



The children are at the heart of everything we do"

•Key tags

Special school; ages 2-19; West Midlands of England; ▲ above average number of students eligible for FSM; ▼ below average number of students speaking EAL.

Intent

The school joined the Well Schools community during the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. They joined to inform their work in supporting young people's wellbeing during this uncertain period. Pupil wellbeing was to be at the core of what they do, and with a particular focus on building community and developing pupils' communication skills. The staff recognised the importance of supporting wellbeing, both as a way of facilitating academic development and for pupil's personal development.

Implementation

Well Led:

The school ensure staff have high-quality training, and provide specialised training sessions which focus on supporting their overall wellbeing. There are also additional support staff, such as "care assistants", and other specialists that teachers can call on for advice when supporting students, including a "behaviour specialist". The school aim to offer flexibility and compassion, and create a positive culture around asking for help, "we do go and ask for advice".

Well Prepared students:

They recognise the importance of physical activity for young people's wellbeing and have a number of strategies to support this including:

- Make this accessible for the pupils they support.
- Have a positive space for developing social skills and emotional knowledge.
- Invest in equipment and resources on the playground and training staff to help facilitate those activities.
- Establish a habit of "active breaks and active lunch times".
- Get coaches to come in to lead extra-curricular activities and ensure all pupils experience high quality physical education.

Mental health is seen as being a firm foundation for young people's ability to participate successfully in their education. The school have counsellors to refer their pupils to if they are worried, and offer both "talking therapy" and "music therapy" so that there is a range of approaches depending on the needs of the individual.

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It's giving them some responsibility, through shared ownership of activities, rather than just being told what to do all the time... they're part of the process.”

Well Equipped students:

The school offer pupils leadership opportunities and see this as being central to their personal development. They do this through a number of approaches e.g., allow pupils to adopt positions of responsibility in their classrooms, have older pupils lead school events and use these skills in the wider community. They see this as a way of developing important “communication skills” as well as “resilience”. The school also offer a wide range of opportunities for young people to go on external trips, such as “forest walks” and “sailing”, and they have an enrichment day at an outdoors centre with “zip wiring”. The school have “made sure there was timetable for pupils to access being outside”. There are also curriculum days which allow the whole school community to come together.

The school's mission statement to support students sets out:

- We develop each pupil's independence and celebrate their successes.
- There is a balance of academic, artistic and physical education, as well as that of social and emotional well-being which prepares our pupils for future citizenship.
- We offer a wide and exciting range of extra-curricular opportunities such as clubs, educational visits, themed days, sporting events, plays, musical performances and assemblies.

Impact

Due to their flexibility as a special school, they are able to adapt their expectations of pupils and celebrate their achievements as well as dedicating time specifically to wellbeing. As the core focus going forwards was rebuilding activities and opportunities that were offered pre-pandemic, and supporting young people to become more resilient, Well Schools has provided a meaningful structure to guide this process. Going forwards they suggested that seeking out “a similar school to us” in the Well Schools community could be useful “so that we could be sharing ideas”.

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They won't learn or won't want to come to school if they don't feel welcomed and secure.”

