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We wanted to ensure that our children and our communities, were physically well and emotionally well and we held that as just as important as academic outcomes."

•Key tags

Primary school; South East England; ▲ above average number of students eligible for FSM; ▲ above average number of students speaking EAL; ▼ below average number of students registered with SEND.

Intent

Kensington Primary school was excited about being part of the Well Schools movement as part of their passion for driving change in the education system and moving away from the traditional focus prioritising academic outcomes. Well Schools was "totally in line with what we are doing". They were drawn to the importance placed on creating a supportive culture for staff and students. Supporting mental and physical health should be the foundation for all other school activities and staff believe strongly in developing a culture that actively promotes health and wellbeing.

Implementation

Well Led:

The school emphasises the importance of the shared vision driven by the senior leadership team. The school actively promotes a whole school approach in which staff and pupils contribute to decisions. There is active monitoring of what is happening in the school and changes are made as necessary. They value health and wellbeing support and recognise the importance of developing a culture in which staff feel their wellbeing is prioritised and supported. Workload support is offered by working to minimise unnecessary burden on staff, "our staff are supported, we take away so much of the unnecessary bureaucracy that you can, so that our staff can just focus on what they love which is working with kids." They value staff every day and promote a culture where staff feel respected. They achieve this through continuous professional development, encouragement to pursue their interests.

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Their [school staff] wellbeing needed to be prioritised if we were going to get the best for the children."

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...once you've got that culture then everything else can fall into place so all of the stuff around workload and wellbeing for your team, and, putting physical and mental health for children at the heart of your curriculum can be absolutely central to what we do."

Examples of leadership and management practice:

- Staff and pupil surveys - their voice is important to the school and they undertake regular surveys to gain feedback from staff and pupils.
- Weekly meetings for teachers and bi-weekly meetings for support staff are held to discuss what is going on in school and any support needs for both staff and pupils that need action.
- School leaders also have specific roles with responsibility for promoting health and wellbeing.

Examples of staff wellbeing work:

- One wellbeing day off work every year.
- Bringing staff together socially for quiz nights and organised staff sports sessions.
- Gestures of thanks e.g., paid breakfast.
- Rich and valuable continuous professional development.
- Ongoing monitoring of staff wellbeing.

Well Prepared students:

Physical health: There is a focus on promoting healthy lifestyles through positive physical and mental health as a foundation for all other school activities, and healthy lifestyles are delivered through a rich curriculum. The school encourages physical activity by embedding it into daily and weekly routines. Fitness sessions are used for breakout sessions and throughout the day to energise the children, helping with restlessness and support emotional regulation.

Mental health: The school curriculum includes developing strategies to support emotional wellbeing and encourages children to consider their feelings and achieving self-regulation. They have moved away from traditional behaviour approaches in favour of promoting an ethos of **kindness, respect, and flexibility**. Systems and resources are in place to support children who may be struggling with poor mental health too, for example: Place2Be helps children to explore their emotions and work through them. There is a room in school where children can go to express themselves in several ways e.g., talking, playing or being creative; and a counselling service is offered.

Well Equipped students:

The school have re-designed the curriculum to ensure all children thrive and combine learning activities with the development of communication skills. They promote physical and mental wellbeing as a foundation for life in the 21st century. The school's curriculum is based around four strands: academic; health; communication; and culture. Children learn about emotional health and physical health activities are built into the daily routine. They focus on developing emotional literacy and support children in discussing their feelings e.g., using colour monsters, soft toys, displays and teacher support.

Impact

There has been an overall noted improvement in health and wellbeing. Skills for life and behaviour at the school is reported as being good and staff report that the skills and strategies children learn as part of the Well Schools approach have contributed to improved behaviour and the children are better able to regulate themselves. Sickness and absence records are lower than comparable schools within the Trust and nationally. There has been an overwhelmingly positive reaction from the school community - parents report that their children are fitter, healthier and happier, and the number of parents choosing the school as the preferred school has increased.

As a result of the approaches that have been taken at Kensington, the school was judged as outstanding at it's last Ofsted in December 2021.

“ I feel it, everybody knows this school is an amazing place to work, the children in comparison to where we were when I first started five years ago, we're just a complete different school.”