and that further road safety education was not necessary.

When asked about what they saw as danger activities to them while they were road users, two pupils mentioned travelling on buses and two mentioned riding bicycles. They made some suggestions as to how to remind road users like themselves about what to do on buses or bicycles, and agreed that it might be useful to hear from victims or witnesses of accidents or near accidents.

When asked if they would find it helpful to learn about road safety issues from older pupils in the school, they agreed that it would. Two boys in the group said they would find it interesting to hear about near accidents that older pupils had had. It would be important to avoid the glorification of danger by exploring examples of dangerous driving that had almost resulted in accidents, and to focus instead on the causes. However, the pupils suggested that the activities below could be carried out in a peer education context:

- Listening to first-hand accounts of accidents or near accidents.
- Discussing risk taking.

- Looking at local accident statistics.

S6 Pupils

A group of S6 peer educators met with the researcher. None of them had covered road safety with younger pupils but all felt that it would be very useful for all participants. They made the point that they and younger secondary pupils had no need of being reminded of the rules of the road, but needed help to see how different road user behaviours might affect them and their friends.

One pupil suggested that shock tactics would be best and the group discussed speed campaigns that they could remember and that had made an impact on them. One pupil said that children nowadays were exposed to a lot of violence on TV, videos and computer games, so there was no point in trying to hide the reality of road accidents from them.

Two pupils suggested that use of statistics was not the way to put forward a road safety message to their age group or younger pupils, but that it was important to engage pupils and make them realise that they could be involved in an accident. One pupil gave the example of a popular music group “Simple Plan”, which had developed a video to accompany its song “Untitled” and had made a dedication on the video to a college friend of members of the group, who had died in a car accident whilst still at college. Simple Plan had joined forces with the pressure group MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) in this message. It made a strong impression on the member of the discussion group.

Another member of the group suggested that road safety should be tied in with drugs and alcohol education, and that pupils should be consulted on, and involved in, the development of a safety resource that could be used by peer educators.

All members of the group thought it was important that peer educators who wanted to cover road safety should be given one day’s training from a road safety expert in a location outwith the school. All participants said that they would like facts that they could use. Videos and items for discussion groups would be useful, but they also felt it would be important for all participants in road safety by peer education to have some type of “hands-on” input. They would like to have material that would make pupils care about themselves and other road users.

It was recommended that the road safety peer educators should have follow-up workshops to enable them to talk about their experiences, update their skills, and help develop a resource for other users.

Male: female ratios

More girls than boys became peer educators at School D.

ISSN 0950 2254
ISBN 0 7559 2872 5

www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

The text pages of this document are produced from 100% Elemental Chlorine-Free material.
The paper carries the Nordic Ecolabel for low emissions during production, and is 100% recyclable.

Astron B44630 12/05

ISBN 0-7559-2872-5



9 780755 928729