



Camrose Primary School

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2024

Introduction

The journey towards outstanding mental health and wellbeing provision at Camrose has been many years in the making. We recognise that a positive culture that spans the whole population is a continuous journey rather than a fixed destination or a series of boxes that need to be ticked. The importance of wellbeing has been authentically embraced by school leaders and wellbeing forms a fundamental part of the School Development Plan.

Previously...

The school was awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools in 2019. In order to achieve this, a huge audit of the whole population was undertaken. Most powerfully, a SWOT analysis of staff and Stakeholder Evaluations (for children, staff and parents) enabled us to understand the efficacy of current mechanisms, highlight gaps and challenges and direct us towards best practice.

Covid was a challenging time but the school was able to mitigate the negative effects on the overall emotional wellbeing due to the new framework that was now in place.

Currently...

We believe that we are in a strong position when it comes to meeting the comprehensive needs of Camrose. That said, we are not complacent: we regularly audit our provision, seek feedback and aim for best practice at all times. We understand and insist upon mental health and wellbeing permeating all aspects of school life.

Leadership

Sharon Crick, the Head Teacher has overall responsibility for wellbeing but other members of the Senior Leadership Team have designated roles and responsibilities. While the SLT oversee wellbeing, all members of the school have a responsibility for their own mental health and the offer of support is proactively reinforced.

- Staff wellbeing: Lara Wheeler, Deputy Head Teacher.
- Child wellbeing and staff clinical supervision: John Courtney, the Learning Mentor, Safeguarding Lead and BACP registered therapist.
- Senior Mental Health Lead: John Courtney
- Parents: Sharon Crick, Lara Wheeler and John Courtney. This can be done either formally, by appointment, or informally at drop off or collection – all three are present at the start and end of the day and one is available for drop ins until 4.30pm each day.
- Karen Hill is the governor responsible for wellbeing.

- Appraisals explicitly focus on wellbeing – teacher appraisals are taken by Sharon Crick; support staff appraisals are taken by Lara Wheeler and Phase Leaders, Mel Stephens, Soumya Ramamurthy and Pheobe Glen.
- Phase leaders report back on wellbeing at each SLT meeting, where wellbeing is a staple agenda item.
- The School Development Plan specifically safeguards pupil wellbeing as an objective with key outcomes stated.

Ofsted

In 2013 the school was considered 'Good' across the board during a full inspection.

In 2018, the school remained 'Good' across all areas except for 'Behaviour, Safety and Welfare' where the school's practice was considered 'Outstanding' after a full inspection.

In 2023, the school was inspected again. This was not a full inspection so the overall grading could not change; however the report states: '*There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now.*'

Salient points from the report:

- *Pupils are excited about their learning ... They enjoy taking part in educational activities, including competitions and residential journeys.*
- *Pupils' exceedingly positive feelings about the school were reflected in a recent concert when they joyfully sang about taking pride in 'everything we do'.*
- *Staff nurture a sense of family and teamwork in the school. Pupils are caring and considerate towards each other.*
- *There are rarely any behaviour issues or bullying.*
- *Staff and pupils look out for anyone who might be feeling sad and help to cheer them up.*
- *Pupils of all ages are encouraged to have an awareness of their own and other's mental health.*
- *Pupils are safe in school.*
- *Staff provide purposeful additional support for each pupil to help them overcome any barriers to their education.*
- *Leaders prioritise the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Teachers use a well-structured programme to cover themes, such as healthy lifestyles, relationships, and safe and unsafe situations, tailored appropriately to pupils' ages.*
- *Leaders, including the governing body, regularly consult with staff and pupils to inform their decision-making. Staff appreciate that leaders listen to and act on their views, including when leaders organise staff training. Staff feel well supported in developing their careers and managing their workload, including being able to take a break on 'appreciation days'.*
- *Leaders provide all staff with training that is regularly updated and reinforced.*
- *Staff are alert to the slightest sign that a pupil might be at risk from harm. Staff know the processes for reporting any concerns.*

- *Leaders make sure that all pupils can share any concerns with staff in ways that suit them best. For example, using the worry boxes or talking to a trained therapist.*
- *Pupils are taught about keeping safe, including online, across the curriculum.*

Awards

There are a number of awards that the school has achieved that reinforces best practice in the area of mental health and wellbeing and incorporates children, parents and staff.

Each award lasts between 1-3 years and reaccreditation is sought at the end of this period, ensuring that standards remain high.

- Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS) – 2019, reaccreditation due Nov 2023.
- Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM): Awarded 2016
 - Centre of Excellence: 2017
 - Flagship: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023.
- Jigsaw Flagship School: 2022.
- Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA): 2016, 2020, 2023
- Best Practice Teaching Assistants Award (BPTAA): 2021

CPD, inset and further investment

The school recognises that to keep practice efficient then high quality CPD needs to be available. Insets take place both externally and internally. Information and in-house training will be disseminated to all staff. Considerable investment has been made in order to meet the increasing demands.

The school has supported and paid for a member of staff to become a BACP registered integrative therapist. He is also the Senior Mental Health Lead. This was an important step in the movement to maintaining a positive culture as the additional needs of some of our children can now be met. We know that one in ten children in primary schools present with symptoms of mental illness. We are aware that we have children in our school who have experienced previous and current early trauma.

In addition, a cabin was purchased and kitted out as play therapy room, which is situated on site but outside of the main school building. This creates the conditions and permits the privacy required to create a meaningful therapeutic relationship. Sessions are free and as they take place within the school day, this allows children to access therapy in an easy and convenient way. Parents are also offered a therapeutic space, alongside other family members as and when required. Supervision for staff also takes place in the therapy room.

When assessing the emotional needs of our school, we recognised that some children will require additional support but 1:1 counselling will not be appropriate. We have employed a Pastoral Support Officer who is ELSA trained and runs a variety of wellbeing groups in the afternoons.

All staff have high quality safeguarding training - the link between abuse and poor mental health was recently made explicit in Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE).

All staff are formally trained in:

- Level 2 Safeguarding – rather than Level 1.
- Prevent
- Managing Sexualised Behaviour (NSPCC)
- Domestic Violence and Neglect
- KCSIE
- Emotional Coaching

We have had (and will continue to have) in-house insets pertaining to:

- Attachment, brain development, plasticity and the impact on school
- Mental Health First Aid
- Behaviour as a means of communication and Transference/Countertransference.

Curriculum and school life

The school has a 15 minute soft-start, which enables children to warm up to the school day. We started this during Covid but soon realised the benefits to pupils, staff and parents. Parents could drop earlier if needed; staff report that the gentle beginning to the day helps to set a calm atmosphere for learning. Children can also be monitored during this time as they are invited to name their zone of regulation. The school offers Breakfast Club free to vulnerable children. In terms of managing behaviour, we believe that behaviour is a form of communication rather than a character trait. The school uses Good To Be Green which utilises a traffic light system to empower children to make positive choices. If a child's behaviour is challenging, they will be given an opportunity to think about their choices with the school therapist who will then contact parents in order to triangulate the approach.

We use Jigsaw at Camrose which is a mindful approach to PSHE. We have embraced this scheme and are a Flagship School. We share our expertise with other schools. Safeguarding messages are reinforced through PSHE lessons, ICT, Assemblies, pupil voice and displays. Children are encouraged to speak up and are regularly signposted to trusted adults, School Councillors, Wellbeing Champions and worry boxes.

Parents

We believe that when families are supported, outcomes for children are better. We are on hand to support families and their emotional wellbeing in various ways. Our open door policy is effective and widely used; we recently retained the Leading Parent Partnerships Award and we have an effective PEP team (Parents Empowering Parents), who are supported and directed by our specialist EAL Leader. Together, they provide vital support and engagement to the school. They represent the key languages spoken in school (Romanian, Arabic, English, Farsi, Dari and Pashto). These parents help bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between school and families using their first language. They will spread messages pertaining to wellbeing and continue to run workshops, ensuring that support is there to enable them to play a full and active part in school life and support their children.

The school provides ESOL lessons (for free) to 25 parents who previously could not speak English. This has been incredibly empowering for some of our families.

The school runs Jigsaw Families each week. This is a mindful approach to parenting and school and allows parents to think about parenting styles, attachment, belonging, behaviour and general wellbeing. The sessions provide an open, safe space for parents to articulate any concerns that they have and take on new strategies.

We offer a range of workshops and consultation around: RSE, online safety, Jigsaw.

Staff

Staff wellbeing is prioritised in the SDP. All staff have 1:1 wellbeing meetings with either the Head or the Deputy. Staff are entitled to supervision and the open door policy remains effective. There is a staff worry box and external support is offered via an Employee Assistance Helpline. There are 11 Wellbeing Champions that cover SLT, Teaching Staff, ECTs, Support Staff, Admin and Governors, who staff can go to for support and advocacy.

Due to increasing workload, staff are given additional time outside of PPA. Staff are entitled to Appreciation Days (based on length of service and attendance from the previous year).

Pupils

Child wellbeing is also prioritised in the SDP. Any concerns about a child are recorded via MyConcern. Children will then be considered for pastoral intervention via the referral pathway – or will be monitored. Children who present in a way that raises concerns will be initially spoken to by the adult who notices it and can be referred immediately for a support check in. Children are regularly invited to speak up and out about things that might concern them via direct adult contact, assemblies, displays, worry boxes, safety/bully ballots and pupil voice mechanisms. External support is signposted via posters. There is a rainbow bench in the playground that children can go to when they need support but feel as though they cannot or do not want to ask.

External links

Camrose is part of a cluster that shares best practice and requests and offers support to other schools within this network. Additionally, we act as an essential cog in a wider network of support to children and families. There are times that a child might need specialist support. The school has developed meaningful relationships with the following external agencies to ensure that wider needs are met:

Educational Psychology Service – Nicola Stonestreet

Occupational Health Service – Nicola Stonestreet

ELSA Network – Paul Spencer

CAMHS – Nicola Stonestreet, John Courtney

Children's Services – John Courtney, Lara Wheeler

Local Authority Education Lead – Sharon Crick, John Courtney, Nicola Stonestreet

Police: Domestic Violence / Operation Encompass – John Courtney

GP: John Courtney, Nicola Stonestreet.

SALT: Nicola Stonestreet, Lara Wheeler

Risks and mitigation

Camrose has a transient population with families from all over the world. While we celebrate our diversity, we also recognise that we have to continually assess our intake and ensure

that we can meet the different needs that we have. In terms of risks to emotional wellbeing and mental health, we are mindful of the following:

1. Culture/EAL

Language barriers and cultural differences can be problematic. Stigma and shame remains a barrier to positive mental health and wellbeing in some areas of our school community.

Mitigating steps:

- Use of PEP parents to help support individuals and communities.
- Reinforce positive wellbeing messages and strategies with children that can be relayed to home.
- Continue with Jigsaw Families project.
- Effective signposting.
- Remain empathetic, open and non-judgemental.

2. Budget/finance

Falling school budgets and increasing demands upon finances is a potential threat to wellbeing within school as it potentially reduces what we can offer.

Mitigating steps:

- Wellbeing is part of the SDP and as such, budget will be allocated and protected.
- Therapist, ELSA specialist, working areas and resources already secured.
- In house fund raising.
- Utilise available grants where possible – eg. Senior Mental Health Lead.
- Disseminate messages after external training.
- Continue to work with Cluster schools to share best practice and new strategies.

3. Safeguarding/Child Protection issues

Safeguarding cases continue to rise across the board. Within our school, neglect and Emotional Abuse is the leading cause for Child Protection Plans and Child In Need Plans. We understand that there is a clear link between abuse and compromised mental health.

Mitigating steps:

- 2 x DSLs and a Safeguarding Team comprising the Head, a Teacher, SENDCo, Attendance Officer and the Pastoral Support Officer. This ensures that staff absence will not impact on reacting to and supporting children who present in a way that is concerning.
- CPD: ensure that all staff are at least Level 2 (Level 3 for Safeguarding Team) trained and that additional training is provided for areas of particular risk – Prevent, KCSIE annual updates, Sexualised Behaviour, Domestic Violence, FGM. Safeguarding Team/DSLs to have specific specialist safeguarding and then share messages.
- Annual reminders / training on MyConcern. This ensures that we maintain a culture of vigilance with robust protective mechanisms.
- Keep profile of Safeguarding high within the child and parent population, signposting and supporting where possible.

4. Parent Engagement

Getting parents to engage can be difficult due to a myriad of circumstances – again culture and language comes into play to an extent, but we also understand that work demands means that some parents cannot attend workshops, etc. We also have a number of hard to reach families whose own lived experience of school and perceived authority means that they are reluctant to take part in school life.

Mitigating steps:

- Targeted approach to attracting parents into school, using PEP parents, SENDCo, School Therapist and Pastoral Officer.
- Ensure communications are accessible and translated where possible.
- Utilise alternative methods of contact – Zoom, Google Classroom.
- Consider offering after school workshops.
- Continue with Jigsaw Families.