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CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND MEDIA

Media Smart *Be Adwise 2*

An Evaluation

Professor David Buckingham

Dr. Rebekah Willett

Dr. Shakuntala Banaji

Dr. Susan Cranmer

Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media
Institute of Education, University of London

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Context

Media Smart is a UK-based media literacy initiative, aimed at primary school children. It is a not-for-profit organization, which is funded by a range of corporate sponsors, and is advised by an Expert Group including representatives from industry, media regulators, academia and formal education. The main focus of its work to date has been on advertising. Its objective is to provide children with the critical tools to help them understand and interpret advertising, so that they are able to make informed choices on their own behalf.

Be Adwise 2 is the second set of teaching materials produced as part of the UK Media Smart initiative. The materials were launched in late 2004, and have been sent on request free of charge to over 7000 UK primary schools. Developed with leading UK media literacy experts, the materials are designed for use with pupils at Key Stage 2 (aged 7-11). They aim to support a range of curriculum areas, focusing particularly on Literacy/English and Citizenship. They also support Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Drama, Technology, Art and ICT education. The materials aim to build on children's own experience of media, and encourage active learning through the use of games, role plays, and practical media production tasks. The pack is organized in three modules: an introduction to advertising; advertising aimed at children; and non-commercial advertising. Each module takes the form of a resource pack containing teacher's notes, curriculum information and lesson plans, photocopiable material for pupils, examples of real advertisements from a range of media, and an interactive DVD with advertising clips and teaching materials.

The Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media is a specialist research centre based at the Institute of Education, London University, the UK's leading graduate school of education. The Centre has a strong track record of research, consultancy and evaluation in the field of media literacy, and has undertaken projects funded by a wide range of organizations, including the UK government research councils, the European Commission and UNESCO. The Centre's MA programme is the largest media literacy training course in the world; and its staff have published widely in the field of media education.

2. Aims

The Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media was engaged by Media Smart in mid-2006 to undertake an independent, objective evaluation of its *Be Adwise 2* materials. The evaluation sought to address the following questions:

- How and where are teachers using the materials?
- How well do they connect with the existing curriculum?
- Are the materials easy to use with different groups of children?
- How do the materials relate to teachers' own views on advertising and media literacy?
- Do the materials help children to understand advertising better?

In addition to evaluating the pack as a whole, we obtained responses to specific components (for example, the DVD and worksheets) and areas of content. Our questions here focused on three key dimensions:

- Success at engaging pupils
- Design and ease-of-use
- Age-appropriateness and adaptability.

3. Methods

The evaluation involved three main forms of investigation:

1. A detailed online questionnaire (www.beadwise2.co.uk), completed by around 350 teachers. The questionnaire contained 120 questions, inviting both 'tick box' and qualitative responses.
2. A series of in-depth telephone interviews with 24 teachers who have used the materials. These interviews lasted around 20 minutes each, and explored more qualitative questions about teachers' responses.
3. Classroom observations over several weeks in three contrasting primary schools. These observations provided much more sustained opportunities to see how the materials were being used.

The evaluation therefore sought to provide breadth and depth. It gathered information about teachers' views and attitudes, but it also sought to explore how the materials were actually being used in classrooms, and how pupils were responding to them.

4. Survey respondents: their motivations and patterns of use

Despite considerable efforts, we found it impossible to reach our target of 600 responses to our online questionnaire. This may in itself reflect pressures on teachers' time; although responses to surveys of this kind are rarely very high. However, it could also suggest that relatively few of the teachers who have requested the materials have actually used them.

Of our survey respondents, 55% had used the materials, while 45% had not. The teachers who used the materials had integrated them into their English curriculum or PSHE/Citizenship time. Generally, the packs were seen as a resource from which to pick and choose and to adapt to the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. The overriding reason for not using the materials or for using only part of the pack was that of time constraints, both in terms of planning time (time to read the materials and adapt them) and curriculum time.

5. Survey: evaluations of the materials

Overall the teachers responded extremely favourably to the materials. The 23 activities were rated as either 'excellent' or 'good' by over 85% of the teachers. The materials were evaluated on their success at engaging pupils, design and ease-of-use, and age-appropriateness and adaptability. The various components of the pack (DVD, teacher notes, real examples, curriculum mapping and worksheets) were also highly rated, with 3 out of the 5 components receiving over 87% 'excellent' or 'good' ratings in terms of their usefulness.

6. Survey: how the materials connected with teacher attitudes

The survey indicated that teachers see advertising literacy as an important part of their pupils' education. However, according to a majority of the teachers surveyed, the primary reason for developing advertising literacy is due to the gullibility of children and the powerful influence of advertisements. These attitudes of the teachers may have determined how, when and which aspects of the materials were used. For example, advertisements were used to teach about persuasive writing; and regulation of advertising was taught far less frequently than how audiences are targeted.

7. Survey: how the materials connected with the curriculum

Over 70% of the teachers rated the materials 'excellent' or 'very successful' for teaching about the language of advertising, how audiences are targeted and messages and values in advertisements. Although other advertising literacy areas such as how an ad is produced and regulation of ads received lower scores, this is most likely due to teachers prioritizing other areas more highly (possibly indicating less interest in these latter areas), given the time constraints which require picking and choosing of activities. In terms of National Curriculum components, the teachers rated the materials most successful for addressing group discussion and interaction skills and for speaking and listening skills (over 80% of teachers rated the materials 'excellent' or 'very successful' in this respect). The materials were also rated highly in the areas of writing and PSHE and Citizenship. Curriculum areas where the materials were not used by a majority of the teachers, such as music and drama, were rated less highly.

8. Observations: teachers' and students' responses

The children we observed and interviewed in our three case study schools already had a considerable knowledge of advertising. Some of the oldest children, aged ten, had a developing understanding of complex issues such as the persuasive techniques of advertising, the different types of advertising, and consumer rights. On other issues, such as the association between endorsers and products, there was more confusion. Even so, the children had had very little opportunity to discuss or study these issues in school.

The teachers too had had very little previous experience of media education. This was partly a consequence of lack of time, and other pressures on the curriculum, but it was

also to do with a lack of training. Most work on advertising tended to occur in the literacy curriculum, under the rubric of 'persuasive writing'.

Responses to the pack in all three schools were very positive. The children approached the activities with great energy and enthusiasm, and particularly enjoyed the pair/group work. Teachers also were very positive, arguing that the packs had been stimulating and successful. They appreciated having 'ready-made' resources (particularly in the form of the DVD), and they also understood the relevance of the topic to the children's everyday lives outside school.

9. Observations: problems in using the materials

Nevertheless, teachers faced several obstacles and difficulties in using the pack. These were partly about their own inexperience in the field – in relation to subject content, technical know-how and the particular teaching strategies that were used. Teachers who lacked confidence tended to use the materials in a less flexible and selective way, and to work through the activities fairly mechanically, seeking to impose single right answers. This sometimes functioned to close down discussion, and proved alienating for some students.

Further difficulties were encountered as a result of weaknesses in the design of the materials. Issues raised here included the difficulty of using the DVD, the lack of space for students to write on the worksheets, the language level of some of the worksheets, and the quality of the photocopied materials. A further issue here related to the cultural exclusiveness of some aspects of the content, which was particularly an issue for children who came from non-English backgrounds. These children challenged the representations (for example, of families) in the materials, and produced alternative images that were more relevant to their own cultural backgrounds.

10. Observations: pedagogical issues

The teaching strategies used in the pack were generally well received, although in some cases they were quite difficult for teachers to implement. This was particularly the case with the production activities, which proved complex for the teachers to manage, particularly in smaller classrooms with limited resources, and where teachers were generally less experienced in this approach. On the other hand, the production activities did allow children who might otherwise have been marginalized to display their strengths. The children's presentations of advertisements for their school showed real insights about aspects of 'media language', persuasive techniques and the targeting of different audiences.

11. Observations: children's learning

In general, the work on the materials enabled the children to become more aware of the persuasive appeals of advertising; the use of 'media language' (including camerawork and music); and how different consumers are targeted. The pack raised issues (such as charity advertising and non-commercial campaigns) that many children had not considered before, and that challenged them to think in new ways about advertising.

There were clear gains in learning, which were apparent from comparing the initial interviews and the debriefing interviews, comparing the initial responses and later responses to the worksheets, and looking at how the children integrated their critical understanding into their own productions.

12. Implications for Media Smart

In many respects, the evaluation provides a positive endorsement of the materials: the teachers who had used *Be Adwise 2* found it to be engaging for pupils, comprehensive in its coverage of key media literacy issues, and effective in terms of developing children's understanding.

However, the feedback from our surveys and interviews, and the data from our observations, also suggest that there are some key ways in which future materials might be improved.

The worksheets could be designed to be more 'kid-friendly'; they should allow children more space to write; and attention needs to be paid to the quality of reproduction, to ensure that materials are clear and readable. Making the materials available via a website, and in an adaptable form, would permit greater flexibility.

Some of the activities in the pack lend themselves to a rather 'literal' approach. Efforts need to be made to ensure that activities open up discussion and debate, rather than closing it down by imposing single 'correct' answers.

The examples of real advertisements (on the DVD and in the printed materials) are much appreciated; but efforts need to be made to ensure that examples remain current. This might be achieved by providing further examples via a website.

The materials need to be more inclusive of different cultural backgrounds, and could usefully include material from different cultures. They should also encourage children's efforts to be critical of mainstream media representations – a key area of media literacy that is rather neglected in the pack.

There is a need to provide further training and support for teachers who are less experienced or confident in media education. This could be provided face-to-face, or in the pack themselves – in teachers' notes (for example, by providing accessible routes through for teachers new to the area), but possibly also in short video sequences of 'best practice' on the DVD.

13. Implications for media literacy in schools

The evaluation also suggests some broader implications for the future development of media education in UK primary schools. Our research shows that there is considerable interest in this area among teachers, and that *Be Adwise 2* is meeting a perceived need. However, it also suggests that teachers continue to face significant obstacles in actually implementing media literacy in the classroom.

In general, there appear to be few opportunities for media literacy work, and teachers lack experience and confidence in this area. As a result, they may be likely to steer clear of the 'technical' aspects of media, and to use existing materials extremely 'literally', thereby compromising the more engaging, open-ended approach of media education. We found that teachers were particularly wary of production activities, not simply on the grounds of their own lack of confidence with the technology, but also because they found them too disruptive and difficult to manage with large classes.

All this points to an urgent need for professional development in this area. Teaching materials can provide valuable training in their own right, but they need to be supplemented by face-to-face provision, or possibly distance learning. This is something that Media Smart might provide, although it will obviously need to work with other partners and stakeholders in doing so.

SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

This part of the evaluation was designed to gain a broad picture of how the materials were being used and how teachers across the UK felt about the materials, as well as giving in-depth data on specific uses of the materials. As such, we implemented an online survey for quantitative data which would give a broad picture, and we contacted 24 teachers for phone interviews to give us more qualitative data. The online survey consisted of 120 questions and the phone interviews lasted 20 – 30 minutes. The survey contained questions about how and why the *Be Adwise 2* materials were used, evaluative questions on different components and aspects of the packs, questions about how well the materials addressed particular skills and questions about teachers' ideas about children and advertising. There were thirteen places in the survey for teachers to write comments further to what they had already indicated, providing us with more qualitative data. The telephone interviews contained follow-up questions to the survey and provided further qualitative data on teachers' opinions about the materials and how the materials were used.



Methodology and analysis

The survey was advertised to over 7000 teachers who had requested the packs. Letters and faxes were sent to teachers, and incentives were given for completing the survey (WHSmith vouchers and a prize draw for a camcorder). We aimed to survey a minimum of 600 teachers. However, in spite of repeated attempts to encourage teachers to respond, only 347 teachers completed the survey. This may in itself reflect pressures on teachers' time; although responses to surveys of this kind are rarely very high. However, it could also suggest that relatively few of the teachers who have requested the materials have actually used them. Whatever the reason for this poor response, the results discussed here can therefore only be seen as indicative of teachers' use and opinions of the materials. This is not a representative sample of UK teachers, because we were only

surveying teachers who had requested the materials. The results must be seen as an indication of the opinions of teachers' who have access and time to complete an online survey and who were interested in the materials from the start.

In order to more fully understand the responses that teachers gave in the online survey, twenty-four teachers were interviewed by telephone. The majority of these teachers had taught the materials with 10 – 11 year-olds, though one teacher had used the materials with a class of 6 year-olds, another two teachers with 12 year-olds. Their responsibilities and positions varied from Head and Assistant Head teachers through to one teacher who was newly qualified. The teachers who took part came from across the UK, from as far north as Inverness, Scotland, to Wales to the South East of England.

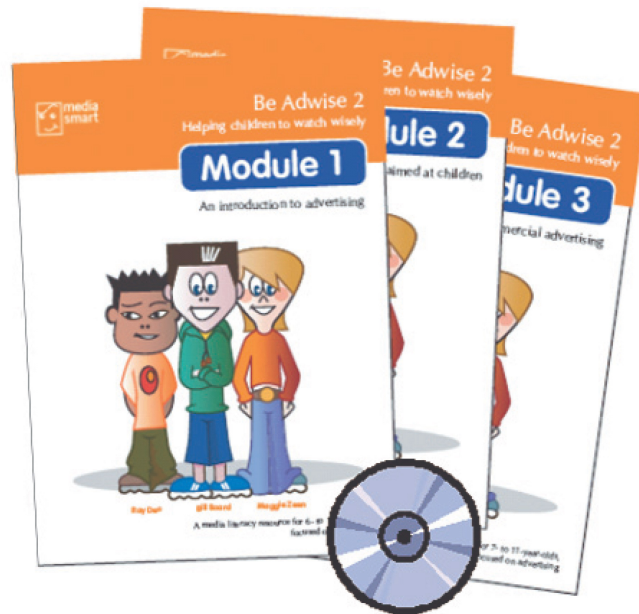
The analysis which follows integrates qualitative data from the interviews with the more quantitative data from the survey. In the analysis we looked for patterns in the responses from teachers. In particular, we looked to see if the statistical data from the survey corresponded with the comments from both the survey and the interviews. We also looked for patterns across the different sections of the survey (comparing teachers' attitudes towards children and advertising with their reasons for using the materials, for example).

It is also important to consider the results from the evaluation in the context of everyday teaching practices in primary schools. One aspect of good teaching is to draw on a variety of resources in lessons. However, this often involves adapting materials so they can be integrated into the classroom in order to meet specific objectives, to match the needs and abilities of pupils and to link with other areas of study. As such, it is very rare for teachers to use materials 'straight off the shelf'. Committed teachers draw on a variety of materials to construct a coherent programme for pupils on a daily basis as well as over the course of a unit or term. The data from the evaluation indicate that the *Be Adwise 2* materials were used in this way, with the teachers dipping into the packs and adapting the activities for their situations. It is also important to note that 'media education' is not specified in the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2, as it is in Key Stage 3, and teachers at this level will have had no training in this area. Integrating the materials into existing curriculum areas, such as literacy or citizenship, is crucial in order to give them time and space in an already crowded school day.

One further contextual factor to keep in mind when reading this evaluation is the daily life of teachers. One of the reasons we may have had a low rate of response to the survey is the considerable pressure teachers are under, time constraints being particularly relevant here. With very little preparation time for lessons and increasing demands to have the skills and knowledge to meet the social, emotional and academic abilities of pupils, teachers' lives outside their teaching day are very busy. Teachers are also under considerable pressure and time constraint in the classroom, given the curriculum they are required to cover as well as the obligation to prepare pupils for national assessments.

Why and how the Be Advise 2 materials were used

From the survey of 347 teachers, almost 55% of the teachers had integrated the materials into their curriculum at the time of the survey. This section of the report will discuss why and how teachers used the materials, as well as looking at reasons for non-use.



Requesting the materials

Teachers indicated a wide range of reasons for requesting the materials. Teachers were attracted to the materials as they contained real examples of advertisements, were free and saved time in that they did not have to collect their own resources:

“The real examples have saved me so much time as I used to video adverts and trawl through for something interesting and appropriate - thanks!”

“Anything that’s free I sort of send off for, I try and get hold of. And especially with DVD materials, they’re always good. But this particular one I was very impressed with, I liked the design and the cover, the bright, glossy wallets.”

Although we did not ask where teachers heard about the packs, a number of teachers mentioned finding out about the materials through training courses or local education authority advisors, suggesting an effective means of distribution might be to target and even invite advisors and trainers on a media education course which would introduce the pack¹. Primarily, the teachers were looking for resources to teach about advertising and/or particular aspects of literacy. (Evaluation of how the pack met teachers’ objectives in these areas can be found in the sections which follow.) The data suggest

¹ Teachers mentioned finding out about the pack through a student teacher, the British Film Institute, an interactive white board training course, a primary strategy team, a local educational authority literacy advisor, and an advanced skills teacher course for literacy and ICT.

the materials were used mainly during literacy teaching, though some teachers mentioned using the materials for cross-curricular work, drama and Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) or citizenship. Teachers said that there is a dearth of resources in general for teaching non-fiction, so the *Be Advise 2* materials were very useful in filling the gap. Often the materials were used as a way of looking at persuasive writing, whilst capitalising on children's already established enthusiasm for adverts.

"I knew that we had the literacy unit to cover on persuasive writing. And I know that adverts are things that really fix in kids' minds. When you talk about them, they all know the adverts, they all know the songs and the jingles so I thought it was a really good example of looking at persuasive writing."

Teachers frequently said that teaching persuasive writing was their original motivation for using the materials. Where teachers specifically mentioned the importance of teaching about media, it appeared that their teaching included media as an aid to learning about other issues (e.g. to spark a discussion about 'junk food') rather than being media education aimed at helping children to understand how media are constructed.

Teachers commented on the strength of using materials which connected to children's lives as well as to the curriculum:

"They all know the adverts, they all know the songs and the jingles so I thought it was a really good example of looking at persuasive writing."

"In a lot of the work we do now, we are trying to equip the children with skills for life...everything now is linked back to real life examples so that they can see the point in doing it."

The aims of the pack fit particularly well with current teaching initiatives aimed at encouraging healthy eating. Teachers thought it important that children understood products might not be as healthy as advertisers sometimes suggest:

"Also we are doing healthy eating at school. So we are trying to say, look, all the nice things may not be as nice as they are advertised. They taste nice but they're not good for you."

Finally, teachers mentioned looking for materials that were exciting and engaging, particularly for 'hard to reach' pupils, for use at the end of term and for use with English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils. The materials were seen as an ideal end-of-year activity to re-energise and engage children at a time when lessons can easily flag.

"We mainly used it as part of a literacy focus. It was done sort of at the end of term so it was quite cross-curricular really. And they were just good activities to really keep the children's interest, because they were very real life..."

One teacher said that a group of Further Literacy Support (FLS) students had responded much better to the *Be Advise 2* materials than the usual FLS materials.

"It really engaged particular boys really. Because, there were five boys in that FLS group and they just responded much better to those materials than the FLS"

materials... It's people they know, they're in the media, not particularly because it's adverts that they know, but because it's media figures they're aware of, and that they know really. (referring to celebrity ads, Gary Lineker et al)."

In the interviews and in two of the responses on the survey, teachers indicated that they found the packs particularly helpful for engaging boys in literacy work:

"They love the ones that the footballers are in, get the boys interested. With boys especially with English, they can be less interested sometimes; but they become just as interested with the television because you are dealing with something they already know."

Teachers who did not use the Be Advise materials

We had 144 statements from teachers who had not used the materials. Two-thirds of the responses indicated that lack of time was an issue. We also asked teachers who used the materials what obstacles they faced when doing more work such as this, and two-thirds of these teachers specifically mentioned time constraints and crowded curricula. Teachers who had requested the materials but had not use them mentioned lack of opportunity: they had not covered the topic yet, they had already planned their lessons before they received the materials, they were covering other curriculum areas and did not have time to focus on advertising and/or they had not had time to look through the materials. Although we did not specifically ask about future use, just over half of the teachers who said they had not yet used the materials were planning to use them in the future. A further proportion (23%) qualified their statements with 'yet' (eg. 'not yet covered the topic'), indicating that they were considering using the materials in the future. Several others who had used the materials said that now they have used them once, they would be able to explore the materials more fully in future. From these comments and from the comments from non-users (eg. 'haven't had time to look at the resources'), it appears to take time to explore the materials; therefore, one improvement to consider is how to make the content more accessible and provide different 'routes' through the pack for teachers who may be short of time.

The third of teachers who did not mention timing as a reason for non-use gave various reasons for not using the materials, and no teacher openly rejected the materials based on quality. Eight percent of non-user teachers said they did not find the materials suitable due to the subject or age-range they were currently teaching (for example, a drama teacher and a librarian did not find them applicable). A higher number (17% of non-users) said the materials were unavailable, either because they had not received them, they were misplaced or they had given them away. Making the materials available on-line could solve this problem.

How the materials were used

The materials are aimed for use with children ages 6 – 11. A majority of the teachers (85% of the survey respondents and almost all the telephone interviewees) used the materials with somewhat older children, ages 8 – 11. Some teachers thought that the materials were too difficult for younger children in their schools:

"I'd use them with [years] 5, 6, I wouldn't use them with our 3, 4s. But in another school they might go with 3, 4s. But I wouldn't personally use them with year 3,

4s. [Interviewer: Why, because you think they'd be too difficult?] Yes, and I wouldn't think about teaching persuasion in the same way with 3, 4s."

Data from the survey indicated that 65% respondents used the materials for 2 – 4 weeks, with the largest percentage (42%) using the materials for 30 – 60 minutes per week. The materials are divided into three stand-alone modules: an introduction, advertising aimed at children, and non-commercial advertising. The materials are designed so teachers can pick and choose from the three modules and adapt materials for their needs and purposes. From the survey, we can see that the introduction was used more frequently than the other two modules, and the non-commercial advertising module was used least frequently; the introduction was used over three times more than the non-commercial advertising module, and the 'advertising aimed at children' module was used over twice as much as the non-commercial advertising module. Together with the teachers' comments about time restraints, we can speculate that many teachers did not go beyond the introductory modules because of lack of time to devote to the topic.

The interviews give more details about how the materials were used. Here teachers indicated they dipped into the modules, selecting and adapting materials they thought would work well:

"I pick and mixed what I could use and what I couldn't use. I don't think I ever followed anything precisely as it is in your booklet, but I don't think anybody ever would. I think you would just adapt it to your class."

The data indicate that teachers had to familiarise themselves with the pack and carefully select materials. Teachers being interviewed were frequently unable to give a detailed explanation of why particular activities had been rejected. They had carried out these selections very quickly, dismissing what they thought would not work. One teacher gave the following account:

"It is very important to look at the children and think about which adverts, which is why I chose the adverts I did, because they were the ones that I knew the children would relate to, they were the ones about the shoes and the trainers. I knew that they would like those ones."

Reasons for selecting or rejecting particular activities included:

- Time: some activities looked more time consuming (for both the children carrying out the activities and also the teacher in terms of preparation time; the implication being that these activities were less likely to be selected)
- Quality of engagement: activities which looked particularly engaging were chosen (for both children and their teachers)
- Objectives: teachers looked for materials which would meet National Curriculum requirements
- Level of difficulty: teachers chose materials which matched or could be easily adapted to the abilities of the children

- Children's experience: teachers considered what the children would already know about, what would engage them by fitting in with their own experiences, their home lives, and their interests.



Obstacles to using the materials

As discussed above, throughout the survey, teachers indicated that time was a major obstacle to using the packs. In response to the question, 'what obstacles would you face in doing more of this kind of work', two-thirds of the teachers indicated time constraints and/or pressures on the curriculum. Again, as stressed previously, the more the materials are linked explicitly to National Curriculum objectives, the more easily the materials will be integrated into classroom timetables, as this teacher indicates:

"No time to become familiar with materials. The first thing I look for in literacy resources is which text level objectives are being addressed. It was not immediately obvious how Media Smart materials could fit into my teaching programme."

The remaining third of the responses contained a random assortment of obstacles, with almost one-quarter of these teachers saying there were no obstacles. The other responses included issues about children's needs (language barriers, differentiation, conflicts doing group work) and resource constraints (having cameras or editing equipment to do particular tasks, having enough packs in the school, having advertisements for children to be working with individually, having updated advertisements).

Three teachers on the survey mentioned having to clear the materials through school administrators or advisors, and at one school mentioned in the interviews there had been problems in the past when showing films and clips from films, as parents did not wish their children to be exposed to the media. In relation to *Be Adwise 2*, this teacher

said if objections were raised, she would seek to overcome parents' resistance through talking to them about the aims of the pack:

"I think that's the way I'd overcome it, I'd educate the parents. I'd make sure that they knew that we were deconstructing adverts and teaching children not to become passive consumers."

Evaluation of the activities

The three modules contain 23 activities which teachers were asked to evaluate on the survey and comment on in the interviews. It is important to recognize that teachers only evaluated materials that they used. Some materials were only used by one-quarter of the teachers surveyed. However, we have averaged the scores together to be able to present an overall picture of the teachers' evaluations. This could possibly present a skewed evaluation, as teachers only used (and evaluated) materials they thought would work in their classroom.

Each activity was evaluated in the following three areas: success at engaging pupils, design and ease-of-use, and age-appropriateness and adaptability. Chart 1 shows average scores for all the activities in the three evaluation areas.

As can be seen from this chart, overall the evaluation of the materials is very positive. In the interviews and in comments on the survey, the activities and the resources contained in the packs were highly praised:

"The beauty of it was that it all went like a dream, it was a really good resource"

"They were just good activities to really keep the children's interest, because they were very real life...they were very high quality resources"

"Used the resources during Ofsted and they really did the trick!"

In response to the question 'were the materials successful at engaging pupils in classroom activities', 90.7% of teachers rated the materials as excellent or good, with only 9.2% rating them as adequate and one person rating one activity as poor. Comments from the survey and the interviews align with this positive indication.

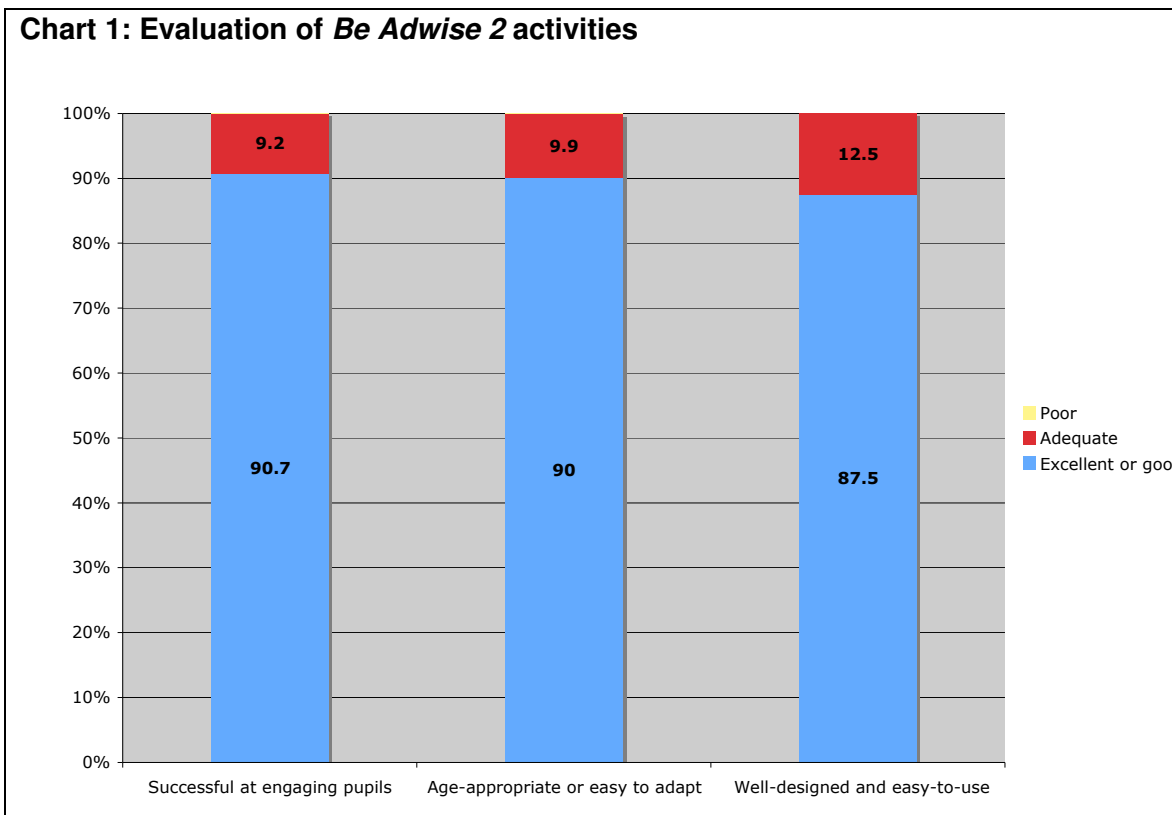
"Highly engaging. Pupils looked forward to these lessons each week."

"Very successful - children were really interested and excited by what they were doing. children at all levels of ability were able to talk from their own experience and make connections."

Similarly positive ratings were given to the question 'were the materials well-designed and easy-to-use'. 87.5% of teachers rated the materials as excellent or good, with only 12.5% rating them as adequate and no one rating them as poor.

"A fantastic resource - lessons were easily adaptable and everything required was to hand so preparation was very easy. The children loved them and the lessons often featured in their 'I have really enjoyed....' section of their weekly reviews."

“I liked the presentation of them. Things like the writing frames. They were very clear and they were very simple and just right for primary school children really.”



Finally, the teachers were asked if the materials were ‘age-appropriate or easy to adapt to your age group’. Materials were considered easy to adapt by a large majority of the teachers surveyed and interviewed. 90% of teachers rated the materials as excellent or good, with 9.9% rating them as adequate and only two out of over 4000 responses indicated a poor rating. Teachers commented on the adaptability of the materials for more or less able children. The materials could be used with mixed ability groups, and in some cases the teachers said that they differentiated the materials so that all children could achieve at their own level.

“For my class some of the activities were quite challenging, so it worked well within mixed groups allowing lots of discussion and allowed the more able to be stretched a bit.”

“The main way that I adapt them is through the adult support. I mean for example, your pack, the way the materials come, I would use that with the middle ability. And then I would differentiate it down by making the work sheets simpler and putting an adult in for my lower ability. Then I might add extensions on for my higher ability and expect them to go further.”

The materials were inclusive to an extent – they engaged all children in classes, including children with special needs and other children who would not normally contribute in discussions. In relation to English as an Additional Language (EAL) children, one teacher said:

“I think it worked well for them. I have an interactive whiteboard in my classroom so I was able to play the DVDs on a big screen. And they got very excited about that. And they could relate to everything that I was saying or could understand everything that I was saying because I was showing examples on the screen. So we looked at the ads that appealed to children. And they could understand the features of a good advert because they were seeing them on the screen. It just helps because instead of reading it all the time, they could see an example.”

However, some of the advertisements in the modules, such as the Oxo ads, were considered difficult for some children to relate to:

“Also because our children are predominantly Muslim, they don’t come from the twee little families that, you know, they have a lot of extended families so they can’t necessarily relate to that sort of ideal really.”

Usefulness of components

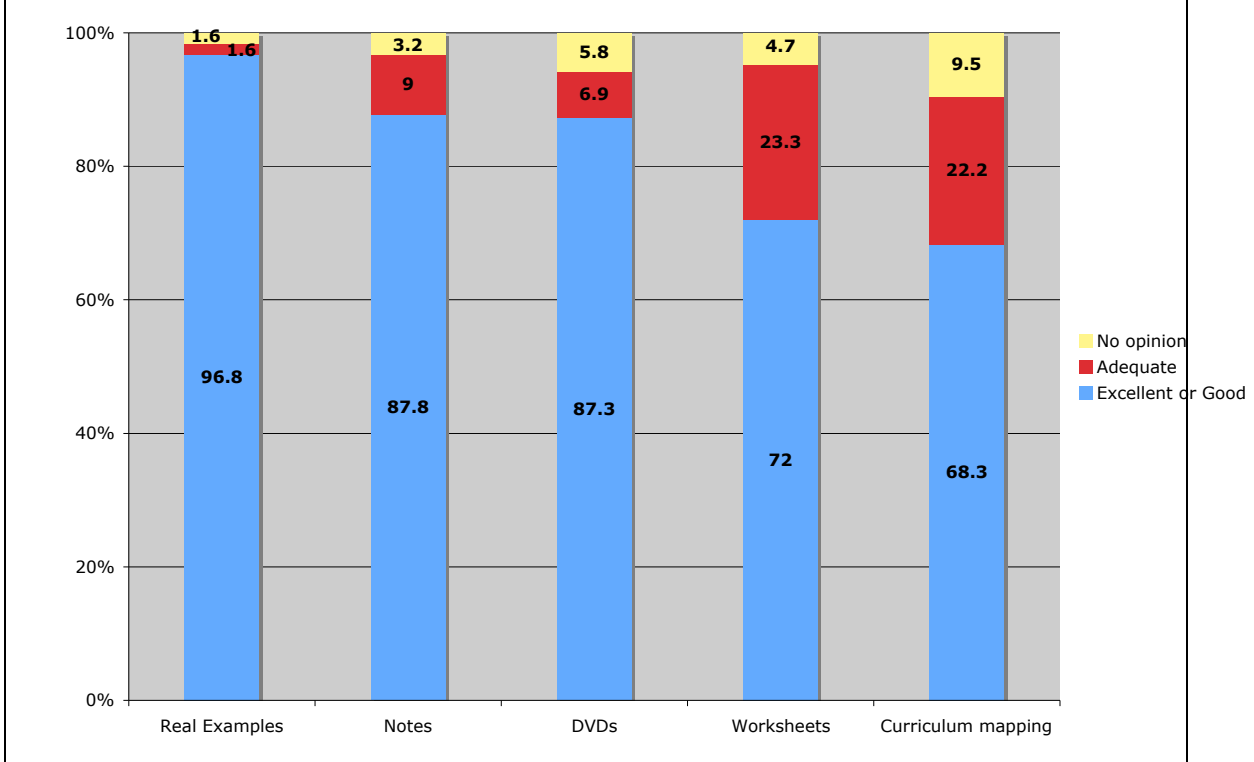
The *Be Advise 2* pack contains various components: the DVD, teacher’s notes, worksheets, curriculum mapping and examples of real advertisements. The teachers were asked to rate the components of the pack according to how useful they were in the classroom.

“It was hard to go wrong with it really. It certainly had all of the resources, they were fantastic, very accessible for the children as were the lesson plans and the ideas given with it for me. And it fitted in with the curriculum, where I wanted it.”

Overall the data indicate a positive response to all the components, as can be seen on Chart 2. The real examples of advertising were rated excellent or good by 96.8% of the teachers; and the DVDs and teacher notes were both rated excellent or good by just over 87% of the teachers. However, by comparing the responses across the different components, it is apparent that teachers are significantly more positive about the real examples, DVDs and teacher notes. This indicates that teachers are particularly looking for visual resources and ideas for lessons, as is also suggested by their reasons for requesting and using the pack.

The worksheets and curriculum mapping appear to be slightly less useful for teachers. Here, 72% and 68% of the teachers rated the worksheets and curriculum mapping excellent or good, respectively. Given the positive responses to the adaptability of the resources and the indication that teachers used the materials in adapted forms, the data suggest that teachers are confident with the curriculum and their ability to adapt materials to suit both the curriculum and their pupils’ needs. Worksheets which they are not able to adapt, therefore, are less useful. It is also worth noting that three teachers on the survey commented that they do not use worksheets, and therefore gave them a low rating.

Chart 2: Usefulness of *Be Advise 2* components



The survey provided little qualitative data on how the components were used. Of the 20 statements given under the heading ‘additional comments on the components of the pack’, half the statements were general comments about the usefulness of the materials or the intention to use the materials further in the future. The other half (10 responses) gave specific comments on the components, ranging from problems with the DVD to comments about general policies about not using worksheets in the classroom. Further details of the responses from the interviews and the survey are as follows.

Real examples

The real examples were seen as particularly engaging and added to the children’s learning and understanding of how ads are constructed:

“Real examples are one of the best ways to get the message across to the children as they can relate to the particular advert.”

“With the ads actually picked out by Media Smart, it was sort of picking out the best ones for them to be looking at. So I think, yes, they got more quality out of it rather than just adverts I would find.”

DVD

The audio-visual materials on the DVD were said to work particularly well on whiteboards. Teachers said it was crucial that the clips remain up-to-date. One suggested updating on a two-year basis, downloadable from the website. Another suggested using adverts which continued to use the same motifs over time as a way of

getting around this. Most teachers were realistic about how expensive it could be to update the DVDs regularly:

“I don’t know whether annually would be realistic? A lot of adverts do stay around for quite a while don’t they? Like the Andrex puppy one where they use the puppy all the time, it’s just a different advert each time.”

Some teachers said they would like to be able to copy from the DVDs into their word processing application so that they could use the materials more flexibly, for instance, to develop their own.

“Because you didn’t have it on the disk, a lot of it you had to retype out... So I was cutting the pictures out and remaking them. It was just some of the wording really that I had to alter. Just simplify it down.”

Together with the indication that teachers are willing and comfortable adapting the materials, and the comments that worksheets were graded lower because of their lack of flexibility, it is clear that all materials need to be as flexible as possible to maximise use in classrooms.

Teacher’s Notes

Most teachers found the notes useful, though as indicated earlier, the suggestions were not followed ‘to the letter’:

“Yes, they were useful, for giving you an idea because even if at the end of it, you were thinking, no, that wouldn’t work with this class, I know what will and get me the same objectives, and it is the objectives you really looking for.”

Worksheets

Teachers who used the worksheets found them useful. They did not adapt them on the whole, instead they were more likely to exclude what they did not think would work.

“I didn’t use all the parts of the module. I just used the parts which best fit. And I did supplement it with other activities, so that we used Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and they designed an advert for a new chocolate bar... But the actual resources I used, I used as they were. I didn’t adapt them at all. So I used the video clips, I used the images on the disk and I used a few of the worksheets as well. I didn’t adapt those at all, I just used them straight from the pack.”

Teachers who did adapt the worksheets listed the following reasons: age group, different abilities, and because they felt it was good practice to put their own interpretation on materials. The worksheets were scaled down, other activities were added and language was simplified.

One teacher commented that the worksheets were easy to adapt for different children, as they did not contain a lot of text. Some teachers would like to have the worksheets as colour posters so they could be held up in front of the children:

“A poster size worksheet would have been quite nice. Then we could have stuck labels onto them, and the children could have come out and picked the various areas, and because colour is quite a major part of advertising isn’t it?”

Curriculum mapping

Very few teachers commented on the curriculum mapping. One teacher who found the links helpful, suggested further links to the Literacy strategy and one suggested links to the curriculum in Northern Ireland.

How the materials connect with teachers' views of advertising and children

The survey and the interviews included questions which would allow us to examine teachers' opinions about the relationship between children and advertising. The following statement encapsulates many of the responses we received:

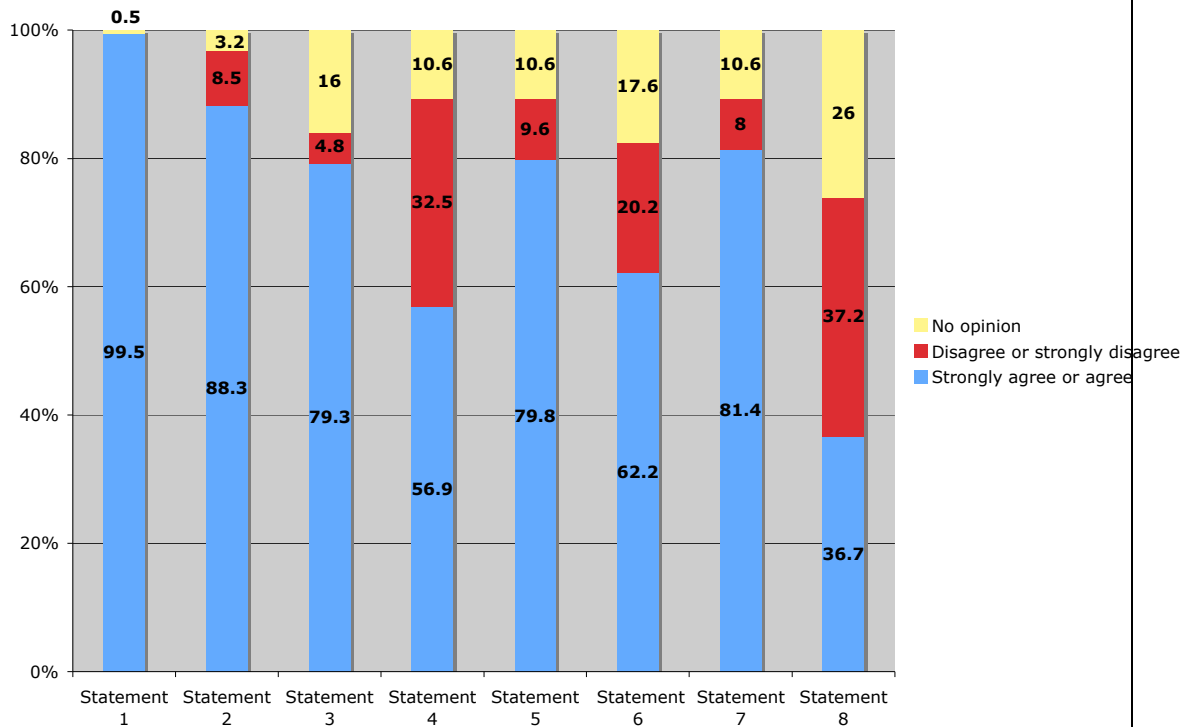
"Whilst accepting that children appear more media savvy than earlier generations, they are still naive and very open to exploitation. Media education gives them tools to read ads more thoughtfully and critically."

As in the above statement, generally the teachers held attitudes that fit with popular beliefs about media effects: although they may be sophisticated on some levels, children are seen to be easily influenced by media. Not surprisingly, given their profession, teachers see education as offering a way forward.

Over half the teachers surveyed agreed with the statement, 'In a media dominated society, children today are savvy consumers' (one-third disagreed). However, *nearly all* the teachers surveyed agreed with the statement, 'Children are easily influenced by advertisements'; and nearly 80% agreed with the statement 'Commercialisation has caused exploitation of children.'

This is not to say that teachers are entirely negative or pessimistic about advertising. Over 80% of those surveyed agreed with the statement 'Modern advertising is often enjoyable, intelligent and artistic', and 62% agreed with the statement 'Advertising is an important source of information about the world.'

Chart 3: Teachers' ideas about children and advertising



Statements:

1. Children are easily influenced by advertisements.
2. Without education, children are unable to spot ulterior motives of advertisers.
3. Commercialisation has caused exploitation of children.
4. In a media dominated society, children today are savvy consumers.
5. Media education will prevent children from being exploited by advertisers.
6. Advertising is an important source of information about the world.
7. Modern advertising is often enjoyable, intelligent and artistic.
8. Advertising is a major cause of childhood obesity.

There was widespread agreement that some advertisements should be banned, such as alcohol and tobacco, particularly during children's viewing times. However, according to a large majority of the teachers, the answer to 'the negative effects' of advertising is not a ban on adverts, but media education. Nearly 90% agreed with the statement 'Without education, children are unable to spot ulterior motives of advertisers.' And nearly 80% agreed with the statement 'Media education will prevent children from being exploited by advertisers.' The survey included an option to write 'any other thoughts about children and advertising', and many statements, as well as comments from the interviews, emphasised the importance of education:

“Some children are very sophisticated readers of advertising and we need to ensure that all children are active viewers...Media education is an essential part of our job as teachers.”

“Children need to learn how to 'read' adverts to be able to make up their own minds about the product being advertised.”

“I don't think we should be banning advertisements aimed specifically at children. But I do think that we should be educating the children. I think it's part of life. I don't think advertising in general is positive, but I don't think it's harmful.”

Teachers were also keen to discuss other influences on how children 'read' advertising, including parents and peers. Again, education, this time in the home, was seen as an important means of 'resisting' advertisements. Peer pressure was referred to repeatedly in the survey responses either as an important influence on children's purchasing habits or as something advertisers create ('ads create the must-have label society') or capitalise on ('Children are particularly influenced by advertising which focuses on making them look cool'). Some teachers indicated that this kind of pressure from advertisers was particularly difficult for children to manage if their parents are on low incomes.

Many teachers talked of children's 'bombardment' with advertising, particularly around Christmas. There was a plethora of comments on this issue, both in the interviews and the survey responses, which express concern about advertisements aimed at children. These statements position children as passive subjects to the powerful strategies of advertisers:

“I think that an ad affects children in exactly the way that the advertisers expect it to affect them. I think that children are very prone to adverts and are very affected by them... They think if it's on TV it must be popular and all their friends have it so they want it.”

“I think the children were absolutely completely unaware of the purposes of advertising. It was shocking. It was something that went in and that was it. It can sell them all sorts of wrong ideas. And, and also for adults, you know, I think it sells the lifestyle as much as the product and I think that's very dangerous. I don't think it's fair, I think that advertising aimed at children is manipulative.”

There were examples of teachers who did not hold these views or who were unclear about the effects of media on children. One teacher described children's consumption of advertisements as passive compared with their more critical take on film and television clips used in class. Other teachers described mixed responses from children:

“Children often surprise you with how aware they are of the tactics used by advertisers. For those that aren't, even a small amount of input can greatly increase their awareness.”

How the materials address advertising literacy skills

Teachers said that the packs really helped children to understand advertising better:

“They learnt the features of adverts, what makes a good advert, what makes an advert persuasive, what sort of persuasive language, what persuasive tactics the advertisers use. And it’s all the things we keep throwing at them but the beauty of this pack was that it became very clear.”

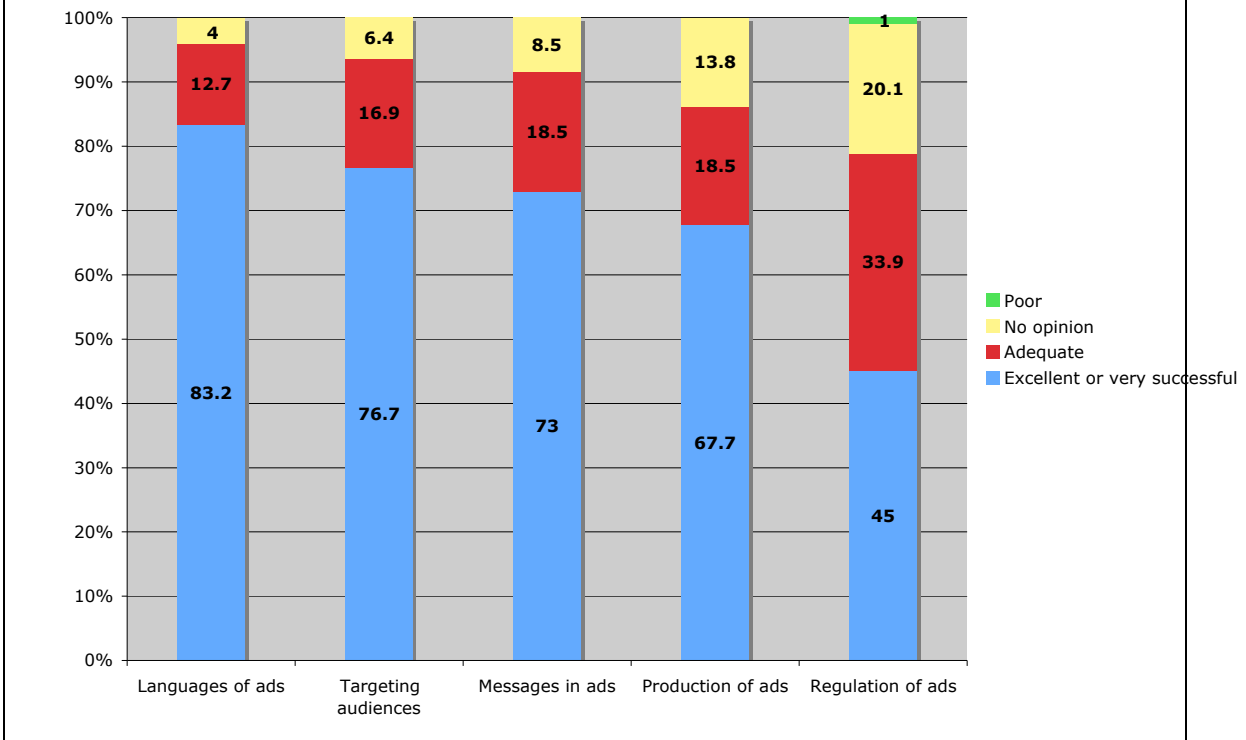
“It certainly opened their eyes to the world of advertising and how it’s done. The main thing they gained from it was they started questioning the adverts that they saw on television. In the beginning they were very much taking them at face value and believing what was said. By the end of the unit they were thinking: ‘actually that might not be right what they’re saying. They’re saying that just so that we buy it’. I thought that that was a really important lesson at such a young age (7 and 8 year olds).”

As can be seen in the second quote above, some teachers thought the packs helped children to ‘not take adverts at face value’ and ‘not become passive recipients’. Others thought adverts would make little difference to children’s consumption compared with peer-pressure:

“I think children are easily manipulated, even the street wise ones. So, I think if a friend’s got it, you’ve got to have it. And that’s not a savvy consumer. I really do think that peer pressure is more than advertising pressure and things...I don’t think the media do half as much as a stronger personality.”

In terms of specific advertising literacy skills, the teachers were most enthusiastic about using the materials to teach about languages of advertising, ways audiences are targeted and messages and values represented in advertisements (see Chart 4). On the survey these areas received the highest scores, with 83% of the teachers rating the materials excellent or very successful for teaching about ‘languages of advertising’. (Slightly fewer teachers gave these high ratings in relation to teaching about ‘How specific audiences are targeted’ and ‘Messages and values represented in advertising’ – 77% and 73% respectively rated the materials excellent or very successful.)

Chart 4: Effectiveness at addressing advertising literacy outcomes



Lower ratings were given to the areas of regulation and how advertisements are produced; and importantly, here there is an increase in the number of teachers who responded ‘no opinion’. As can be seen on Chart 4, as the percentage of ‘excellent or good’ responses drops, the percentage of ‘no opinions’ rises. In other areas of the survey, teachers were told to indicate ‘no opinion’ if they had not used particular materials or covered particular areas, so the increase in ‘no opinion’ indicates that teachers are not as interested in teaching about these areas. The emphasis on language, messages and targeting techniques aligns with teachers’ views on advertising and children, which was discussed in the previous section. Teachers see teaching about advertising as a way of giving pupils the tools to decode advertisements and therefore protect them from being manipulated. Also, given that literacy instruction is a large part of the school day, there is more opportunity to integrate *Be Adwise 2* materials into this time slot, and therefore language skills will be the focus. The following section indicates how the materials fit with particular National Curriculum areas.

How the materials address National Curriculum components

Because teachers are often new to this kind of media education, they frequently linked the materials to skills with which they were familiar and were already part of the curriculum. Persuasive language, speaking and listening and general critical thinking skills were mentioned most frequently.

“[Interviewer: How well do you think it addressed the objectives of the National Curriculum?] Really well, speaking and listening, because they did lots of drama work round it, lots of looking at how persuasive writing is framed and how it

engages the audience, looking at magazine ads, and newspaper ads... We got them to collect print advertisements and look at the sort of language that is used, use of alliteration and all those sorts of things."

The materials were rated most successful for addressing group discussion and interaction skills, with 89% of the teachers rating the materials excellent or very successful in this area (see Chart 5). In a closely related area, the teachers rated the packs high for developing speaking and listening/oracy skills (81% of the teachers rated them excellent or very successful).

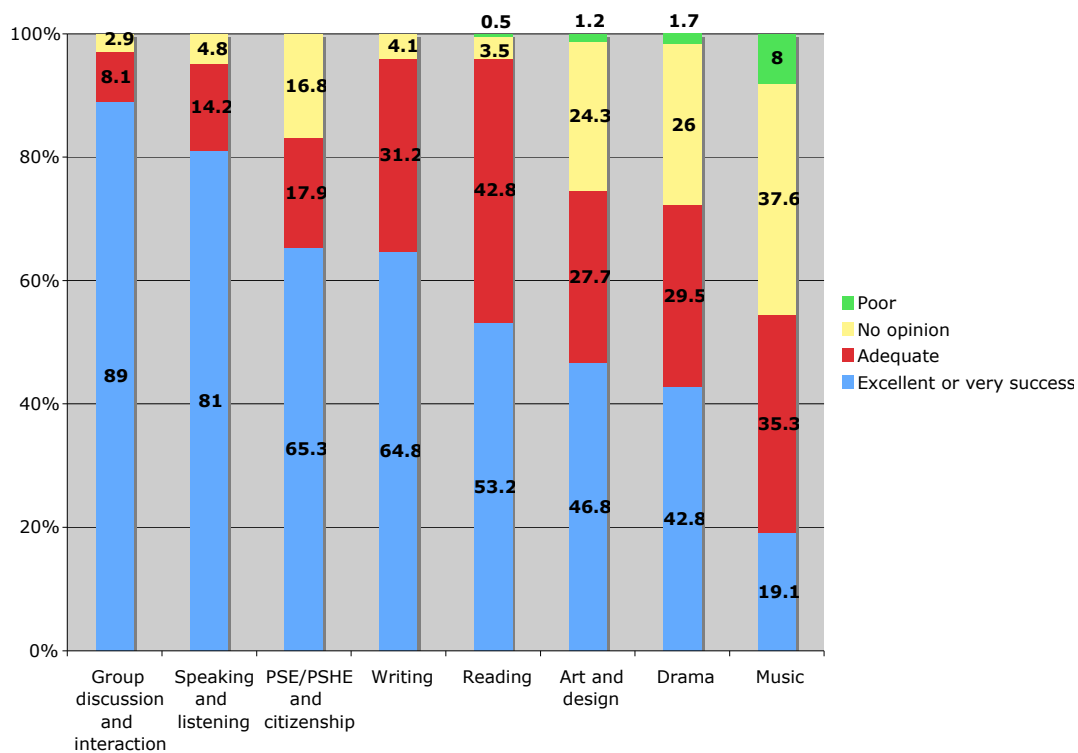
"It definitely encouraged discussion. Even down to the simple things such as why I liked an advert or why you didn't like an advert. The children do have lots to say about things they see on the television."

"I found the pack, not so much for reading, it's more speaking and listening and debating and things like that. So I wasn't really looking at it from a reading point of view."

This second quote confirms the impression gained from interviews, that where teachers have put 'adequate' for how the National Curriculum objectives are met by the packs (in the survey), it was often because they had not seen these particular objectives as aims when using the packs in the first place. As can be seen on Chart 5, areas such as art and design, drama, and music therefore received lower ratings (47%, 43% and 19% of the teachers rated them excellent or very successful in these areas, respectively). Importantly, there is also an increase in 'no opinion' responses in these areas (24%, 26% and 38%, respectively). As discussed above, 'no opinion' responses may have been given if the teachers did not use the materials in a particular subject area. Again, this indicates that the materials were used mostly for English teaching, and less for art, music and drama.

One area in which the materials might be expected to be used is Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship. Here we see the materials were rated favourably (65% of teachers rated them excellent or very successful). With a higher rate of 'no opinion' (17% compared to 3% on discussion and interaction skills), the materials are apparently not used as often in this subject area as in English. Assuming that 'no opinion' indicates the materials were not used in this area, we can remove the 'no opinion' responses and examine responses only from teachers who used the packs in PSHE or citizenship. With this calculation, 79% of the teachers rated the materials excellent or very successful for teaching PSHE or citizenship. Given this positive evaluation, one consideration might be to promote the materials specifically in PSHE and citizenship training courses.

Chart 5: Effectiveness at addressing National Curriculum components



Other skills addressed by the materials

“I was surprised by how naive my pupils were. Most of them thought that the Oxo family was a real family, for example. I think the lessons have made them more aware of some of the constructs of advertising and they have certainly grasped some of the technical language as well.”

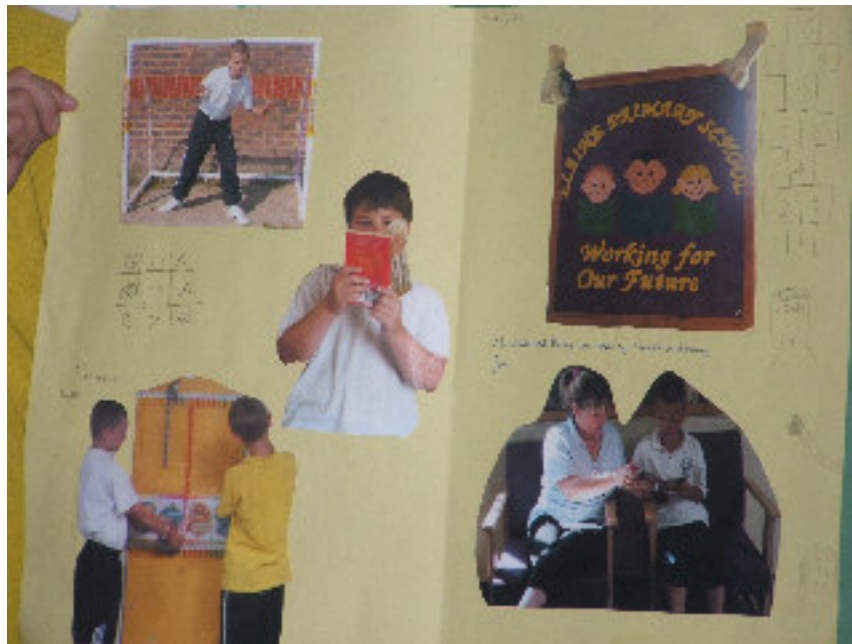
Interestingly, although we asked teachers to evaluate the materials in terms of advertising literacy and National Curriculum objectives, many teachers volunteered further information about areas they saw being addressed by the materials. In answer to the question ‘What else do you think your pupils learnt as a result of using Be Adwise 2’, 40% of the respondents opted to write a short statement. A large majority of these responses can be categorized as giving more details about the advertising literacy or National Curriculum skills being addressed or they refer to attitudes the pupils developed, as in the above statement.

A majority of the responses (45%) referred to advertising or media skills being developed. Here teachers included a variety of ideas such as awareness of the artistic processes and complexities involved in creating ads; the connection between the purpose, the audience and the language of the ad; awareness of different types and purposes of ads; and the impact of colour, sound and image. Within these responses there were also a number (11%) of statements which could be categorized as aligning with a negative view of advertisements and a view of children as being at risk from

persuasion by advertisements (for example, 'made children more aware of the trappings of advertising and the tactics companies use to sell their products'). Here the materials were seen as an effective form of revealing the 'tricks' advertisers use to get people to buy things.

Another group of responses (28% of the statements) referred to specific skills from the National Curriculum, either key skills or more specifics about the English skills being developed. In terms of key skills, areas such as group work, critical thinking and presentation skills were listed. Again, English skills (e.g. speaking and listening, persuasive language) feature in two-thirds of these responses: 'I feel the materials helped me deliver the literacy objectives in an informative and fun way with good quality resources.'

Finally, 27% of the survey responses can be categorized as attitudes that the teachers see the materials as developing. The responses here ranged from positive attitudes toward advertising ('how to have fun with advertising'), to more neutral responses ('To be a lot more curious as to the underlying message of advertising'), to responses which again, indicate a pessimistic and negative view of children's interactions with media ('Not to be fooled by promises which adverts make').



CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In order to explore how the Media Smart materials were being used in practice, we undertook three sustained classroom observations in contrasting school settings. Our aim here was to complement the survey and the interviews by addressing the complexities and difficulties of classroom practice, as well as gaining more direct access to children's perspectives on the materials. Observations were carried out over several weeks in the Summer and Autumn Terms of 2006: we conducted an average of 12 hours' of classroom observation in each school, as well as separate interviews with teachers and pupils both before and after the use of the materials.

The schools

The three schools were chosen to reflect a diversity of student intake and of educational settings. School A is in an inner city London location, and serves an ethnically diverse, socially disadvantaged area. School B is in a small South East town in Kent, with high unemployment and a largely white English population. In both schools, Year 6 classes were chosen to conduct the *Be Adwise 2* evaluation in the period after their SAT tests had been completed. Children were aged 10, and preparing for secondary school after the summer, both socially and academically. School C, observed in the Autumn term, provided a further contrast, being an independent Roman Catholic girls' school in an extremely affluent area of North West London. Here, a Year 5 class consisting of mainly 9 year olds was observed. The class sizes ranged from 26 and 27 (in Schools A and B) to 21 (in School C).

Further details of the schools are provided in the Appendix, but one aspect that is particularly worth noting is the physical layout of the schools and the classrooms. In School A, for example, because of the age of the building, the classrooms observed were small and crowded, and there was not much space for either teachers or children to move around. At times, this inhibited group work or activities of a practical nature, of the kind included in the *Be Adwise 2* materials. These issues were less acute in School B, whose buildings have recently undergone a makeover; although in School C, the classroom we observed was laid out in a rather traditional manner with sloping rows of 'old style' desks and chairs, which also made pair and group work more difficult.

Methodology and analysis

The work in Schools A and B sometimes involved the researcher (Shakuntala Banaji) leading and facilitating the lessons and questioning children; although at other points, it involved more distanced observation, when the teacher was guiding the class and Shakuntala was sitting unobserved at the back watching the interactions of the children and the use of the materials. In School C, the teacher led the class on all occasions whilst the researcher (Sue Cranmer) observed from a desk at the side during whole class sessions and walked around discussing the activities with the girls and the teacher during the pair/group work.

Extensive notes, digital recordings and taped interviews as well as photographs provide some additional means of describing the teaching of the packs in each school (photographs of the children at work can be found throughout this section of the report).

Assessing the findings

It is difficult in any area of educational research to generate definitive findings about the impact of particular teaching strategies or materials on children's learning. Even when using classic 'before-and-after' tests, or randomized controlled trials (where an 'experimental' group might be compared with a 'control' group that is not exposed to the materials), it is hard to ascertain whether, when and why learning has taken place. This is particularly problematic in situations where the time period is limited, and where the subject matter itself is complex – as was the case in this evaluation. Our sample size here was small, and the children and the schools we used cannot necessarily be taken as representative. For all these reasons, this research cannot provide definitive evidence of the effectiveness of the materials or the strategies that were used: our comments here are more qualitative in character.

Children's existing knowledge about advertising

Even prior to beginning the pack, several children in each class displayed a sophisticated and even critical understanding of advertising. The children clearly possessed a detailed knowledge of a wide range of advertisements aimed both at children and adults, even ones that would be shown after the watershed; and many of them had strong feelings about advertisements connected to particular products, especially electronic goods such as Sega and Nintendo, advertisements related to football, financial services advertisements (which were uniformly hated) and road safety, among other things. We also found a strong awareness of issues such as brand loyalty and brand identity, sponsorship (again, particularly where related to football), and celebrity endorsement; and there was some discussion of the use of persuasive techniques such as music and humour.

Here, for example, are some extracts from children's focus-group discussions about the question 'what is advertising?' held in School B before work on the materials had begun:

Girl 1: I think advertising is where you try to persuade someone to do something, like if you wanted someone to buy an idea or an object, you could use really persuasive words like 'It's the best around', 'you won't find this anywhere else' and -

Girl 2: - yes and then you could also persuade people by asking 'em to try 'em and then if it doesn't work out you get your money back or something...

Girl 3: And then there's advertising that's trying to persuade someone not to do something.

Girl 1: Yes like the Road Safety Campaign, THINK!

Girl 3: That's trying to persuade you to think and not just run out into the road, so advertising can be about that, like that there are good things, and also to inform you that there are BAD things, not just good things.

Girl 2: If you don't like something, then it isn't how they say on the ad. Sometimes, things aren't how they say they are, they are bad.

Girl 1: And sometimes advertising can be trying to persuade you to do something or not to do something, not just to *buy* some product.

This shows a very clear and reflective understanding of the persuasive functions of advertising, that goes well beyond its ability simply to sell particular products.

Here is a further example, in the form of the teacher's summary of the whole-class feedback on this initial session, as written up on the board:

- advertising is ubiquitous
- it persuades
- it is often eye-catching and sometimes shocking or scary
- it persuades you to do something or to buy something
- it tries to sell a product
- it can try to 'sell' an idea not a product
- it can try to dissuade as well as persuade
- it can inform or sell, it does not have to sell
- it can be written or spoken or visual or all three
- it may be found in a whole range of places, from newspapers, bus hoardings, product packets and television to supermarkets, the radio and the internet
- it can use written language or music or visual language or spoken words

In the class we observed at School C, where the children were one year younger, these more abstract understandings were less in evidence; but the children were quite familiar with the idea that advertisements could be placed within various spaces such as in magazines and newspapers, on radio, TV, billboards, etc., in order to sell to different audiences. They were also familiar with and could repeat slogans or sing jingles of ads for companies such as Asda and Macdonalds.

By contrast, about half of the older children observed were more prepared to discuss relatively complex issues such as the different types of advertising (in terms of the aims and the positioning of the advert), the selling of ideas, the notion of dissuasion, the use of promotional gimmicks and the importance of visual space. Additionally, the issue of consumer rights - the possibility of advertising being misleading and the potential for obtaining redress for misleading labeling of products - was raised at least once in each discussion group in Schools A and B.

Having said this, it was clear that the children's knowledge was in some respects partial. The younger children in School C were less aware of aspects of consumer culture such as the use of logos on clothes, although this may have been a result of their different home backgrounds; and they were much less conscious of the other purposes of ads such as providing information and/or putting forward a point of view. In some instances, the children in Schools A and B seemed to confuse liking for an advertisement with liking for a product. Most admitted to being swayed by particular advertisements, but usually where they were already partial to the product. On the other hand, they enjoyed some advertisements for products that they were never likely to purchase. Whilst there was some confusion between product and advert in School C, some children were keen to

show that whilst they enjoyed singing jingles associated with particular products, such as burgers and pizzas for instance, they would not eat them as they are 'bad for you'. (This enjoyment of advertisements as media texts for their own sake by young children, and not for their consumer links to particular goods, is an interesting and salient finding of our research about the Be Advise materials.)

During the teaching of initial units from the 'Introduction to Advertising' pack in Schools A and B, a degree of confusion was apparent as to the actual product being advertised. For instance, if a picture of a footballer was on an ad for a cereal bar, at least 50% of the children did not connect the two and thought the advertisement was for football or trainers. In this respect, by initiating discussions about celebrity endorsement, the pack helped to focus attention on the way in which some products/people are used to persuade us of the quality of others. At the end of the unit, the children were much more careful about the language they used to describe both the advertisements they were looking at and their own feelings about celebrities and products.

Even so, some of these issues remained a source of confusion, even after the materials had been covered: some children in School B, for example, still appeared unclear about whether or not it was legitimate to be persuaded by a product, whether or not they were responding to a product or to the advertisement, or to the persuasive techniques of the advertisement. Having said this, these are complex issues that would not necessarily be easy for most adults to disentangle.

Ultimately, however, it was clear that the pleasure – or lack of it – afforded by advertising was often more important than the more 'critical' responses. In class discussions, 'product type', 'humour' and 'music' appeared to be the most significant factors affecting the ways in which children responded to ads. Television commercials which used classical or unusual music were less likely to get a positive response than those which used music that was quirky, youth cultural, or popular with the age group. Anything 'cool' – sportswear, football, games, communication technology and films – was more popular than things perceived not to be 'cool', such as 'healthy food' or 'money matters'; and as we have noted, ads for financial services were particularly singled out for vilification. Similarly, any ad that made the children laugh was seen as 'successful', regardless of the product. Even so, having completed the pack, the children were significantly more capable of naming the factors that made an advertisement successful in their eyes.



Children's overall responses to the pack

In general, the materials were received by the children with great energy and enthusiasm; and in our debriefing interviews, many spontaneously expressed their enjoyment of the work. In School C for instance, three girls produced further posters for homework unsolicited by their teacher; while in Schools A and B, the work was seen as significantly more engaging than the literacy work they had been undertaking earlier in the term in preparation for their SATs tests.

In all three schools, watching advertisements and discussing them in smaller or larger groups proved as popular as production work. In School B in particular, whole class discussions were enjoyed by every single member of the class and seen to be extremely worthwhile in contributing to their understanding of advertising in general and of specific campaigns covered in the pack.

While in School A there was a marginal preference expressed for planning and making an advertisement after learning about the process from the pack, in School B it was the 'out of the box' activities that involved analysing 'media language' (sound and images) and representation that particularly captured their imaginations and called forth the most critical discussions. In particular, children commented in post-pack interviews on the material relating to non-commercial advertising, the horror of the images before they knew what they were watching and the impact that charity or campaigning ads could have (see below).

On the whole, the children at School C said that they liked producing their own posters the most, working in groups and 'learning new things'. Some of the girls said that what they most liked about making their own posters was being able to draw from other ads in the choices they made, the creativity of making their own and particularly being able to include animals.

The children interviewed at School C agreed with the principle of being taught about how to understand advertising better. One girl explained this as follows:

"Advertising, you see it everywhere, and you can't have all these things because they cost a lot of money, so you have to understand what it's all about."

By contrast, another saw the aims of the activity more in terms of production: she said that it was useful to study advertising as you may have your own company one day and need to be able to promote what you're selling in order to make the company more successful. Likewise, in post-pack interviews in School A, several ethnic minority children expressed an avid interest in learning more about the technical aspects of advertising with an eye to becoming either film-makers or journalists. When asked if they had always felt this way, they explained that it was studying the pack that had crystallised their interest in the thought of a media career. However, they specifically stated that they did not necessarily want to go 'into advertising'.

Previous experience of media education

The discussions and interviews we held with teachers and children, as well as the classroom activities we observed, clearly showed that media education was a relatively unfamiliar area for them. As we have indicated, our interviews and discussions with children suggested that they had considerable experience of media and advertising, and a good deal of knowledge about the issues at stake here; but their opportunities for discussion of such matters in school were very limited. This was partly because most teachers were inexperienced in the area, and hence lacked confidence; but it was also a consequence of the lack of time and the narrow focus of the current literacy curriculum. In Year 6, media work received virtually no attention due to the pressure of SATs and the necessity of 'teaching to the test'.

The most obvious context for such work is in the literacy curriculum, specifically in relation to the theme of 'persuasive writing', as one teacher explained:

Interviewer: What normal media activities do you do in relation to advertising and in what context might these be taught?

Teacher: I suppose most of it does come through literacy, at least in relation to persuasive writing and writing to inform, and those kinds of things. And we try to do it in a way that the students will find interesting, there are some good websites where I go to download advertisements to show.

Interviewer: And every teacher covers this?

Teacher: Well, I can't speak for everyone. There's a requirement to cover persuasive language, but [laughs] some of us are more comfortable teaching in a broader way, so [for others] it might just end up being quite narrow language work.

As this implies, the context of 'persuasive writing' could lead to a relatively limited focus on advertising slogans; and in most cases, this topic appeared to be confined to one or two classes and lessons. At least initially, the lessons we observed tended to focus more directly on this issue than on less familiar media literacy issues such as audience responses to advertising. Nevertheless, all the teachers seemed to perceive this as an area that required further development; and even if only to this extent, the *Be Adwise* pack was seen as addressing a perceived need.

Teachers' overall responses to the pack

Like the students, the teachers' general responses to the pack were very positive. They agreed that the packs had been stimulating and successful; as far as they were concerned, they would use the materials again in future years. They felt that the packs were particularly useful as an engaging post-SATs exercise with year 6 and as what they called 'media work' with year 5. Interestingly, they did not discuss the pack as a form of literacy work but rather in contrast to the literacy activities they had done previously.

Where teachers have either no time or little motivation to venture into teaching about advertising in depth, the materials were seen to be particularly valuable:

Teacher, School A: The pressures of literacy [the Literacy Strategy] are huge, and time constraints are high. The materials actually are structured in such a way

that we can dip in and dip out. That for me is one of the big plusses. For others having DVD material right there and activities is the best thing, and it can be justified in terms of literacy. It might even work better in year 4 or 5 than in our currently packed year 6 schedule... And of course, the classes love it. It's such a change from the usual...

Although the teacher at School C found the pack quite intensive to use in the classroom - 'you don't have a minute to sit down' - she appreciated having so much of the preparation work done for her, and the small amount of marking needed afterwards.

In this respect, the DVD was found to be particularly valuable. The collection of real examples here provided 'just what busy teachers need', 'stimulating audiovisual resources' that were 'entertaining as well as interesting for the students'. However, there was some concern that the advertisements included would become 'dated' quite quickly, and for this particular age group the use of current, recognizable ads was seen as being key to retaining engagement (one teacher asked whether Media Smart would be sending out regular updates in future years). In School C, the teacher experienced technical problems using the DVD with the whiteboard (as we shall see below).

More broadly, the pack was seen to meet a need for materials addressing the advertising-saturated context in which children are living, and of raising related issues such as peer pressure, branding and the digital divide. For example, one of the teachers in School B described his situation as follows:

"The catchment here is quite into fashion goods, sportswear and leisure technology items such as games which can be far beyond their parents' means. But I think that judging by the homework that they bring in there is a discrepancy between their knowledge and use of technology and the internet – maybe just under half may have a computer at home but the number who have broadband access is much lower. So access to a pack like this, especially the DVD materials, is an important contribution to evening out media related access and discussion. ... We do some multimedia stuff with video and computers using Powerpoint, and they're alright with cameras, but we actually have no time at all to make things, to do production work, especially with the pressures of year 6. So the pack actually gives a framework for doing this, and discussion is a useful bridge across."

Likewise, the teacher in School C thought it important to educate children to be more critical of advertising and how it works, given its prevalence and potential to mislead. She gave the Oxo family as an example of how advertising draws on images of the 'perfect family' to sell a product. She also criticized the use of sports personalities such as Gary Lineker and David Beckham being used to advertise unhealthy food such as crisps when they could more usefully be involved in anti-smoking campaigns.

The School C teacher also felt that the work the children had produced while using the packs would provide good evidence for the inspection due to take place at the school the following year. She said that she would bind their work into booklets to improve their presentation. Whilst she was surprised at how much the children knew about advertising at the beginning of the packs, she felt that their awareness and understanding of the construction of ads and of the wider purposes of ads (beyond simply selling products) were much enhanced. She also felt that the inclusion of materials focusing on protecting

the environment was especially useful, as there was never time to cover these issues to her satisfaction within the existing curriculum.

Obstacles and difficulties in using the pack

Nevertheless, the teachers faced several difficulties and obstacles in using the pack. The most obvious of these was to do with their lack of time – and, as we have noted in our report on the survey, this was far and away the main reason why some teachers had been unable to use the pack in the first place, despite specifically requesting it. Preparing to use the packs took time, both in terms of engaging with the materials to be taught, and also in terms of the time required for photocopying, mounting and cutting. This was offset to some degree by the provision of the materials and particularly the DVD contents, which would otherwise have required considerable time to put together; and the activities did not generate extensive amounts of marking. Nevertheless, the teachers did not always have time to familiarize themselves fully with the content of the pack before using it: the teacher in School C, for example, worked through the pack in a linear way, and did not realize until she was several lessons into the materials that the packs contained a glossary, which she would certainly have found helpful. Likewise in school A, at times the teachers were only one step ahead of the students in terms of familiarising themselves with the activities linked to the different sections in each pack and hence sometimes ended up selecting a section that repeated activities already covered in another section.

Teaching materials, particularly in new or unfamiliar areas such as media education, often have to perform a training function in themselves; although this can only go so far, and it is obviously undermined if teachers do not have time to read teachers' notes, however helpful and extensive they may be. For example, in School C, a teacher with 10 years' experience of teaching primary children in a range of schools said that using the materials made her feel unconfident: 'It's like being a newly qualified teacher!'. Probably as a result, she appeared to steer clear of teaching the more technical or specialized aspects of media work, with which she may have felt less at ease. Although she was very enthusiastic about the materials in general, this lack of confidence created difficulties in a number of areas.

These difficulties were partly to do with knowledge of the subject content. For example, while the activities worked well for motivating and engaging the children, cases often arose where the teacher found herself unsure of how to interpret particular aspects of advertising. The activity sheets contributed to this confusion through at least appearing to stipulate 'right or wrong' answers (see below). For instance, in one part of Module 1, 'Ads that sell ideas', the teacher struggled to understand how to fill in some the columns. She said: 'I find that column a bit ambiguous. I don't know...' (This issue was compounded by the captions on the still ads for this unit being almost impossible to read: see below.) The teacher said later that she would have found answers or further guidelines useful here.

There were further difficulties to do with technology. This teacher also experienced technical problems when trying to use the DVD via a DVD recorder, shown through a TV, rather than through a PC and a whiteboard. She had difficulty pausing the still ads which rotate after a short time lapse. This severely compromised the whole class discussion which was frustrating for both teacher and children. In later classes, she was

able to attach a DVD to the computer so that the materials were presented on the whiteboard. This made the process easier and smoother, but pausing was still an issue, as was the volume of the TV ads shown, due to not having separate PC speakers. Nevertheless, the teacher spoke positively about using technology with the *Be Adwise 2* materials and emphasized that the pack had encouraged her to become more familiar with these media:

“By doing that, to be positive, I have learnt a lot about how to use it. I would never have put that DVD player on there had I not been doing this.”

While these are particular difficulties, they are not unrepresentative of the kinds of problems teachers typically face in using technology in the classroom. As we shall see below, these difficulties are compounded when it comes to enabling children to engage in media production activities, which pose significant challenges in terms of classroom management. Media production remains the area that teachers are likely to shy away from without further support, and unless its benefits are highlighted more strongly in the packs.

Finally, there are aspects of the more open-ended teaching style of media education that may cause difficulties and misunderstandings. We found that the materials could be used extremely ‘literally’, particularly if the teacher was less confident about the area. There were occasions on which sections in the pack were taught in chronological order, covering every activity and bullet point regardless of the potential for wider discussion or broader media literacy awareness. For example, the use of ‘true/false’ lists (which are quite frequently employed in the pack) can be a good way of generating open-ended discussion; but they also fit in well with traditional classroom techniques, in which there are ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ answers. Likewise, questions in the materials like ‘The most important shot in the ad is...’ or ‘The message of the ad is...’ resulted in disappointing discussions, with a preponderance of yes/no answers and little space for debate. When the ‘wrong’ naming of a shot type (close up rather than medium shot, for example) is regarded simply as a factual mistake, or when children are told that their interpretation of an advertisement or its message is entirely ‘wrong’, this can act as a significant disincentive to participation.

For instance, the ‘true/false’ question sheet in Module 1: Activity Sheet 13 worked well with those who ‘got it’ and understood how a fake family was constructed to appeal to a particular target audience group. However, as we shall see below, several children were interested in a broader discussion of the images of the family portrayed in these ads, and for them these sheets were very inhibiting. On the face of it, the ‘true/false’ approach relies on simple, single answers, and does not allow for a broader range of audience interpretations. Similarly, the teacher’s request (reported above) that she would have liked to have been given the ‘answers’ for Activity Sheet 11 likewise suggested that she needed further support to be able to interpret the responses for herself, not least because this was her first experience of teaching media education.

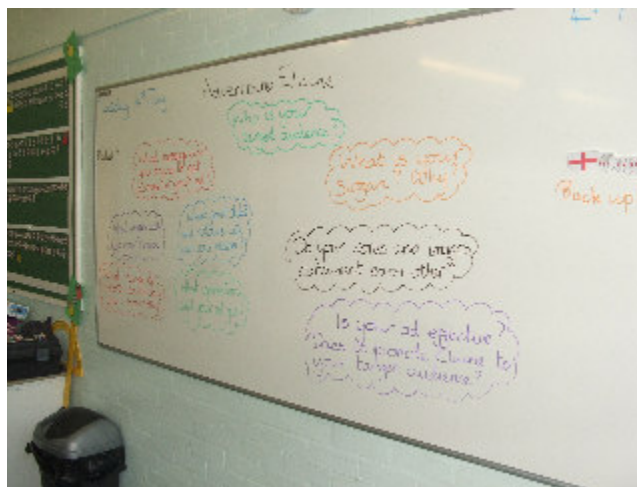
One consequence of this is that teachers who are less experienced in media education are likely to work their way through the packs in a fairly mechanistic manner, even if this is not the intention. Several of the units use similar approaches (‘true/false’ lists, filling in boxes), and if each unit is simply taught in turn, this can quickly become repetitive. Those with more experience in this area are able to adopt a more selective and flexible approach:

Teacher, School A: I am quite used to teaching about media issues and using digital technology and so for me it is not so problematic to pick and choose. I will undertake production work in the pack too. Other colleagues might feel uncomfortable with this approach. Some of my colleagues would be more inclined to start at the beginning and work their way through which for the children might give a somewhat boring experience. This is a problem at the training end - teaching degrees I think, not just with the school or the pack. But the pack needs to take this into account. It needs to say big and large, please vary the activities, make your own changes, don't just follow what is written here and mix it up. Because if you're not confident, however experienced you are, you'll just go from Activity Sheet 1 to Activity Sheet 25 and that could turn children off the topic.

Similarly, teachers with greater experience of teaching media-related topics would be more likely to supplement the packs with other materials:

Teacher, School B: Some of us are more computer savvy than others and we find it easier to just jump on the internet and download and use material. This could affect even the way the pack is taught, even if lower down in the school. Maybe there should also be a list of such websites in the pack where you can find other ads, ones not on the DVD, to extend discussions.

Overall, these observations clearly point to the need for additional training - in subject content, in the use of technology, and in classroom strategies. While the pack itself provides some good support in many of these areas, it could provide more; although conversely, it may also be unrealistic to expect teachers to spend considerable amounts of time familiarizing themselves with new materials and approaches, given the other pressures on their time. We would therefore suggest that the materials should be part of a broader training strategy in this field, where teachers are provided with specialist face-to-face training in media literacy; and we note that Media Smart has begun to develop such work, in collaboration with other agencies.



Group work and production activities

The packs proved particularly useful for facilitating group work. In School C, the children do not usually work in pairs or in groups. Yet in using the materials, they took to this extremely well, being collegial and helpful to each other most of the time. The materials allowed them to practice speaking and listening with their groups and within the whole class discussions, and to extend their knowledge through collaboration. In the whole class discussions, further time was needed (compared with the guidelines given in the packs) for children to contribute.

In a final whole class discussion and in the interviews, a number of the girls said that working in groups was one of the aspects that they had particularly enjoyed. One girl described the value of this approach as follows:

“If you haven’t got the actual idea in your own head, you can say ‘oh yeah, that’s a good idea’ from your partner or somebody and then you can tell someone of your ideas.”

One of the most challenging aspects of the pack for the teachers in this respect was the practical production work (devising simulated campaigns, or developing an advertisement for the school, for example). This approach is an important element of media education, providing important opportunities for ‘hands-on’ learning and participation: it provides an essential complement to the more analytical approaches covered elsewhere in the pack. It can also facilitate different styles of learning, and success for children who are usually side-lined.

A comment by one of the teachers in School A shows that here expectations of specific children were positively challenged by the production activities in the pack:

“The few children that I thought wouldn’t be engaged at all, were actually the ones that were the most eager. I was so surprised. Even though a few had to be moved, after that they were really interested and took a really active role. So clearly this type of media work appeals to them and plays to their strengths.”

The making of an advertising campaign for the school using digital cameras was also very effective in involving children for whom speaking English was a problem. The planning and framing of shots, the attendant praise when a shot came out well and the contribution of their efforts to a group end were absolutely crucial in raising confidence.

In Schools A and B, the production of advertisements about the school aimed at parents or prospective pupils was one the most successful activities, following on from the work on child audiences (Module 2). Likewise, the production of posters in School C for ads incorporating animals (Module 1: Ads that sell ideas) appeared highly successful in terms of increasing children’s understanding of slogans, and the use of pictures and persuasive language to promote their products. Some children found this activity so engaging that they went on to produce further posters unsolicited at home.

Even so, production work of this kind is often particularly difficult to manage – not least because of the appearance of additional mess and noise during the planning, negotiation and execution stages. The open-ended nature of this work can be somewhat stifled by a more controlled primary school environment. In School A, it was clear that

the ethos of the school militated against the degree of movement around the classroom and between groups that is needed in this kind of work, although in Schools B and C this was not the case. This was partly a function of the physical arrangement and facilities in the classroom. The spacious layout of classrooms, with inbuilt lockers and drawers for each child to store work in progress, tools and possessions in School B makes media production activities far simpler and less disruptive than in Schools A and C, where every work-sheet, pencil, marker or pair of scissors has to be given out and then collected back at the end of a lesson. In this respect, it would help if the pack were to provide some guidance for teachers who have never taught media before or who may be unfamiliar with this kind of practical group work: some concrete ideas about how to minimize disruption and encourage children to be more independent in using small stationary items would significantly ease some of the classroom management issues that inevitably arise.

It would also be helpful to clarify the purpose of the production activities. In all three schools, teachers were not always clear about whether the aim was to teach sets of 'skills' (for example, in design or literacy), to point out the 'dangers of advertising' to vulnerable students or to raise broader issues about how advertising works. The aims of the pack as a whole are primarily in the latter area – and in this sense, the questions and discussion generated by the process are much more important than the technical quality of the finished product. However, the teachers who were less familiar with media work appeared more confused about this aspect, and would have welcomed further guidance in the pack. Here again, the evaluation raises broader issues about the need for teacher training in this field, which will be discussed more fully in our conclusion.

Design and language

In general, the materials were found to be accessible and easy to use. In School C, most of the girls interviewed said that they had found the work-sheets 'fun' to fill in. One said it was because they were interactive, not just for reading:

"You didn't just read them and do nothing, you got to think of things to write down. You didn't just have to be told by someone: 'you write this down', you thought of what you wanted to write down."

However, some difficulties were encountered in terms of design and language level. Several of the children commented that they wished the work sheets could have been more 'kid friendly'. Most of them felt that even when the work-sheets were blown up to A3 there was often not enough space to write. A few in each school found the story-boards confusing, and wanted clearer instructions reminding them about camera angles and shot types. They were keen to have an additional worksheet that summarized all this information that would stand alongside the story-board sheets.

More problematic was the language and literacy issue, where worksheets required a certain minimum literacy which even in the post-SATs year 6 classes was often lacking. This caused particular difficulty for the children who did not understand or write English well. Teachers said that they would have appreciated a set of worksheets prepared specifically with such mixed abilities in mind, that utilised images and very simple language or instructions to aid those at different levels. While they appreciated that it was their (or their school's) responsibility to address this issue, at least one of the

teachers was sceptical of this happening in the case of the *Be Adwise* pack and felt that certain children would just be left to muddle along or to have answers written for them by other children. In this respect, production activities proved to be the most effective means of integrating non-English speakers.

There were also concerns that some of the material, particularly the units on non-commercial advertising and the writing-based exercises, would be less appropriate for Years 3 and 4. We were unable to try out the packs with these younger age groups, but we strongly suspect there would be a need for some of the materials to be adapted to suit younger children.

Further problems arose with the production quality of the materials, particularly when photocopied. For example, the captions on the ads provided in the unit on 'Ads that sell ideas' proved too small for the children (or indeed the teacher) to read (although they are larger if printed off from the DVD). Other activity sheets did not photocopy well. For instance, in Module 2: AS2, the children could not clearly identify the subject of the pictures. One teacher also said it would have been helpful to have had the activity sheets included on the DVD so that she could point to them on the whiteboard, both when explaining how they were to be completed and when writing up responses when children fed back to the whole class.

The content of the pack: cultural issues

In all of the schools, questions were raised about the cultural inclusiveness of the materials. This took various forms depending on the catchment and issues faced by each school. In School A, cultures and languages within the classrooms varied significantly, with many refugee, asylum seeker, and new immigrant children. The particular sets of ads chosen for analysis in the pack, especially the children's campaigns and the Oxo campaign, were seen to be somewhat culturally exclusive. Here, at least half the class simply did not like the Oxo campaign because it was seen to be a white middle-class picture of family life that they did not or would not relate to. They also criticized its tokenistic and exotic image of other cultures. This came as a surprise to the teacher, who then attempted to emphasise the healthy eating and multicultural food aspects of the campaign.

Comments by children reflected a whole range of cultural assumptions and differences that may be at stake in interpreting a campaign such as this. Some failed to 'get' the joke of the Baby Spice ad. Others asked, 'How is it healthy to boil all the vegetables so much? Doesn't it kill all the vitamins? That's what our teacher told us!' Still others complained: 'That's not *real* Chinese/curry/Italian food'; 'I wouldn't be able to digest my food if my parents were touching each other like that'; and 'I'd never speak to my parents like that - I'd get beats'. Several of the children viewed the ads as alien narratives to be critiqued or as images of the world that they did not accept, which in a way was exactly the opposite of the advertisers' intentions to create a comforting family space where healthy food is the norm.

In terms of the pack, this had several repercussions. Many of the children did not enjoy the ads and were disengaged during their viewing - unlike in School B, where the preponderance of white children made the scenarios portrayed a little more familiar. This effectively led the teacher to act as the apologist for the advertisers, attempting to justify

or explain ads that were failing to captivate a majority of the children. At the very least, this was a distraction from the fundamental aims of this aspect of the pack.

During the production of story-boards for an imaginary Fish Oxo cube in School A, instead of using the pack's designated cut and paste activity that would leave the Oxo family intact, children who were dissatisfied with the original campaign and with the activities shown, were allowed to design alternatives. Some of the ideas that came out clearly showed differences in culture and value at work in the reception of advertisements while also demonstrating the learning that was taking place in relation to the uses of shot types, humour, lighting, camera angles and edits.

For example, two North African boys presented the following story board for Fish Oxo:

Shot 1: Medium Long Shot, a room, with dim light, father and son sitting at opposite ends of a bed watching a television. Shot 2: son is cooking, father watching TV. Shot 3: close up, father looking sad; shot 4: close up: son looking sad; shot 5: close up, son crumbles Fish Oxo cube into the pot; shot 6: father and son sitting facing each other smiling, eating Fish Oxo meal. Shot 7: big close up, Fish Oxo cube – SLOGAN: *Little Cube: Big Smile*

The two boys presented and explained their idea to the class as being based on a situation in one of their households: the class voted this one the best ad. Meanwhile, in another much liked ad, two toddler-twins are shown going missing. Their parents search for them frantically. At the end of the storyboard, the toddlers have laid the table themselves and called their parents for dinner. The slogan reads 'Fish Oxo – so simple even your baby can use it'. Similarly, in School C, there were children who tried to draw on their experiences of watching television drawn from other countries they had lived in or viewed here via satellite.

This has two key implications for designing future materials in this area. Most obviously, it implies that the packs need to be more culturally inclusive. For example, it would be relatively easy to provide examples of advertising from other cultures, in order to provide alternatives both in terms of cultural representation and perhaps also in terms of different styles of advertising. Secondly, it implies that the production activities need to be more flexible, in allowing children to bring different cultural experiences to bear on the activities. The examples we have described required the children to go beyond the cut-and-paste resources provided in the pack; and innovative, alternative perspectives of this kind could be more explicitly encouraged and supported. Finally, it is apparent that the packs need to address questions of representation – which is one of the main 'key concepts' of media education – more directly, not least because this is likely to be an issue that is raised by children themselves.

What did the children learn?

Debriefing interviews conducted after the materials had been used indicated that learning had taken place in a number of key areas. Several in each class observed were using specialist 'media language', drawing distinctions or making connections that they did not or were not in a position to do during the initial group work and pre-pack interviews. This was particularly apparent in the following areas:

audiences, especially positioning and targeting of children and adults

the difference between the attributes of a product and what is said about the product

the role of music in product choice and targeting

the role of technical features such as lighting and mise-en-scene in selling ideas and products

the rights of consumers

peer-pressure in terms of brand culture

non-commercial campaigns

In School C, where the teacher had tended to focus less on the more technical aspects of media work, the main observable learning appeared to have taken place in relation to the different uses of advertising, and how ads are targeted at children and adults in particular ways. In addition, they had developed their speaking and listening skills by contributing to whole class discussions and in pairs or groups, and to a lesser extent, their reading and writing. The interviews with the children in this school suggested that children perceived themselves to have learnt 'new things', as well as building on previous knowledge. They said that they had already understood that advertising existed to sell products. However, the wider purposes of advertising, such as for promoting a point of view or giving information, were new, as were 'specialist' words such as slogan and logo. For others, the packs had given them space to think more deeply about both the wider uses of advertising and how it is used for selling. Others said that the packs had made them more aware of the importance of not taking everything at face value, including what charity ads might say. For instance, fizzy drinks might not be as good for you as ads imply, and animals might not be suffering in the way that ads show. One girl said the pack had made her more interested in advertising, so that she now looked more carefully at how TV ads are put together whereas previously she had skipped them.

In School C, the children completed Module 1: Activity Sheet 1 'What do ads do?' in the first session and were then invited to add to their responses at the end of the final session in a different colour. This showed how their knowledge about advertising had increased as the result of the materials. In the original activity, the children were able to complete the middle column 'Persuade you to buy a product' and to a lesser degree, the 'Provide information' column. However, they struggled to find examples to include in the third column, 'Promote a point of view'. After the teaching of the materials, most added examples to this column, such as 'Rainforest ad' and 'Stop smoking' campaign ads, and to a lesser extent to the 'Provide information' column. There was still some confusion and debate about whether these ads were indeed 'Promoting a point of view' rather than merely 'Providing information': for instance, charity ads such as for the NSPCC appeared in both columns. However, their responses suggested that at the very least, the children had taken on board the wider uses of advertising beyond just selling.

In general, children were more aware of and more able to differentiate between advertising for different purposes following the teaching of the pack than they had been at the beginning. In particular, there was a much increased awareness of non-

commercial advertising or advertising perceived as being more about ideas than products. In these cases, children took the topics extremely seriously, and some appeared quite affected by the content. Interestingly, some of these ads seemed to have had a direct impact on the children's own attitudes. One girl said that she had concerns though about the feelings of those portrayed, particularly 'poor people' who had fallen on bad times. Another girl appeared to have taken on board the Rainforest ad (Module 3: lesson 2) and said that she would be more careful how she used paper in future. She appeared to have absorbed the message of the ad rather than thinking critically about its construction. However, other children in School C were critical of the Rainforest ad, challenging the metaphorical use of legs for trees to represent the threat to people and instead arguing that animals would have been more effective in convincing children to take notice. This suggested they had developed a more active approach to thinking about how ads are constructed as a result of the *Be Adwise* materials.

Here is an extract from one such discussion in School B, where four boys are reflecting on the impact of advertising, and describe a campaign against child abuse:

Boy 1: I started watching advertisements quite young, I think maybe three years old with my parents.

Boy 2: Me too.

Teacher-interviewer: Any particular ones you want to talk about?

Boy 3: I remember these ones about a kid getting kicked by his dad. You might have started to watch it, yeah, and not known what it was about and kept watching.

Boy 2: Yeah, yeah, right it was scary, I mean, for little children, they might've not known it was an advertise. [Very soft:] Child abuse.

Boy 4: That's what the advertise company wants! To make it seem real. In that the kid is in the corner, and his dad is just coming towards him, to hit him, and... it's about child violence, and it's telling us that this happens, this is real so give money to help these children. Like the one you showed about the rainforest. It's no use if none of us gives money. It's about making us aware.

Boy 1: But they shouldn't have gone so far, I don't think. With the kid, and in this with the axe and the legs and all. It could give small kids nightmares....

Teacher-interviewer: Small kids? I noticed that a lot of you flinched. Does that make it a less or more effective ad would you say?

Boy 4: But sometimes it has to be like that, to have an impact. Otherwise no-one would do anything.

Teacher-interviewer: But do you think that some advertisements do go too far and show things that they should not given that they are going to be watched by children?

Boy 2: Yes.

Boy 1: Yes, but like he says, it's like that to make us think. Make us do something, or not do something. Like I really like the Nicorette ones, with the cigarettes lying everywhere it's so disgusting but when I watch that I never want to smoke and I want everyone to stop.

More broadly, the packs appeared to be very effective at introducing children to aspects of 'media language'. The lessons on camera angles and shot types were well received and stimulating: more than 80% of the children of all abilities appeared to have picked up on these terms and ideas. This learning was also reinforced by the experience of producing their own campaigns. After working on the 'Advertising aimed at children' section, children in School A and School B made posters advertising their school using digital cameras and computers. The results showed a clear understanding of the effects of different shot types, as well as a developing awareness of diverse audiences, and the different tactics that would be needed to persuade adults and children. In presenting their work to the whole class, they showed a grasp of media language and a precision in describing their campaign strategy that clearly reflected their immersion in the packs for the preceding six to eight weeks. However, as with older children, the time pressure on finished production activities tended to cast children in the role of 'media professionals' and to push them towards using 'stereotyped images' or clichés less critically than when discussing advertisements by others. This issue of connecting 'theory' (the critical analysis of advertising) and 'practice' (creative media production) is a continuing concern in media education.



CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS

1. Implications for Media Smart

In many respects, this evaluation provides a positive endorsement of the *Be Advise 2* materials: the teachers who had used the pack found it to be engaging for pupils, comprehensive in its coverage of key media literacy issues, and effective in terms of developing children's understanding of advertising. Our classroom research confirms that the children learned a great deal, particularly about more 'technical' or complex dimensions of media literacy, and about aspects of advertising that they had not previously considered. Among the elements that were particularly appreciated were: the provision of examples of real advertising, via the DVD; the use of more 'active' teaching strategies such as group work; and the inclusion of issues that were relevant to children's lives outside school. The evaluation suggests that teachers found few difficulties in understanding the importance of this work, or in justifying it in terms of the existing curriculum.

In some respects, the difficulties and obstacles the teachers encountered in using the materials would have arisen in relation to any media literacy initiative of this nature: to a large extent, they reflect the general lack of experience in this field among teachers, which is particularly apparent at primary school level. However, the feedback from our surveys and interviews, and the data from our observations, also suggest that there are some key ways in which future materials might be improved.

Because teachers adapt materials so they can meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of their pupils, the materials need to be flexible. Electronic versions of worksheets which can be changed by teachers would be more helpful. The worksheets themselves could be designed to be more 'kid-friendly'; they should allow children more space to write; and attention needs to be paid to the quality of reproduction, to ensure that materials are clear and readable. Furthermore, in order to save planning time, activities could be more clearly linked to National Curriculum objectives, examples of advertisements could be indexed, and simple routes through the materials for teachers new to the area could be provided.

Some of the activities in the pack lend themselves to a rather 'literal' approach. Efforts need to be made to ensure that activities open up discussion and debate, rather than closing it down by imposing single 'correct' answers. (However, we would accept that teachers with greater experience in media education are generally likely to be more at ease with a more open-ended approach in relation to these materials.)

The examples of real advertisements (on the DVD and in the printed materials) are much appreciated; but efforts need to be made to ensure that examples remain current. This includes current advertisements on television and in print, but also new forms of advertising such as immersive ads in video games and websites and advertisements sent to mobile phones. This might be achieved by providing further examples via a website. Having materials available on a website would also solve the problem which some teachers faced of not having the materials to hand when they were planning a unit, either because the materials were being shared, they were lost, or they had not received them.

The materials need to be more inclusive of different cultural backgrounds, and could usefully include material from different cultures. They should also encourage children's efforts to be critical of mainstream media representations – a key area of media literacy that is rather neglected in the packs.

Finally, there is a need to provide further training and support for teachers who are less experienced or confident in media education. This could be provided face-to-face, or in the pack itself – in teachers' notes, but possibly also in short video sequences of 'best practice' on the DVD. Guidance is needed not just on the specialist media literacy issues, and other aspects related to advertising, but also on the pedagogy: teachers need particular guidance on the classroom management issues entailed in media production work, and on its fundamental aims.

2. Implications for media literacy in schools

The evaluation also suggests some broader implications for the future development of media education in UK primary schools. The *Be Adwise 2* pack has been requested by a very large number of schools, and it was generally very well received by the teachers who had used it. This would suggest that there is considerable interest in this area among teachers, and that the pack is meeting a perceived need. However, the difficulty we encountered in gathering respondents to our survey might suggest that the materials are not in fact being very widely used. Combined with some of our survey and observation findings, this would suggest that teachers continue to face significant obstacles in actually implementing media literacy in the classroom, however important they perceive it to be, and however valuable the available teaching materials might be.

In general, there appear to be few opportunities for media literacy work, and teachers lack experience and confidence in this area. As a result, teachers may be likely to steer clear of the 'technical' aspects of media (such as 'media language'), and to use existing materials quite 'literally', thereby compromising the more engaging, open-ended approach of media education. We found that teachers were particularly wary of production activities, not simply on the grounds of their own lack of confidence with the technology, but also because they found them too disruptive and difficult to manage with large classes. While the materials do provide a great deal of support and advice in the teacher's notes, teachers did not necessarily have time to study the packs in detail in advance of using them.

All this would point to an urgent need for professional development in this area. Teaching materials can provide valuable training in their own right, but they need to be supplemented by face-to-face provision, or possibly distance learning. This is something that Media Smart might provide, although it will obviously need to work with other partners and stakeholders in doing so. Some of this training could be integrated into existing professional development provision, such as ICT and literacy courses. At present, there is a significant gap between the growing interest in media literacy and the absence of sustained professional development opportunities, especially for primary school teachers.

Broadly speaking, this evaluation confirms that children already know a lot about media, and that they are keen to learn more. Even so, there are areas in which their knowledge is partial or confused: they may not be clear, for example, about what is being

advertised, and they may confuse liking products with liking advertisements for those products. There is a great deal they do not know, for example about how advertisements are produced, and about the economics and regulation of advertising. Yet despite the importance of advertising and commercial culture in their lives, they have few opportunities to discuss these issues in school lessons. To this extent, there is a significant need for systematic forms of media education as a core element of the curriculum. Despite the value of materials like *Be Adwise 2*, we would conclude that this need is still very far from being adequately met.

APPENDIX 1 FURTHER DETAILS OF SCHOOLS OBSERVED

School A primarily serves the needs of the council tower blocks surrounding it, with a few families sending children from further afield. At the recent Ofsted inspection, the school had 270 students of mixed gender, ranging in age from 3 to 11. At entry it takes two streams. The Ofsted report (June 2006) described the social and linguistic background as follows:

“The school is larger than average and serves an ethnically diverse inner city area. There are high levels of social disadvantage represented in the locality. The proportion of families claiming free school meals is very high. A fifth of the school population are refugees. Four-fifths of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and well over half speak English as an additional language. Fewer students than usually found are identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities, but the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average. Pupil mobility is high... It is an old site with three separate ageing buildings.”

School A achieved a Grade 2, ‘Good’ in their recent Ofsted inspection, but have been asked to do various types of work to ensure that old and crumbling buildings remain safe and pleasant for students. We observed that classrooms were small and crowded, that there was not much space for either teachers or students to move around and that this, at times, inhibited group work or activities of a practical nature that require students to move around the classroom rather than sitting in one position. This bears directly on the *Be Adwise* work.

School B, in a small Kent town with high unemployment and a largely white English population, is a much smaller school being single entry and has recently undergone a makeover. Its buildings are spread out and low-rise, with wide corridors, plenty of light and set in open playing fields of which many students have a view. It is attached to a unit for behaviourally disruptive students, although it does not have too much to do with this unit on a daily basis. The ethos of the school feels extremely enabling of students’ personal development and the school has received a commendation in its previous Ofsted report for this feature; the head and deputy head encourage projects, discussions, and debates with and between children. Above all there appears to be no overt racism, and an atmosphere of calm enjoyment in most lessons that is most conducive to participatory teaching approaches such as those employed in the *Be Adwise 2* materials.

School C, in North West London, is a small independent girls’ school which prides itself on its caring and family-orientated approach. According to its website, children from practising Roman Catholic families are preferred for entry though it also ‘maintains a healthy balance of pupils from all religions and cultures’. Girls who enter after the age of 6 must sit an entrance exam. Girls in years 5 and 6 are prepared for entrance exams to what are seen as the ‘top schools’ at secondary level. The school is preparing for an inspection in the summer term 2007. The previous inspection carried out in 2001 by the ISC (Independent Schools Council) praised the school’s academic achievements:

“The results in National Curriculum tests at Key Stages 1 and 2 are good, matching and in some respects surpassing those of comparable schools. Moreover, the results in selection examinations to senior independent girls schools at the age of 11 are excellent.”

The behaviour of the girls within the classes we observed was excellent and the atmosphere extremely warm and friendly. Most of the girls are very able and applied themselves to the *Be Advise 2* activities with enthusiasm. Some even took the activities further than requested by the teacher, producing unsolicited homework. The classroom we observed was laid out in a rather traditional manner with rows of sloping ‘old style’ desks and chairs. This made pair and group work more difficult than if children had been able to gather around larger tables to carry out the *Be Advise 2* activities. Nevertheless, relations between the girls were collegial and they worked well together in spite of the difficulties posed by the desks and classroom layout more generally.