

EPSOM DOWNS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Epsom Downs Primary School, in Surrey, has an integrated day nursery, early years provision, primary school and family centre on site.

What do they do?

Taking a universal approach

Students are taught to embrace and value difference and this is incorporated into the curriculum wherever possible. Each year, they take an active role in Anti-Bullying Week - <http://www.antibullyingweek.org/> where children across the Key Stages take part in workshops and activities that teach them to address diversity in a positive way.

The school encourages positive playtimes and so all pupils complete a Happy/Sad lunchtime tick-sheet which allows staff to track emotional wellbeing and look for signs of bullying or withdrawal. This helps children to be aware of how they feel and enables them to share this with their teachers. Children who are struggling to make friends may be assigned a lunchtime buddy or in more serious cases a Circle of Friends (team of support around the child) intervention may be organised via their Nurture Room service. An evaluation of this intervention found that it helped both pupils who were struggling and boosted the confidence of pupil who were involved in supporting their classmates. For more information about Circle of Friends, go to - <http://www.autism.org.uk/working-with/education/educational-professionals-in-schools/resources-for-teachers/circle-of-friends-promoting-inclusion-and-interaction.aspx> and <http://www.inclusive-solutions.com/circlesoffriends.asp#books>

Targeted provision

The NEST (Nurturing Emotional Security Together) is an early intervention group for key stage 1 children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school made a large investment to develop this facility, which provides emotional support to KS1 children from across the North Downs Confederation area.

It is a separate unit providing intensive support for up to 7 children from local schools and is based at Epsom Downs School. Children will typically stay in the group for between two and four terms. The children spend their mornings in the unit and return to mainstream school in the afternoon.

Staff and parents can refer children to the service. The aims of the service are to

- To give children the support they need at the earliest possible age, to prevent learning problems later at school.
- To help children to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve their self-esteem and develop confidence through close and trusting relationships with adults.
- To provide on-going assessment and support for children showing signs of emotional stress and/or behavioural difficulties in order to enable them to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life.
- To work in partnership with class teachers and parents to enable consistency of approach, both at home and at school.

There is an ongoing assessment process, which is fed-back to teachers and parents. The unit works in partnership with class teachers, and parents to ensure that there is a consistent approach to supporting these children, both at home and at school.

The NEST uses measures such as the Boxall profiles and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (see the section on measuring emotional wellbeing for more information) to assess the needs of the children referred to them. This provides essential insights into the child's barriers to learning and is used to inform planning and interventions to support them.

The Nurture Room is run by two specially trained and experienced Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. They work with individual children or small groups and provide targeted support related to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Sessions for individuals are tailored to meet the needs of the child, and last for 6 weeks, with the child coming for half-hourly weekly sessions. The group sessions usually include children from the same year group, are run weekly in half-termly blocks. The sessions can last from 30 minutes to one hour depending on the age of the children. A structured programme is followed covering the social and emotional aspects of learning and behaviour.

Delivering an Enhanced Enrichment Programme

Outdoors learning including vegetable growing and animal care is used to promote emotional wellbeing. The school has a large enrichment programme, which allows children to develop other skills such as sports, crafts, creative writing, and bike maintenance. This enables children to shine outside of their compulsory school work.

They have a large allotment area, which enables children to grow vegetables, which are used in school meals or for healthy snacks. They also have a farm area where children learn animal care as part of their enrichment activities. These enrichment and afterschool activities including sports and creative activities give pupils a chance to develop new skills, have fun and socialize, and this further supports their emotional wellbeing.

Involving families

Class teachers, teaching assistants and other members of staff build relationships with parents and work hard to understand the sometimes complex family situations. If necessary staff can make a referral or recommendation to their on-site Children's Centre - <http://www.epsomdowns.surrey.sch.uk/Our-Programmes/>

Involving all staff

All staff receive training, specifically around building skills related to behaviour, emotional or communication issues in children. Staff are trained in how to spot signs of emotional distress and are empowered to address them with a senior member of staff. Safeguarding training is delivered to all school staff and governors and staff running breakfast, afterschool and holiday clubs. The weekly staff meeting has a 'Children Causing Concern' section, which all staff are able to contribute to. The names of the children in question are then circulated in the meeting minutes and written on the board in the staffroom.

How do they fund it?

They have used Pupil Premium money to invest in mental health and wellbeing support for the school. They have invested in staff training, setting up the Nurturing interventions, a lunchtime fun club, buying in specialist support such as a play therapist, an EAL teacher and educational psychologist. Their largest investment was to build the NEST facility which provides emotional support to key stage 1 children from across the North Downs Confederation are.

They have recently invested in a new medical area which allows staff to monitor children more closely and administer first aid in a quieter and more relaxed environment.

Contact for further information

enquiries@epsomdowns.surrey.sch.uk

<http://www.epsomdowns.surrey.sch.uk/>