

KINGS HEDGES EDUCATIONAL FEDERATION

Kings Hedges Educational Federation is a Cambridgeshire primary school and nursery for 357 pupils aged 3-11.

What is the need?

A higher than average proportion of students within the school are eligible for free school meals and almost half of the students have SEN and/or disabilities. The school is within one of the most deprived areas in England. All pupils complete a questionnaire when they first join the school and 45-55% were found to be disadvantaged through a lack of expressive language and who therefore cannot express their needs.

What do they do?

They try, in everything they do, to build resilience amongst their school population. Governors are selected who recognise the importance of mental health and as a result, their knowledge supports sound decision making, resource and awareness raising.

They have an induction policy for new staff, which makes their approach to wellbeing very clear. The commitment to emotional wellbeing is underpinned by rigorous policies and training in for instance, the identification of mental health difficulties in early year's pupils, the impact of trauma on pupils and so on.

Prioritising early intervention

The school shows an exemplary commitment to pupil well-being both within and beyond the school community. It recognises the critical importance of early intervention and has both internal processes for working with families and innovative uses of external services and resources.

The school has good relationships with health visitors and children's centres to identify families which may need support and children with mental health problems as they enter the school.

Prior to starting school, all children are visited at home. Home visits are valuable in gaining the parents' perspective on the needs of the child and give the staff an insight to the child's home and family life. Families complete questionnaires on entry to early years as part of a two-year FAB Project (Family Happiness and Wellbeing). This screening process identifies early signs of mental health problems.

Emotional wellbeing is prioritised within the PSHE curriculum. Pupils participate in weekly philosophy lessons to help develop an ability to express feelings and needs - <http://www.kingshedgesprimary.org.uk/learning/pshe-and-philosophy/philosophy---good-work-examples> They use yogabugs for early year's pupils as a way to help them learn to relax - http://www.yogabugs.com/index.php?page_name=home Childline's School Service visit annually to speak to pupils about keeping safe. This service uses trained volunteers who go into primary schools to talk to them about different type of abuse and ways to keep safe - https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/the-work-we-do/childline-services/childline-schools-service/childline-schools-service_wda90513.html

The Pupils Voice

The pupil's voice is valued and placed at the heart of the school's decision-making strategies. The School Council are a group of elected children from year 1 to year 6. They work with the teachers and the Governors to ensure that the school is the best it can be. The School council have addressed emotional wellbeing issues.

<http://www.kingshedgesprimary.org.uk/our-community/school-council#top>

Pupils actively support healthy friendships and vulnerable pupils during playtime, through the provision of buddy stops and the lunchtime club -

<http://www.kingshedgesprimary.org.uk/learning/pshe-and-philosophy/smsc---good-work-examples>

Having someone to talk to

‘Talk Time’

The school has set up systems such as Talk Time, a school-funded drop-in where children can talk to a trained adult and get advice and help about their worries.

Blue Smile

The school has commissioned a local charity called Blue Smile -

<http://www.bluesmileproject.org/index.php> to provide a school based counselling service.

The school refers children who have more complex difficulties or emotional issues to this service. Blue Smile offers one-to one counselling and mentoring. The service uses a play and arts-based approach to help pupils develop better coping strategies and improves their school performance.

Blue Smile also offers volunteer mentors to those children and young people who do not meet referral criteria for counselling, but who are struggling with some emotional or behavioural issues and would benefit from support. The people who become volunteer mentors would have some experience of working with children, and may be in the progress of working towards a qualification in counselling. Mentors become a reliable adult in these pupils’ lives, listening to them, playing with them and helping them make sense of feelings. They are important role models who, by befriending a young person, help build self-esteem and motivate them to improve relationships and performance in school.

The Blue Smile counselling service uses a number of clinical outcome measures such as the Children’s Global Assessment Scale, which measures a child’s emotion and behavioural functioning; and The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ); which helps screen for mental health problems; as well as in-house measures and academic records. They collect data at the beginning and at the end of the intervention and the data give them an indication of how well the service is helping the children, both in terms of their emotional and behavioural wellbeing, and their academic progress.

The data collected also gives the school an indication of the number of children accessing the service and the severity of their mental health problems. The school has used this data to increase the number of therapists and as a consequence increase the number of children who can access the service.

Addressing inequalities

‘So to Speak’

The school has set up ‘So to Speak’, working with a group of over 20 pre-school pupils who are demonstrating delayed or limited-speech development. The project aims to minimize the impact of disadvantage by improving factors around expressive language, separation anxiety and language deficit. The school closely monitors the development of these children and is already seeing that many are exceeding the progress of their peers.

<http://www.kingshedgesprimary.org.uk/nursery-school/so-to-speak>

Working with Families: The Red Hen Project

The Red Hen project is provided by a local charity which is based in the school. The project is managed by the school and works with families to address issues such as attendance problems, bullying, domestic violence, low self-esteem, family break-ups and family sickness illness or bereavement which may cause a barrier to learning -

<http://lisapeat.vpweb.co.uk/default.html>

The 'Red Hen Project' the school provides home-school workers who build relationships with families and works with children in school and the family at home. This worker addresses issues such as bullying, domestic violence, low self-esteem, family break-ups and sickness, illness or the pending death of a parent.

The worker has contact with other agencies such as Social Services and health visitors, organisations that provide out of school activities and other charities such as food banks to make sure that families receive all the help available to them

Commissioning of services

The school monitors a range of in-house data such as i-behave -

<http://www.improvebehaviour.co.uk/> , and electronic behaviour support systems, a bullying log, a racist incidence log, and draft in rates for the school nurse and so on.

This data resulted in the commissioning of The Blue Smile project which gives twenty pupils access to weekly counselling. By collecting data on the severity of mental health problems experienced, they have been able to develop the service so more pupils are able to access support.

Building local partnerships

All staff receive annual safeguarding training and are expected to look out for signs of distress and follow the school's rigorous systems to bring effective and timely support.

Work with statutory agencies has secured further support for families including access to an early year's mental health nurse; additional support hours from a school nurse; pupil self-referral to the school nurse; and an additional home/school worker who is jointly funded by the locality team. The school has good links with CAMHS and other agencies.

What is the impact and how is it measured?

Academic progress is measured before and after interventions and this has shown that pupils are making better than national progress. The Red Hen Project was independently evaluated and found to achieve excellent outcomes for pupils and families. Blue Smile's outcomes are measured with a range of robust systems including the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and other assessment models.

How do they fund it?

The school has used a considerable proportion of their Pupil Premium monies to fund interventions that support wellbeing. In addition, Kings Hedges has secured funding from the Lottery and Children in Need, as well as partnering with local voluntary groups that provide services for free or at a subsidised rate.

Contact for further information

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<http://www.kingshedgesprimary.org.uk/>