



Impact Statement: Wingfield Primary School and the Embers for Schools Programme

September 2026

The purpose of this statement is to set out the national significance of the Embers programme and to describe the role Wingfield Primary School has played in creating it: as a development partner whose practice is embedded in the programme itself, and whose contribution will be felt in classrooms well beyond its own.

Embers the Dragon - a nationally significant programme

One in five children and young people in the UK now has a probable mental health condition, and the shortage of early support is felt in classrooms long before it appears in clinical data.

Embers the Dragon was built to meet that problem at the earliest possible point. It is a children's emotional health programme built on Social Learning Theory (the first-line approach recommended by the NHS and NICE for early emotional and behavioural concerns) and developed through research grants from Innovate UK and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).

Its content has been evaluated to a standard we believe no comparable programme in UK schools can match: a 2020 NIHR-funded feasibility trial, published in *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, followed by a fully independent, NIHR-funded randomised controlled trial (2022–2025) conducted by London South Bank University, in which 456 families of children aged 4–7 took part. The trial was published in *Frontiers in Psychology*

The trial found that the programme significantly improved mental health in children relative to the control group, with Embers families on average moving below the clinical threshold for referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS); the control group did not.

Embers for Schools & Wingfield Primary School

Embers for Schools brings this clinically validated content and mechanism into the classroom: a whole-school social and emotional learning curriculum spanning EYFS to Key Stage 2, designed to deliver the emotional wellbeing strand of PSHE within existing curriculum time and aligned to the statutory requirements for Relationships and Health Education.

Wingfield Primary School, as part of Compass Eko Trust, is a development partner for the Embers Programme and was among the first in the country to teach Embers. From those first classrooms the programme has grown to reach thousands of pupils each year, with the accompanying home programme carrying the same stories, language and strategies to families.

Wingfield's work has been instrumental ahead of the programme's forthcoming national rollout. Its teachers have supported the drafting and testing of every resource in the EYFS and KS1 programme, with their feedback directly shaping the versions now in use across all partner schools. For the KS2 programme the school has taken a leading role in writing the classroom resources in coordination with the Embers team.



In our structured teacher feedback, Wingfield's staff were the largest respondent group, and the school features in our case-study film.

"Wingfield has been a pivotal school in the development of the Embers for Schools programme. Their expertise, classroom knowledge and overall ethos have been a perfect match for Embers, and the programme has grown through co-design with their teachers and children, tested live in the classroom, because that is where a programme like this has to be proven."

Wingfield serves a diverse community, and they have helped us make sure Embers works for every child - including SEND and EAL pupils and children who can be harder to reach - and for every teacher, whether they arrive confident in teaching emotional health or not.

When schools around the country come to teach Embers, much of what works will have been worked out first in Wingfield's classrooms."

Dave Clark, Co-Founder & Managing Director, Embers the Dragon

The impact in classrooms is best described by those leading it at scale:

"Embers is used in classrooms across our trust, engaging over 2,500 pupils each year. As well as running it this year, we are excited to pilot the new Key Stage 2 programme."

Embers' combination of scientific rigour, curriculum alignment and pupil engagement is what has made it stand out to those who have encountered it across the trust. Children need to be emotionally regulated to access learning, and Embers gives them the language and tools to understand and manage their feelings from Reception onwards.

Our teachers report children self-regulating and resolving conflicts themselves, in the classroom and on the playground, and in early years we are seeing children perform strongly in the personal, social and emotional aspects of the curriculum, which sets them up for a good level of development at the end of Reception and everything that follows."

Dr Ross Silcock, Director of Curriculum and Pedagogy & Executive Leader, Compass Eko Trust

In our judgement, Wingfield is an exemplary partner school and a co-author of the programme. The school's ethos reflects the values Embers is built on, and the practice we have observed there - staff co-creating a clinically evidenced national programme and holding it to the standard of their own classrooms - is, in our view, transformative.

Dave Clark

Co-Founder & Managing Director, Embers the Dragon
dave@embersthedragon.co.uk