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I think sometimes in schools we can be quite insular, and we come up with the new sparkly idea or initiative, schools are very reluctant to share [...] so I think it's just that willingness to share and to learn from others [...] so Well Schools for me was an opportunity to see what was going on further afield."

#### Key tags

Secondary school; Wales; ▶ average number of students eligible for FSM; ▶ average number of students registered with SEND; ▼ below average number of students speak EAL.

## Intent

Wellbeing of staff and pupils is a key priority. The school's wellbeing motto, *"We work well when we are well for work"* underpins the school's preventative approach to wellbeing which aims to equip pupils and staff with the tools and skills they need for success. The school has been involved in providing feedback on the wellbeing strand of the new Welsh national curriculum which came into force into September 2022. The health and wellbeing lead at the school is part of a health and wellbeing group run by the Local Authority, and regularly presents on the school's approach to wellbeing at both regional and national conferences. Joining Well Schools was a logical step for the School as the ethos *"tied in well with all the work that we had been doing"* and was an opportunity *"to share and to learn from others"*.

## Implementation

### Well Led:

There is a dedicated health and wellbeing lead to ensure that the school has the *"freedom to really focus [...] on developing health and wellbeing"* as a focal part of the school's development plan and a priority within the senior leadership team. A staff wellbeing group runs as a professional development community, and this group meets half-termly to discuss student and staff wellbeing, survey results and suggestions. The school has strong external relationships with the Local Authority and a School Health Research Network which aims to promote health and wellbeing in Welsh schools and being part of a larger network of school wellbeing leads facilitates the sharing of ideas and feedback.

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We used Well Schools to actually improve what we already had [...] I felt that Well Schools would fit really well embedded within our social, mental and physical health model."

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This model recognises that wellbeing comprises physical health, social and mental health - all *"need to be in place for a person to be regarded as healthy"*.

## How do the School put this into practice:

- Staff can make suggestions via a 24/7 electronic suggestion box.
- Staff have dedicated wellbeing time as part of their PPA time every week. Staff are free to use this time as they see fit.
- Regular wellbeing weeks for staff when there are no meetings, but other activities such as yoga and art are on offer.

## Well Prepared students:

There is a preventative approach to looking after pupil wellbeing, which includes physical wellbeing, social and mental wellbeing. Physical activity and the importance of outdoor learning is recognised, and pupils engage in 120 minutes a week of physical education. The school offers a wide range of outdoor learning opportunities and owns canoes and mountain bikes for pupils to use, and runs a forest school where pupils learn different skills such as lighting fires, cooking and food health.

## Well Equipped students:

Ensuring a positive start at the secondary school is key and the school run a comprehensive transition programme centred on the theme of "happiness" for children joining the school from primary feeder schools.

Pupils are encouraged to learn leadership skills through activities such as the Forest School, and have opportunities to become sports ambassadors and earn leadership qualifications.

## How does the School put this into practice:

- A transition programme is focused on the theme of happiness and starts with children in Year 4 and 5 who are invited into School.
- Year 6 pupils benefit from a transition week where they go to into School and take different lessons and can get used to the school environment.
- A wide range of sports and physical activities are offered, including canoeing and mountain biking.
- Forest School provides an opportunity for outdoor learning.
- Pupils in Year 9 have the option to study an outdoor education course which involves activities such as kayaking, gorge walking and climbing.
- The school regularly surveys pupils to gather insights into how students feel and how this compares to other schools.



We have staff that go out to primaries, and then we have transition week [...] where they will come in and they will do a series of normal lessons with us so they get that taster. And we actually start that transition with Year 4s [...] so they come in and they do a happy theme day, using our facilities and obviously coming to the secondary school getting familiar with the site and what we can offer them."

## Impact

Wellbeing is firmly embedded across the curriculum, and the senior leadership team value both staff and pupil wellbeing. The result is that the school is "a positive place to come into every day". Staff feel trusted to do their jobs and the opportunity for flexible wellbeing sessions "make such a difference". The school has a good track record in retaining staff and offering career progression. Pupils are happier and this is supported by survey feedback. The school regularly presents on its approach to wellbeing and is keen to share the benefits of being a Well School with other local and national schools to increase the number of member schools based in Wales.



Students seem happier and the data we're getting back from them supports that, and just speaking to colleagues, colleagues stay at this school, it's not somewhere where they're constantly looking to move on."