The Beauchamp Papers 4

Carrying our childhood with us

Why well-being matters in transforming learning

Pam Mundy Sue Egersdorff Andrew Hobbs

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The Fourth Beauchamp Paper

Pam Mundy, Sue Egersdorff and Andrew Hobbs

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We are particularly grateful to the following who have contributed their insights, expertise, time and commitment to help shape this publication and the thinking behind it:

- Dorian Coxon
- Isabel Davis
- Malcolm Groves
- Ed Harker
- Kate Hinton
- Anne McCormick

Finding your way round this publication

This publication is organised in three chapters. Although each can be read independently, they do follow a sequence of thought and development. The two main chapters follow a brief recap of the origins and development of the whole series of Beauchamp Papers.

Chapter 1 - Pam Mundy and Sue Egersdorff review what we know about the significance of well-being and its impact on learning and achievement, and explore the implications for school leaders working in all phases.

Chapter 2 - Three case studies, written by Andrew Hobbs, Ed Harker and Kate Hinton, show how a range of schools working across the age spectrum have taken forward the significance of well-being for their learners and the impact it is having.

Chapter 3 - This short final chapter sets out Schools of Tomorrow's plans to take forward these ideas and thinking across 2015.

The Story So Far

Schools of Tomorrow, growing out of the work of its predecessor The Beauchamp Group, launched its first publication *'Towards a new understanding of outstanding schools'* at the RSA in October 2013.

In it, Professor John West-Burnham puts forward four evidence-based moral propositions to guide the development of the outstanding school of tomorrow.

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Towards a new Understanding of Outstanding Schools

Malcolm Groves and John West-Burnham

Growing Engagement: re-imagining relationships between schools, families and communities

Janet Goodall, Ralph Tabberer, Richard Gerver

Identity and Learning

Lynne Davies, Bernie Trilling and Andrew Hobbs

Proposition 1

The outstanding school of tomorrow is one in which every child is entitled to a holistic educational experience which is rooted in personal well-being, delivered on the basis of equity and responsive to the personal needs of every learner.

Proposition 2

Tomorrow's outstanding school recognises that, to secure equity, it has to engage with the factors that are most significant and influential in determining educational success and enhanced life chances. This means that it is actively engaged in securing positive outcomes in terms of family life, community, poverty and social class, according to its context.

Proposition 3

Learning is a social experience rooted in family, community and school that is outstanding in the extent to which it is both personalized and rooted in authentic social relationships.

Proposition 4

Leadership for the school of tomorrow has to be seen in terms of collective capacity rather than personal, hierarchical status. Leadership is a resource to be developed as and when it is needed irrespective of age, status, or formal role. Equally, leadership needs to be seen in terms of a community rather than an organisation, and in terms of collaborative relationships.

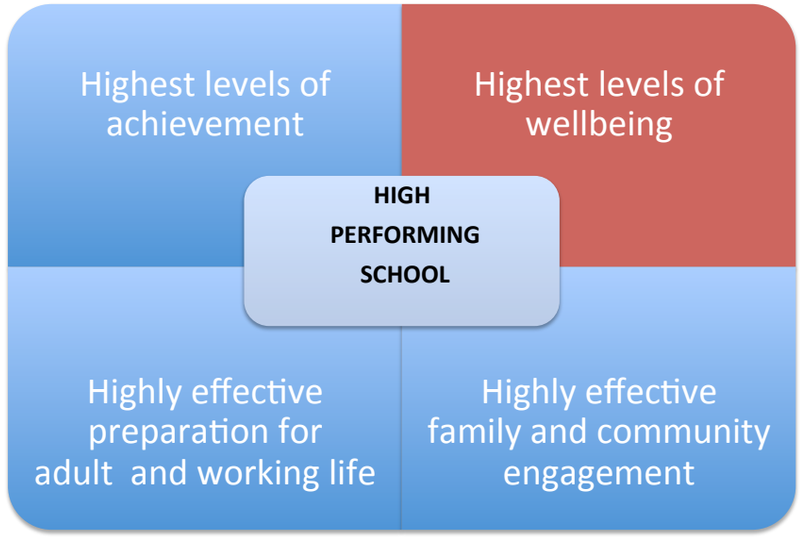
Starting from this essentially moral values-base, Schools of Tomorrow believes truly outstanding schools offer much more than consistently high levels of achievement. They also lie at the heart of their communities.

As a new organisation founded by and for school leaders, we are gathering evidence of how this is being achieved by school leaders in practice and beginning to define how this can be validated rigorously. It has also been important for us to find ways to involve students in this work, with eight schools acting as learner hubs for student-led research and development.

The emerging SoTo Framework identifies four fundamentals of equal importance if a school of tomorrow is to be of the highest quality, and thus beyond outstanding. It is able to secure at the same time:

- Highest levels of achievement and progress for all;
- Highest levels of well-being for all;
- Highly effective preparation for adult and working life.
- Highly effective family and community engagement;

If this Framework is to provide a basis for redefining what we mean by an outstanding school, then it is essential to think about these four fundamentals as inter-related and inter-connected – not as separate parts, but constituent elements that will demonstrate themselves in different ways at different times and in different contexts. Outstanding in one community context may appear very different to another, but the outcomes for all children and young people will be defined in terms of preparation for the future, not a limited measure of some of the things they have achieved (or not achieved) at points of time in the past.



The Outstanding School of Tomorrow Model

Recognising that, our publications each consider one element of this Framework in turn, whilst drawing out the common threads and linkage between them.

The second Beauchamp Paper addressed the need for new thinking in relation to family and community engagement.

The third two-part publication picked up themes related to preparation for future life.

This fourth paper now focuses on Well-Being.

We carry our childhood with us

Pam Mundy and Sue Egersdorff

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The impact of well-being on educational achievement

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Introduction

As a committed education professional, it is entirely possible to spend huge amounts of time designing learning experiences and activities that work well for students of all ages, supporting them in achieving and even exceeding required standards and objectives, yet still wonder whether such diligent effort is really making enough of the most appropriate difference. Increasingly, in the care and development of children and young people, we are accumulating a plethora of proven research making the case that they way in which children and young people perceive themselves and their identity impacts on achievement, their view of the world as a safe or hostile place and ultimately wider (and longer) life chances.

This evidence suggests that for educational approaches to be truly inclusive and meet the ongoing challenge of closing attainment and achievement gaps, they need to both take into consideration cognitive development and simultaneously re-focus thinking about the social, emotional, physical and relational contexts of learning and development. Brought together, such component parts constitute ‘quality of life’ in the recognition that students thrive when their holistic and individual

needs are considered and they are empowered to develop competencies that go beyond ‘formal’ schooling. Such approaches support students in following their own passions and interests and enables them to make their own connections in learning. They increasingly recognise how one thing impacts on another, how one piece of information leads to a range of associated discoveries.

The best learning environments (in the broadest sense) are designed in response to this knowledge and recognize its impact on student motivation, behaviour and attitude. Using this awareness, adults consistently provide a richly diverse and networked educational offer that expects high standards and levels of engagement. Such environments also prioritise peer to peer discussion, give real time for student reflection and questions, allowing the exploration of connections and enabling students to recognise the consequences of particular choices. Critically, these environments for learning take the strongest possible account of uniqueness and individual preference.

For some years now, there has been a relentless focus on raising children’s educational achievement in order to build an increasingly open, meritocratic society. Policy has consistently used language related to improving teaching, raising standards and narrowing attainment gaps, particularly between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ pupils. Of course this is of critical importance and the core business of schools across all phases. Is it, however, enough to achieve the Government’s wider moral mission of equality and social mobility?

Therein lies a complex concern, prompting significant questions about what actually sits behind entrenched performance gaps between particular groups of pupils. Is it a reflection of weak teaching, poor school leadership or inappropriate curriculum provision - or is there a need to look ‘beyond the school gates’?

Whatever the cause, the solution is proving to be elusive and yet clearly involves the intricate inter-relationship between a range of factors which extend into the home and society and which themselves and particularly when combined are difficult to quantify. For example, the factors of gender, culture, family attitude and parenting styles are often implicated. At this point a case could be made for the re-emergence of the strongly-embraced ‘Every Child Matters’ thinking, where stakeholders work together to fully understand and respond to the complexity of child development, acknowledging that when component parts work harmoniously students develop as highly effective, independent learners. This focus on a sense of shared

endeavor, when well executed, can ensure children and young people have the 'golden package' of support to develop effective knowledge, skills and dispositions. The result is children and young people who feel confident to take responsibility for their own lives and relationships, make good choices, and appreciate the positive contribution of good physical and mental health on learning and achievement.

It is in this context, where it could be argued that many of the barriers to learning remain poorly understood, that these interconnected questions arise:

What does a thriving pupil look like, and what typifies their behaviours?

How do they approach and respond to their own learning?

How does this impact on their academic progress and achievement?

What might this mean for all aspects of educational provision and practice?

Such questions merit deeper thought and form the under-pinning rationale for this paper.

Something forces us to think

Freedom to measure

Let's start from what we know. We currently have more research, information and intelligence about all aspects of children and young peoples' lives than ever before. Physical and emotional health, well-being, education and even 'happiness' data provide measures for all ages and developmental stages across cohorts, schools, localities, regions and even countries. Such analytics, whilst useful are often presented in piecemeal, sector specific ways through reports, research, reviews and calls to action. They are rarely brought together to enable us to consider the overall reality and quality of everyday lives and learning experiences.

While such a growing focus on gathering forensic evidence on individual aspects of children and young peoples' lives is interesting, its real significance is only fully realised when the interconnectedness and meaning of intelligence is explored. This enables a better understanding of the impact of potential risk and resilience factors such as equality, social circumstance, physical/mental health and poverty on educational attainment and effective learning. Only by consideration of how such

disparate parts may contribute, if at all, to an overall sense of well-being, identity, worth and personal agency is it possible to begin formulating a response to the questions posed in the introduction.

Busy measuring

Although it seems we are increasingly dependent on data as a means of measuring our progress, securing accountability for our actions, evaluating performance and evidencing standards, children and young people remain the richest source of information about themselves and their needs. From the youngest age, the majority are able to talk eloquently about their wishes, dreams and aspirations. They are certainly aware and able to discuss well-being concerns related to such things as physical health, exercise and diet. As young consumers they are bombarded by advertisements encouraging them to look after themselves and making strong links between personal attractiveness, popularity and success. In everyday communication with peers they appear to be increasingly aware of and concerned with image linking this closely to personal self-esteem, peer acceptance and educational performance.

Children and young people establish and develop their own identity through comparing themselves with others and checking out their personal achievements and attributes against others. A concerning trend amongst many young people, when faced with examination options and/career 'choice', is the desire to be a 'celebrity' of one kind or another – a false expectation and the 'choice' or 'fortune' of the minority.

> *"Identity is a fundamental core of personality by which humans learn to increasingly differentiate and master themselves and the world. It gives meaning and purpose to life, and perspective to human efforts. Through it individuals come to situate themselves, for instance, as belonging to a distinct place, nationality, gender or culture."*
>
> Nsamenang (2008)

Freedom to act

The current operating context for schools is one of 'freedom to act'. It increasingly values school autonomy and capacity as the key driver of educational improvement and enhanced opportunity for all children. Schools have greater freedom than ever before to make decisions about curriculum, examination pathways, extra-curricular provision, parental engagement, pastoral care, community involvement … the list continues ad nauseam.

However, more freedom brings with it more responsibility. Going forwards, it appears that in the political arena the educational landscape will feature less centralised control with fewer 'response required' mandates. Schools and academies are likely to experience conditions of continual change and deregulation with increasing importance placed on evidencing success to regulators and simultaneously making decisions that make sense to the children, young people and their families at a local level. In such an operating environment, making wise choices and knowing what matters most and works best will become increasingly significant alongside building a strong narrative about the impact of actions.

Some may see such a trend toward freedom as unsettling, an added burden and at worst something of which to be fearful. However, it also presents an opportunity to think again about the authenticity of holistic approaches to learning and what aspects of student development and activity merit careful scrutiny in terms of their contribution to academic achievement.

'The calibre of our stewardship will determine the quality of their lives'
The Deciding Time 2012

A recent Scottish initiative demonstrates this intention to recognise the holistic effect of a range of measures and respond by thinking and acting differently. The 'Active Healthy Kids Scotland Report Card 2013' is based on a number of key local health indicators and evidenced behaviours (http://www.activehealthykidsscotland.co.uk). The indicators were compiled by the universities of Strathclyde and Aberdeen, and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario 'Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research' Institute.

Specific concerns for Scottish children included:

Specific concerns for Scottish children included:

- The extremely high exposure to recreational screen time with 76% of 11 to 15 year olds watching more than two hours of television per day and 77% of boys and 37% of girls, reporting two hours of gaming every day on top of their TV viewing
- Consistently poor levels of physical activity with only 19% of adolescent boys and 11% of girls, aged 11 to 15 years meeting the Scottish, UK and International recommendation of at least 60 minutes per day of moderate-intensity physical activity
- High prevalence of obesity with both sugar and saturated fat intake far exceeding recommended levels with only 14% of children eating the daily recommended five portions of fresh fruit and vegetables. The Report Card highlighted high levels of obesity particularly amongst more disadvantaged children
- High levels of socio-economic inequality against all the key indicators

The Report Card 2013 provides a robust up to date and evidence based summary of the real lives of Scottish children and is intended both as an advocacy tool and as the basis for public debate, policy discussion and change.

In a similar way, Public Health England is actively collating data relating to the Healthy Child Programme on the Child and Maternal Health Observatory Website (http://www.chimat.org.uk). The knowledge hub provides easy access to a range of information, evidence, knowledge and statistics relating to all aspects of the health of mothers and children with performance data available for every local authority.

Within England there are major unexplained and unacceptable variations in a number of key health measurements which have been reported in the first Report of the Children and Young People's Outcomes Forum 2013 /14. These include:

- a 4-fold variation in admissions to hospital for bronchiolitis or asthma;
- a 3-fold variation in tonsillectomy rates;
- deaths from accidental injury showing a 3-fold variation across regions;
- measles, mumps and rubella vaccine rates of uptake range from 69.7% to 95.3% and human papilloma virus vaccination rates in girls vary from 62.3% to 97.2% by local authority;
- variation in obesity rates across age groups;
- access and availability of CAMHS provision.

The Report goes on to suggest there are serious consequences for inaction related to children and young people's health outcomes. It argues that five of the 'top 10' risk factors for the total burden of disease in adults are initiated or shaped in adolescence. For example, although there has been a significant reduction over the past decade in the number of young people drinking regularly or starting to smoke there is still much to be achieved as:

- more than half of 15–16 year olds had consumed more than five alcoholic drinks in the previous month;
- hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions in 5–17 year olds show an eight-fold variation around the country;
- more than 8 out of 10 adults who have ever smoked regularly started before age 19;
- 8 out of 10 obese teenagers go on to be obese adults.

and with regard to mental illness:

- 50% of life-time mental illness (excluding dementia) starts before age 15 and 75% by the mid-20s although there is evidence from longitudinal data that much of the risk may be accumulated by age 18;

- approximately 10% of children and young people suffer from a mental health problem at any one time.

There are further important indicators that demonstrate entrenched inequality in health outcomes for particular groups such as 'looked after children', those from black and minority ethnic groups and those with a range of disabilities.

This 'state of the nation' report makes a clear case for prioritising physical and mental health as a major contributor to children's immediate and longer term well-being, also recognising its relationship to and impact on children and young people's learning readiness and motivation.

Modern childhood - a threat to well-being?

We do not need to look far to read news headlines suggesting that modern childhood is under threat or even in crisis, along with an increasing romanticisation of past eras when children were safe to roam outdoors freely, cycle without fear of traffic and walk to and from school unhindered. The impact of modern lifestyles on health and well-being is central to the argument that suggests children today are confronted by excesses, and are increasingly:

- addicted (in the precise meaning of the word) to social media, TV, video gaming and the virtual worlds that such technologies present
- under constant and ruthlessly targeted pressure from advertisers who regard them as active and valuable consumers
- overweight through 'couch potato' exercise-deficient lifestyles, poor nutrition (some by deliberate and some by unwitting dietary choices) and basic ignorance of alternative pathways
- exposed to inappropriate violent and sexual imagery from a worryingly young age

However, it is to be recognised that perspectives on modern childhood are wide-ranging and sometimes sensationalised, so the debate is often polarised and confusing. It is more helpful to consider some well researched and evidence based facts rather than to rely solely on targeted media commentary and its unavoidable political 'spin' on the status of children's lives as currently lived.

FACTS

- A significant number of children become increasingly less active with each year of age
- Inactivity amongst children can often be linked to sedentary living in adulthood
- A number of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers are a result of cumulative unhealthy lifestyles
- Bad health and well being habits in childhood affect health later in life
- The 2008 Health Survey for England reported that only 32% of boys and 24% of girls aged 2-15 years were achieving 60 minutes of at least moderate activity each day
- Girls in adolescence are much less physically active than boys
- Research studies are increasingly making a connection between physical activity and increased levels of alertness, executive function and learning
- Children with poor physical health are at a higher risk of experiencing common mental health issues
- Rates of mental health problems increase as children reach adolescence
- Rates of depression and anxiety amongst teenagers have increased by 70% in the past 25years
- Children in poor households are three times as likely to have mental health problems as children in more affluent households
- Children of depressed parents have a 50% risk of developing depression themselves before the age of 20
- Taking part in social activities, sport and exercise is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction

In order to gain a better understanding of the importance of well-being for a happy childhood and fundamentally as a key contributor to achievement the opportunity to reflect on the significance of such a table of facts as presented above is crucial. A useful starting point may be for school teams to reflect together on local health and well-being data and achieve some consensus around the following fundamental questions:

- What is the story about **our** children and young people's daily experiences and what does available health data and our analysis of it tell us? What do we need to understand more about?
- What are the main barriers and risk factors that prevent some of our children and young people from being active, thriving and enjoying life?
- What are the specific needs of **our most vulnerable families** in relation to understanding the relationships between health, well-being and achievement?
- What do we actively do to promote '**our**' children's sense of identity and to build their well-being and personal resilience?
- What does this require us to think about and do in a consistent and sustained way **as a school team**?
- How will we know we have been successful for **all** our children and young people? What can our children and families expect from us and we from them?
- How successful are we compared to **other schools and communities** facing similar challenges? What can we learn from others to improve our thinking, understanding and practice?
- What do we already do well and should build on?

School ready – early windows of opportunity

School readiness is the phrase increasingly used as a marker for early childhood development with global research evidencing the importance of this often overlooked stage of learning. Michael and Elliot explore the interconnectedness between health, well-being, learning and behaviour in the early years:

> '*Health and learning are intertwined; in order to grow and learn very young children need a healthy beginning. The early years are a time of rapid growth and development and can be a time for establishing a healthy base for learning. Nutrition, physical activity, mental ability and amount of stress, all interact to affect learning. Understanding the intertwined health, social development and learning requirements of young children can guide parents, practitioners and policy makers in planning for early childhood. Nurturing relationships, good nutrition, exercise and rich environments enhances early brain growth and development. Learning language depends on conversations and interactions with a variety of people. Children are nested within families, and families within communities. Growth and learning benefits families and communities'. (p.4)*

All schools have much to gain from paying closer attention to children's early experiences as part of their approach to educational improvement. Caring, secure, stimulating early learning environments including home and family environments, have the power to influence neurological development of the brain, with important and lasting implications for children's capacity and capability to learn.

However, school readiness is often narrowly defined, focusing on a child's readiness to learn, in terms of meeting the various demands of the classroom and school environment and interacting with teachers, adults and other children. More child-focussed criteria are beginning to emerge, based on a growing body of research on child development and well-being. For example, the American National Education Goals Panel and research of Doherty have defined school readiness as 'all encompassing':

Physical well-being and appropriate motor development	• Adequate nutrition • Protected against accidents or the experience of neglect, abuse or violence • Protected against preventable diseases through immunisation • Has ample opportunity to exercise large muscle groups through running, jumping and climbing and to develop fine motor coordination through the manipulation of various objects.
Emotional health and a positive approach to new experiences	• Child has developed a secure attachment with a main caregiver which supports them in developing skills to regulate their emotions and to develop competence and confidence to explore their world.
Social knowledge and competence	• Through secure attachment with a main caregiver and via direct instruction, the child has learned to be co-operative, empathetic and responsive with their peers. Positive interactions with peers results in greater social competence with other children.
Language skills	Language development requires • gaining control over the speech apparatus in order to produce specific sounds intentionally • being exposed to language • being actively encouraged to use language '*Children who are readied for future learning are spoken and listened to; have their questions answered; are offered explanations; and are encouraged to try new words and ideas, to imagine, to guess, to estimate, to draw and to observe'.* *Ontario Royal Commission on Learning*
General knowledge and cognitive skills	The rate of development and the formation of the cognitive skills required for school readiness depends upon the anatomical maturation of the central nervous system and the child's physical and social experiences.

Linked to the broadening of the definition of school readiness is the need for a deeper understanding of what researchers have termed critical physical and psychological 'windows of opportunity'. Although each child is unique, typical age-related development patterns have been identified. For example, the sensitive period for:

- visual acuity is strongest between birth and age 5/6;
- gross motor control is at its maximum from birth to five then gradually wanes around age 8;
- fine motor control is believed to start around age 2 and begins to wane at around age 10 and has also been shown to be a predictor of later mathematical achievement;
- acquiring language and language skills is between 9 months and age 5 with a capacity to learn more than one language simultaneously without confusion;
- learning emotional control is between birth and age 2 and is likely related to the ability to self regulate and manage stress;
- playing with others and developing social competence usually starts around age 3.

Research also indicates that the extent of children's eagerness and willingness to explore and their confidence to trust is established as early as age 2.

Much of this research references the centrality of secure attachment and the importance of strong relationships with adult caregivers. Without secure attachment, particularly between the ages of 6 months and 2 years, the child begins to see the world as a hostile, unsafe place influencing feelings, thoughts, anxiety levels and expectations in later relationships. The promotion and understanding of healthy attachment behaviours by both parents and practitioners can help to facilitate strong developmental competencies that will positively contribute to school readiness and later school achievement as well as building lifelong resilience.

The anatomy of well-being

'But what should count as an educated 19 year old at the beginning of the 21st century?'

If we are to improve educational outcomes for all children there is a need for a better consensus about the broad aims of schooling and where the current system may be flawed and even fail to deliver improvement. In this context there is a strong case for arguing that there is much more to education than academic success and that a broader definition of the term is called for. Looking more closely at the 'anatomy of well-being' and giving more serious attention to the diversity of children's experiences both past and present may bring more consistent rewards, particularly for the most vulnerable learners.

Children and young peoples' well-being, resilience, sense of personal identity, esteem and confidence lie at the heart of improving their ability to learn well, achieve, make good choices, manage risk, participate actively, build positive relationships and ultimately live more fulfilled lives. Pring (2013) suggests, when considered together, this moral dimension represents the essential characteristic of becoming and being a person and involves acquiring and developing appropriate

dispositions for successful learning, both intellectual and moral. These, he argues, are essential to the serious pursuit of knowledge and require a wide vision of learning that embraces the need for children and young people to understand their world, to work capably within it, to contribute, take responsibility and acquire a sense of self-worth and human dignity:

> *'Understanding, of whatever kind and at whatever level, requires a concern for the truth – honesty in presentation of what one claims to know, modesty in terms of what one might achieve, open mindedness in the face of well-meant criticism of others, patience in the search for answers, perseverance in the often difficult task of solving problems'.* Pring, 2013

Looking at education policy through a well-being lens allows the developmental needs of children to be placed centrally with consideration of an all encompassing range of physical, social and emotional competencies that directly impact on academic attainment and positive behaviours. Dedicating resource, time and energy to improving well-being does not need to detract from other areas of learning. Contrarily – it should be viewed as an intrinsic aspect of them.

A growing body of research presents consistent messages demonstrating the importance of holistic approaches. Much maligned in certain quarters, it is the misinterpretation of the term that has led academics in the field to dismiss this and now, in the light of hard evidence, to embrace, promote and explore further the impact of such approaches. For example, participation in sport alongside art and cultural activities has been proven to have the potential to impact on learning outcomes and also self esteem, identity and creativity. Such activities encourage children to discover new types of self-expression and capacities, increasing feelings of worth, confidence and motivation and even enabling lifelong passions to develop. To this end, it may be helpful to consider grouping such additional competencies into a simple framework as a basis for self-evaluation and further professional discussion.

Anatomy of wellbeing	Development	Entitlement to support the successful learner
Belonging, connecting and engaging	Social me	Having access to a number of familiar and consistent adults/school staff who understand and are empathetic, responding sympathetically to my needs. Feeling a sense of ownership around my learning and knowing I am able to postively influence my learning environment and make it work for me. Being encouraged and given opportunities to form mutually respectful relationships.
Being and becoming	Healthy me Emotional me	Being well fed, rested, physically active and mentally stimulated. Feeling safe from emotional and physical harm, abuse and bullying. Recognising a personal sense of wellbeing, self-worth, motivation and personal identity. Having confidence to make the most of learning and talking to peers and adults when I feel my learning is not going well. Recognising and being able to name my own feelings and those of others. Managing my emotions well for myself and in my relationships with peers and adults.
Contributing and participating	Creative me	Contributing my individual and unique thoughts, feelings and ideas. Feeling well supported and respected for the choices and decisions I make. Having opportunities to take responsibility for myself and others as a team member and leader. Becoming increasingly aware of what is involved in being an active group member.
Being active and expressing myself	Physical me Behavioural me	Having opportunity to develop all my senses through active involvement in first hand experiences, exploration and problem solving both inside and outside the classroom. Expressing my feelings, value judgments and emotional needs appropriately and being able to self regulate.
Imagining, exploring and understanding	Mindful me	Understanding how learning works and developing my own tools for effective learning. Learning new knowledge, skills and processes from both high quality direct teaching, adult and self-initiated activity Having opportunities to think, to understand, to ask questions and to pursue my own interests and concerns at a pace that helps me to succeed Having reflection time to evaluate my own progress and set both current and future goals for myself

The Integration Imperative

If we are to meet the needs of children holistically, there is a need to consider the extent to which professionals from the various disciplines:

- listen to each other
- respond flexibly and at an appropriate pace
- demonstrate professional respect
- collaborate and work together to find solutions that work for children and young people
- challenge and hold each other to account for improvement, quality and outcomes
- share a clear sense of moral purpose and commitment to improving children and young peoples' health and well-being outcomes

Learning and experience from the days of Children's Trusts and Every Child Matters tells us that this is not easy. However, the business case for greater and more sustainable integration of learning remains as strong as ever. The need for integrated

care co-ordinated around and tailored to the needs of the child and their family is clear and fundamental to improving educational, health and well-being outcomes.

The most recent work of Louise Casey and the Government's Troubled Families Initiative endorses this. In the Department for Communities and Local Government Report 'Understanding Troubled Families', July 2014 she refers to services working with:

> *"individuals on a presenting or dominating problem, not the interconnected layered problems and dynamics which mean the family unit as a whole and the individuals within it are sinking. With many services circling families or individual problems it can mean families are only contained in their difficulties, often lurching from crisis to crisis."*
>
> Casey, 2014

The Report goes on to examine some of the common issues faced by the most vulnerable families. Families involved in the Programme to December 2013, had on average nine cross agency problems related to employment, education, crime, housing, child protection, parenting and health and shared some common characteristics. In short:

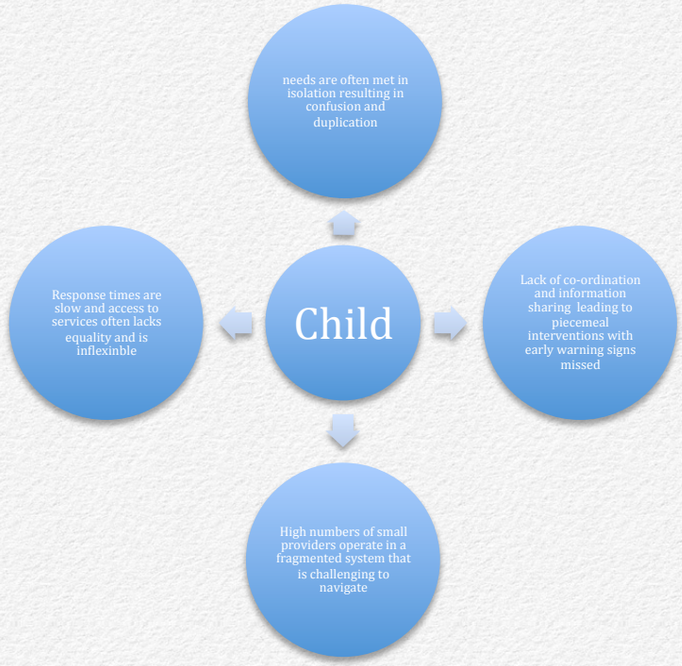
- 40% had 3 or more children compared to 16% nationally
- 49% were lone parent households compared to 16% nationally
- 82% of families had a problem related to education eg. persistent unauthorised absence, exclusion from school or being out of mainstream education
- 71% of families had a health problem
- 54% of families were involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- 42% of families had had police called out to their address in the previous six months
- 29% of troubled families were experiencing domestic violence or abuse. National estimates put the level of domestic violence among individuals at around 7% in a year
- 35% of families had a child who was either a Child in Need, subject to child protection arrangements or where a child had been taken into care
- 21% had been at risk of eviction in the previous six months
- In 74% of families there was no-one in work compared to 17% of households nationally
- In 83% of families, an adult was receiving an out-of-work benefit compared to around 11% of the population nationally
- 70% were living in social housing compared to 18% of the population nationally

The data states and then demonstrates the associations between different issues. Adult problems are strongly associated with problems affecting children in the family. For example, having an adult in the household who had a recent proven offence was associated with:

- having a child in care
- having a child with special educational needs
- having NEETs in the household

One of the areas of difficulty above may also be a manifestation of another. For example, the Report found a significant association between behavioural problems in school and youth crime with experience of domestic violence and truancy, youth offending and child and adult mental health. Child and Family Services have tended to respond to each problem in isolation resulting in duplication of time, resource, high cost to the public purse, and limited success because tackling only the dominating problem failed to address the root causes.

Casey (2014) calls for a much more systematic approach from public services in order to gather a single view of a child, young person or family and look across the family's circumstances to seek out risks. This involves a much more sophisticated approach to the sharing of information in order to better co-ordinate who is working with an individual or family and what their involvement is seeking to achieve. Where integration is particularly impactful the joins between services and commissioning responsibilities are invisible because services are working in partnership to deliver the best opportunities across all phases and life stages. It is increasingly clear that for many children, particularly the most vulnerable, support systems have not evolved to cope with the complexity of individual needs and circumstance as the diagram demonstrates:



The achievement of more effective integration and how to tackle this efficiently and effectively is a live issue being faced increasingly by schools across the country. The traditional local authority support services are diminished and health services are commissioned in new ways through local Health and Well-Being Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups. Local education provision and school configurations are also diversifying and decentralising with the emergence of federations, school improvement partnerships, school partnership trusts, academy chains and free schools alongside more informal school networks and clusters.

In January 2012, the then Secretary of State for Health established the Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum, closely followed in April 2013 by the emergence of Public Health England. Both share the common purpose of raising the profile of children's health and well-being issues with the ultimate ambition of giving all children the best possible start in life and narrowing the gap between vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and the rest of the population. 19 of the 66 indicators in the Public Health Outcomes Framework 2013-2016 have a primary focus on maternity, children and young people. The specific domain on the social determinants of health highlights the links between health and education outcomes.

Interestingly, England is not alone in recognising there is still some distance to travel. Recent research by the Mowat Centre at the University of Toronto (2013) explores the potential opportunities offered through greater collaboration to enhance the impact of public services. Although not focused exclusively on school provision, the research identifies five key underpinning themes in consistently high performing integrated service provision. These can be summarised as follows:

Mowat Centre 5 themes	Implications for integrated children's services
1. Focus on outcomes	Providing clarity about what must be achieved and maintaining a focus on those things
2. Support pathways	Working together to develop a plan for protecting children from harm, actively promoting their welfare, championing the needs of vulnerable children and ensuring that the child's voice is not only heard but responded to
3. Co-ordination and secure accountability	Building trust and good lines of communication, listening to different views and understanding the drivers of different services. Challenging and holding partners to account for shared outcomes
4. Effective partnerships	All partners contribute to determining and articulating the vision for provision as well as helping to make it happen. They model an open, inclusive approach in their own behaviour and build a sense of shared endeavor and common purpose
5. Place based integration	Influencing the local environment and strategy to lead change from a clear value base and articulate the evidence, rationale, benefits and potential impact of decisions ensuring that the pace of change is acceptable to all stakeholders

Growing evidence consistently highlights that the best school practitioners and leaders consistently challenge negativity and entrenched views about what children and young people are able to achieve and relentlessly seek to identify and remove barriers to their involvement, engagement and participation by working sensitively across services and leading local responses.

Such transformational approaches are also referred to as resourceful leadership and have a number of defining features that have usefully been distilled into eight core behaviours by the National College for Teaching and Leadership. These behaviours were originally intended to support the work of

Directors of Children's Services but are equally relevant for all those engaged in thinking about their role in improving educational achievement and life chances.

The **EIGHT** core behaviours:

1. Openness to possibilities	Understanding the different options for resource deployment and using the available resources in a considered way that can evidence impact
2. The ability to collaborate	Working together within teams and alongside partners to focus on outcomes and deliver results, building a strong evidence base of what works and how
3. Demonstrating a belief in their team and people	Fostering a sense of team and practices of team working to enable working through others and learning from them whatever their professional background
4. Personal resilience and tenacity	Demonstrating the ability to see things through and work through challenges
5. The ability to create and sustain commitment across a system	Aligning people to work towards a common goal and clear purpose
6. Displaying a persistent focus on results, outcomes and impact	Not only inputs, outputs and process but ensuring that the improvement of outcomes for children and young people is the overarching priority
7. The ability to simplify	Removing unnecessary complexity from systems and also creating a simple, clear narrative or strategy for action and improvement
8. The ability to learn continuously	Trying new tools and techniques, adapting them as necessary and learning from the experience and evidence

Conclusion

> The skills a child needs for school are part of the skills they need for life. We want all our children to lead happy, enquiring active childhoods, recognising that this provides the foundations for fulfilled and productive adulthoods.
>
> *The Tickell Review DfE 2011*

This paper strongly suggests that well-being and learning are close partners throughout early years, primary and secondary education. However, greater and more in depth research is required to fully understand and appreciate how multiple dimensions of well-being may lead to differences in educational outcomes or a better capacity to predict educational success. Clearly the relationship between well-being and educational outcomes may vary for different groups of children at different times and is not fixed.

If children and young people are to thrive in the true sense of the word the educational offer should be broad, seamless and balanced, focussing on intellectual development alongside physical, social and emotional needs. This includes key aspects of learning such as social skills, self-awareness, managing feelings, good attention skills and empathy which are easy to overlook when faced with growing accountabilities around pupil performance and testing. This view is supported by recent research commissioned by the Department for Education.

The findings of the November 2012 Report, The Impact of Pupil Behaviour and Well-Being on Educational Outcomes, endorse the thrust of this paper:

- children with better emotional well-being make more progress in primary school and are more engaged in secondary school
- children with better attention skills experience greater progress across all key stages. Those who are engaged in less troublesome behaviour also make more progress and are more engaged in secondary school
- children who are bullied are less engaged in primary school whereas those with positive friendships are more engaged in secondary school
- as children move through the school system, emotional and behavioural well-being become more important in explaining school engagement, while demographic and other characteristics become less important
- relationships between emotional , behavioural, social and school well-being and later educational outcomes are generally similar for children and young people, regardless of their gender and parent's educational level

DfE Research Brief – DfE – RR253, November 2012

Motivation, high aspirations and self esteem alongside good attention skills, engagement and positive dispositions to learning are key to fulfilling potential. They in turn depend to a large extent on the strength of the school ethos demonstrated through whole school and stakeholder ownership of vision and values and also through the quality of relationships at all levels. Early identification and intervention (in terms of, where possible, prevention) for children displaying attention problems and troublesome behaviours may help to prevent a downward spiral of low self esteem, disengagement and poor achievement and the subsequent and often perpetuated cycle.

It is interesting, however to conclude by reversing the tables and posing instead the question: *"What is the potential for education to improve well-being?"*

Recent research into adult well-being and happiness by the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (2009) asked four related questions:

- What sorts of life do we wish to lead?
- What do we value most?
- How can we lead a good life? (This is, of course, dependent on the criterion for this definition)

- How can learning help us achieve what we want from our lives, for ourselves and our communities?

There can be no bigger questions than these. Growing evidence from the new science of well-being suggests that the economic benefits of learning have been overstated, with people increasingly recognising that money alone is not enough. Leading a satisfying life ultimately involves placing higher value on health, healthy lifestyles, social connectivity, time to spend with family and opportunity to contribute to the wider community.

> *'People gain pleasure from doing a good job, and having it recognised by others. They enjoy grappling with, mastering and then using new skills and knowledge. All in all, they value freedom which we define, not as the possibility of ignoring other people and their needs, but as the ability to shape our own destinies'.*

Supporting children to become effective lifelong learners is seen as having a significant role in helping help them flourish across as well as through all aspects of their lives. The evidence that learning promotes well-being is becoming overwhelming. The enjoyment of learning has a direct impact on children, young people and adults by helping them to develop the capacities and internal resources that influence their well-being:

> *'Learning encourages social interaction and increases self esteem and feelings of competency. Behaviour directed by personal goals to achieve something new has been shown to increase reported life satisfaction'.*
>
> New Economics Foundation 2009

The links between well-being and learning are complex and the evidence base continues to emerge. There is a compelling case to be made and abundant scope here for more action based research and real time exploration. The Government ambition, for all children and young people to achieve, alone is not enough. All children and young people have the right to flourish and to enjoy the state of well-being as defined by the Government Office for Science in 2008:

> *' A dynamic state, in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to their community. It is enhanced when an individual is able to fulfil their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society'.*

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Cameos of Change

2

Three case studies examine how an infant school, a secondary school and a federation of nursery schools have started to put well-being at the heart of their strategy to transform learning, and describe the difference it is making.

Building a team around the child

The importance of collaborative working as part of a well-being approach when supporting children with attachment needs.

The context of the school

St Saviour's is a two form entry Nursery and Infant school on the suburban outskirts of Bath. Half the school is the Foundation Stage, and the principles of Early Years education influence the whole school. In the words of headteacher Ed Harker:

> "*We believe that the curriculum should be 'active, creative and personal' and that children thrive when all significant partners in their lives work closely and effectively. We thrive on close links with our school community, carrying out home-visits for all pupils as part of our induction program, and are always keen to find new ways to better support the children in our care".*

The identified need

> *"Becoming attachment-aware has really opened my eyes to help me think 'this is why they are acting like this, this is why they're falling out with their friends, or this is why their learning has suddenly declined' so it's been really useful".*
>
> St Saviour's Nursery and Infant School staff member

- Over the past three years the school has seen a rising number of pupils with specific challenging behaviour needs. Several of these children were identified as having significant unmet attachment needs
- The leadership team recognised that the school needed to adopt new approaches to inform its work with these children.
- This pattern was being repeated across Bath and North East Somerset, and was being increasingly discussed at local behaviour panels and SEND forums.
- An increasing number of staff were developing expertise in the area of attachment awareness through their direct 1:1 support with these children. As a high degree of consistency and predictability is key to successful work with children who have attachment needs, it was clear that a whole school approach was needed.
- In the wider educational environment there has been an increasing awareness of recent research that points to attachment needs as a key influence on children's outcomes.

At this initial stage the 'team around' any one child would consist of the child's parents/carers, their class teacher, specific 1:1 support staff, the school's Inclusion Leader, and some specialist outside agencies.

The chosen strategy

"The Attachment-Aware Schools program is a comprehensive program of whole school training, bespoke support and networking delivered by lead attachment practitioners over a 12 months period. The program promotes positive learning outcomes and well-being for all children whilst supporting the needs of children who have unmet attachment needs and those who have experienced early trauma and neglect. It will provide schools with new approaches to managing and responding to children's emotional and behavioural needs, based on recent research in brain functioning. It will help all children and young people understand and regulate their own behaviour."

(http://attachmentawareschools.com/)

- As a direct result of the shared needs identified by several schools and the Behaviour and SEND forums, the Local Authority created a school's-led program focussed on Attachment Awareness.
- Schools with a particular interest were invited to take part, and used Pupil Premium funding to pay for the associated training.

- The initial training was for whole staff teams, but planned to meet the school's specific needs. St Saviours had the training at the start of the 2013/14 academic year and key governors and outside agencies joined in for the day.
- As a result of feedback from the day further training needs were identified, and these were delivered through the year for groups of staff; for example one session was focussed on Emotion Coaching, and this training was shared with our partner Junior School

The 'team around' any one child would now also include Year group staff, and lunchtime staff, who would share the understanding and strategies needed to fully support the child.

What does the approach look like with the children?

> *"Taking a reflective moment before launching in is vital. It's counting to 10 in your head, not for being angry but for stopping and thinking well how can we sort this out. Why have they reacted like that? Why have they been like that? What's going on? And you do kind of run through every scenario or every situation that is affecting that child's life at that point in time."*
>
> St Saviour's Nursery and Infant School staff member

According to deputy head Kate Hinton, key features are;

- It is important to have a greater sensitivity to the language used when talking to children with attachment needs. By using 'Emotion Coaching' as a whole staff approach we help children to identify, interpret and recognise the emotion that they are feeling. The narration of their emotions starts to enable them to solve the situation that they are finding 'tricky'.
- It makes us confident to tailor our in-school provision to the child's needs, '*moulding the school to the child*' and not vice versa.
- We now track children with attachment needs as a vulnerable group, and explicitly review their progress at termly pupil progress meetings. Headlines from these progress meetings are shared with Governors termly.

The 'team around the child' now includes all school staff (through emotion coaching), core subject leaders (monitoring progress), and school governors who have oversight for the progress all pupils in the school.

> *"It has made it easier to have conversations about pupil's difficulties and for people to feel more confident in sharing these issues. It's made us more open to the concept that if we can crack it early, children's behaviour will regulate more easily and they'll be more ready to learn."*

What St Saviour's has learned so far…

1. The importance of collaborative and team working within attachment awareness:

   - Cohesive, well-planned and absolutely consistent approaches are vital to support the repair of children's unmet attachment needs. This will only work if everyone is working in the same way, using the same language, behaviours and routines.
   - This consistency ensures that the child feels safe and secure within a team of well-trained adults.
   - Once the child feels safe then their longer term ability to manage their attachment needs can be addressed, and other learning outcomes can be planned.

2. The wide range of significant partnerships that make up the 'team around the child':

   - The whole staff team working in partnership with each other to share challenges and successful strategies.
   - Staff working in partnership with the child, with ongoing identification of needs and sharing strategies to meet them. Explicit messages about roles, expectations, boundaries and safety.
   - Staff working in partnership with the child's family, sharing insights, strategies and 'next steps'.
   - Local Behaviour panel, providing expert support through Brighter Futures (locally commissioned Behaviour Support).
   - Teaching Assistant trained in Theraplay, now offering weekly sessions for identified children.
   - Parent Support Adviser workshops on Emotion Coaching offered to parents and carers in local schools.
   - School working with other professionals on specific training and practise needs (e.g. Bath Area Play Project).

3. The approach has a clear impact:

   - The original target children show a clear improvement in their emotional well-being, tracked through 'Rainbow surveys' and 'Strengths and Difficulties' questionnaires
   - There is a raised awareness of the issues involved in attachment needs throughout the whole school.
   - Emotion Coaching is now part of the school support offer for children, and also for parents and carers (through Parent Support Adviser workshops).

- The school team has a greater capacity for supporting children with specific needs.
- There is an overall improved 'emotional intelligence' within the school team.

"I've learned that my ability to do it well (emotion coaching) and fulfil my side of the negotiations is so heavily dependent upon what sort of day I'm having, what's going on in the classroom."

St Saviours Nursery and Infant School staff member

What are the next steps?

Ed and Kate identify these next steps they now want to put in place:

- Supervision sessions for all staff working with children with attachment and trauma needs, recognising the additional personal demands that this work can create.
- Continue to work with their partner Junior school to ensure consistency of attachment awareness to support children's transition from Year Two to Year Three.
- Staff will be sharing lessons learnt from the work with other local network schools.
- Further sharing of successful attachment aware behaviour strategies with parents and carers.
- Extension of focussed Emotion Coaching work to support EAL pupils.
- Extending the use of assessment tools that identify specific emotional and behavioural needs, ensuring early identification and intervention, and the ability to demonstrate impact.

From Tutor Time to Team Time

"One of the key factors for our students in terms of engagement in learning is emotional resilience – emotional resilience, because what we find is that those who are successful deal with failure and act on it. Those who aren't successful have one failure and the toys go out the pram straightaway and it's irretrievable for that lesson, and then for the next lesson and the day's gone. And if you have a bad day it can be the week, and it builds up, and builds up. Emotional resilience is the key."

An issue defined

In those words, Dorian Coxon, Deputy Head of Orchard School in Bristol, described one of the main issues they had been struggling with as a school. It is a complex issue that has far reaching consequences for students, families, staff and levels of attainment and judgements made of the performance of the school. It is an issue that affects the well-being of students and their families and of staff.

When students give the following responses, then it is clear something is beginning to change, at least for some:

> *"You get to know more about other people, what they do."* (Lewis, Y9)

> *"It feels like your part of a family in your tutor group."* (Joshna, Y8)

> *"It feels good to have someone with you and to support you, like you can support everyone else in your tutor group by knowing what's going on."* (Jaysla, Y10)

This case study describes how two tutors have taken a different approach with their tutor groups, the impact it has had for students and staff and how the whole school has now taken it forward from the start of the new school year in September 2014.

The Context

Orchard School is an 11-16 comprehensive academy in North Bristol serving a number of communities, the main one of which is South Mead, a very large estate of social housing. The ethnic diversity of pupils attending Orchard School is increasing with thirty-three different first languages currently, although the majority are White British. Socio-economically, families are working-class with a relatively high proportion of families without an adult in employment. 56% of pupils are in receipt of free school meals.

Whilst some pupils are very motivated and have high aspirations, others come from families who do not see the value in education. Orchard School works hard to engage with and to be part of the local communities. A community team engage with primary schools and organise a range of activities in the school and local community centres to breakdown barriers to education. The school has used restorative approaches for a number of years as part of its behavior management strategies and is also increasing its therapeutic provision for individual students through a counseling service and with Kids Company.

Despite all this, the leadership team came to the view that they were still 'skirting around the edges of dealing' with the core problems of students' engagement in learning.

In the words of Dorian Coxon:

> *"We have not really educated our students as a population in terms of noble failure, in terms of being nice to people".*

'Emotional resilience' is seen as being key to improving attendance and the ability of students to learn, and ultimately to raising attainment. However, it is not being defined only as an individual problem, but as a wider social issue that affects the communities of the school and of the locality. Dorian explained that there are two aspects to this. Firstly, limited 'emotional resilience' should not be understood as a problem for individuals:

> *"It is not just of that student, but in the emotional resilience of that family and that community".*

Secondly, effective solutions are most likely to come from working with the students together as a group and enabling them to help each other:

"Helping students as a whole to support each other, that is also part of it, as a lot of these students feel isolated, they feel that they can't cope, because they feel that the support isn't in them and around them. Their peer group isn't a supportive peer group necessarily".

Finding solutions

As with many of the best organisational solutions, they do not come from one source and a number of people contribute in different ways. Firstly, a number of people had been feeling that the vertical tutor group system was not realising the full potential as intended. Students described how they *"used to do lessons in tutor time*" when "*we would have to write it down in our planners",* which one student, Jordan, explained *"doesn't really go in your head"*.

Laura Evans is an NQT who started at Orchard in September 2013 who '*just wanted to get to know my tutor group a bit better'.* It was the associate tutor, who was working with her at the time, who suggested using circle time with them, having had some experience of trying it the previous year.

The suggestion to use circle time for Giles Butcher, an experienced tutor and teacher of music came from some of the older students in his group who were saying that did not know the younger students. Laura and Giles separately discussed their ideas with the respective Heads of House and took different approaches in trying out their ideas.

Laura explained how her approach has become more structured since she first '*pushed the tables together*' and encouraged students to talk about what they like and don't like about school.

Circle time now takes place every Monday and Friday focuses upon a review of the week or weekend and what the hopes and plans are for the week or weekend ahead. Laura also places an emphasis on what the students like and dislike and how they are feeling, encouraging them to talk about their hopes, fears and worries:

"I feel that as a tutor my role is to make sure that their well-being is fine and that they're developing personally and they're developing all of those skills and they are talking about their feelings, because if something is going on and that leads to them having an argument with a teacher because no-one has asked them how they are that day then

that could have been resolved just by me asking them how their day is".

For Giles, the emphasis has been on getting to know each other better. Starting with himself, he then encouraged students in turn to talk about themselves, their homes, families and backgrounds. Students also talk about what they do outside of school and that has led to students presenting and performing to the rest of their group.

For Pete Hurran and Phil Edmonds, their Heads of House, tutor time has the potential to have an impact on the culture and ethos of the school, to be the 'glue of the school.' Pete Hurran has experienced vertical tutor group systems in other schools and sees that it should be 'breaking down cliques between age groups'. He was also becoming more critical of how tutor time has been operating, which he summarised by saying, "What's the point of tutor time if it's a 20 minute lesson and you are replicating what you see in lessons?" For Pete, tutor time should be an opportunity for sharing learning experiences, socialising and getting to know each other better. His vision is to have an impact on what happens in school and throughout life:

"If we can get that right, it will have a massive impact on learning and the way you deal with problems that come up in your life and your learning".

Phil Edmonds also emphasised the development of skills in young people and seeing the relationship to what happens in the home and out of school:

"I think the main idea is to develop certain skills within our students who maybe at home don't get the time to talk to small groups of people or members of their family. Therefore they miss out on some of these vital skills".

For both, developing the qualities of being 'mindful' of other people and improving communication skills, particularly about feelings and emotions is part of bringing students together as groups, developing a team ethos and a sense of belonging.

Dorian Coxon's thinking was being stimulated by a series of discussions in and out of school and his observations of what was beginning to happen in Laura's and Giles's tutor groups. Dorian is a member of the Schools of Tomorrow working group on Well-being and came away from one meeting asking himself why successful strategies used in early years and primary

schools are often discarded in secondary? In particular, the use of circle time to bring everyone together to listen and talk to each other. If young children can do it so successfully, why cannot older children continue to do it? Discussions with Heads of House resulted in the aim becoming to 'make it part of the culture of the school' and to Laura's and Giles's personal experiments being seen as a pilot.

Once the 'coincidence' of people thinking along the same lines and about a similar solution had been captured, the tutor programme for the coming year was rewritten and the preparation of all staff began. Circle time began to be called team time, partly because some staff and students regarded it as 'What they do in primary' and all tutors were expected to introduce the process to their tutor groups before the end of the school year.

Within the new Tutor Programme, Mondays and Fridays are designated as team time days and all tutor groups are expected to use the circle time process. Initially, on the other days this will not be a requirement, but it is hoped that the positive impact will result in it being used more widely, including within lessons. The new Tutor Programme has been constructed around 6 themes:

- Belonging
- Kindness (Cool to be Kind)
- Resilience
- Awareness
- Ambition
- Participation

A range of stimulus materials are provided for tutors to use for each theme, but as Dorian explained these are 'suggestions to get it going' rather than a prescriptive programme:

> *"I've been quite loose with it, because in my experience to be too 'this is the way that is going to work' is contrary to the team time idea for me. There needs to be a little more flexibility for the member of staff to pursue whatever the group, however the group dynamic works".*

Dorian recognises 'that structure is quite important for a lot of other staff' and that some 'may struggle a bit at first'. The programme combines, therefore, the circle time process with themes and content that together will explore and develop the skills, qualities and attributes that could be defined as skills for

life long learning. That should also improve the well-being of students both in school and beyond.

The Circle Time process

Everyone emphasises that circle time is different and it is the approach that makes it different, not the content.

The students explained that what made it difficult initially was being asked to sit in a circle and how at first they didn't want to do it and wondered what was 'going on':

> *"The first time it was a bit awkward. It was new so we weren't used to it so when sir told us to sit in a circle we were looking at him a bit funny".* Jordan, Y10

After 3 or 4 attempts, however, they became used to the process and the students gained confidence and began to talk about themselves and their lives, feelings and thoughts.

Giles described how trying "*to do a circle time session without getting into a circle we ran into trouble"* adding, *"several times I tried to do a similar thing in rows and it just fell apart."* This does cause logistical problems of 'rigging' the room in different ways for different lessons, but for Giles and Val (the associate tutor with the group) this is an essential part of the process. Now that the students are used to the process, sitting in a circle has become the norm, as Giles explains:

> *"We put it into a circle pretty much every time we meet now even though we don't treat circle time the same, but we sit in a circle and we go through the things we need to go through consistent with what other tutors are trying to achieve in terms of looking at attendance, punctuality and in terms of looking at positives and negatives, but we do it in a much more holistic kind of way and usually these things lead to discussion that quite often leads itself."*

These comments indicate that it is not only the students who have adapted to the process. Giles and Val have become more responsive and allowed the students to lead the discussion, sensitive to the feelings and concerns of the moment:

> "*I think that Val and myself have got quite good at improvising the situation and going where we think the needs are by responding to what's happening at that time. I try not to plan it, but try to be clever at looking at what the needs are, as someone could be having a bad day or not or whatever.*"

The emphasis is on listening, being responsive and not giving quick responses and solutions. Val is very sensitive to the effort and courage required for a young person to speak up about matters that are important to them and explained how 'real' listening and responding to what the student has said matters in many ways:

> *"I think if a young person has said something it's important to move away from "That's great" and "Well done," as that's a bit dismissive, and try to encourage them to expand on what they've said or what they've done…. Try to get a conversation going."*

This requires confidence, patience and persistence, which is challenging even when people are familiar with the process. Laura also emphasised the importance of asking 'deeper questions about what they say' and building up trust so that they come and tell you things at other times. Laura has experienced 'a few awkward moments' but said these have never resulted in tension or conflict and usually have led to positive outcomes.

One of the main benefits of circle time is that it establishes a trusting and nurturing environment within the tutor group, where all students feel relaxed and confident to speak, especially those who are reluctant for whatever reason. Achieving this requires paying attention to the 'quieter members of (the) tutor group' who, as Laura said, '*wouldn't say it unless this environment had been created*.' Once the right environment is created students feel able to talk about what matters to them as part of a supportive norm within the group rather than being dependent on the tutor. As Laura said:

> *"It's given them an option to talk about things because everyone is talking about stuff without me focusing on just them."*

The impact of circle time on Well-being – The students' perspective

In a very short space of time, circle time has had a significant impact on students and their well-being in a number of ways. Students describe becoming more involved and engaged during the lessons and with each other. They like the opportunity to listen and talk to each other and being able to direct the conversation and what they talk about:

> *"In our tutor group it becomes like how your life has been like before you started at this school and what you did before, and we are ask questions eventually to the person*

who has been talking. It tells us a bit more about them and their backgrounds." Jordan

"I like getting to know other people and what they do in their spare time. You (then) speak to people about things they like, if they like the same thing. It creates conversation. When you do circle time you get a chance to say something and you get a chance to choose what you talk about." Lewis

"We are getting involved, not just listening to a teacher and not really listening. And getting to know people better and not just wasting time." Georgia

The students all agreed that this is making them more supportive of each other and is making them more confident:

> *"We are friendly towards other people in our tutor group because we know more about them so we become like friends and become like a community*." Joshna
>
> *"Everyone can chat with each other now and get along.*" Lewis
>
> *"You get to know people more because in our tutor group people are from lots of different nations so you get to know about their background and their country."* Jaysla.

They also explained how it is having a positive impact on their behavior, as a result of the improved relationships and mutual support to each other. This extends to individuals whose behavior is challenging and disruptive.

> "*When you get to know other people more and know their background it makes you want to help them more… It teaches us not to judge people by how they look or act."* Jordan

The students in one of the groups explained that now they have a better understanding of the background and what causes the disruptive behavior of one individual and that they now are able to be supportive rather than reacting with frustration and annoyance. They shared in celebrating the good progress being made in improving this student's behavior and 'now getting positives and less negatives'. The students demonstrated an empathy and concern for their peer's well-being and were genuinely pleased for him and the progress he has achieved. It was not surprising, therefore, that staff also gave as an example this student's progress.

Increased confidence extends to other lessons and outside of school. One student (Lewis) explained that it has given him confidence *"to speak more in other lessons rather than just*

sitting there" and he now finds it has *"made lessons more interesting"* and he is *"more engaged".* Jordan gave an example of how it has increased his confidence to join a group out of school:

> *"I've got more confident with circle time so outside of school it made me want to go and join different things. I went to a different place than I usually go to play football and spoke to people straight away rather than sit back and hide in the corner."*

It was very evident in talking to the students that circle time has given them a sense of community, which they are very proud of having created, understanding that it was a difficult process and will require effort and commitment to sustain. In one tutor group there was a recognition that "one person could mess it up for everyone," with some relief that "we don't have that person at the moment". In the other pilot group it was thought that there are "a few people in our tutor who disturb it a little bit but people just carry on and ignore them" and that overall "it's going well". Collectively, they demonstrated a reflectiveness on the year ahead, which included thinking about how they will receive and welcome the new pupils into Year 7 at the start of the next school year.

One final point of particular note is how the students are establishing their own unwritten but commonly understood ground rules for the group based on respect and sensitivity towards each other. Jaysla explained that what is talked about within the group is not to be talked about to others:

> *"It stays within our group of people because the other person might be uncomfortable about you talking about that, so it's like confidential."*

This has not been talked about as a group but is "*like an unspoken rule".*

The impact of circle time on Well-being – The staff perspective

The main impact identified by staff is on how relationships have improved, especially between staff and students, but also peer relationships. Giles recognises how the responsibility for developing improved relationships comes from him and what he does:

> *"I'm learning to (listen) now much more. I've seen how important that is in my relationship with those kids to be able to give them the opportunity to talk and ask questions and not tell my story all the time."*

The benefits of improved relationships are not just for the well-being of students, but are also beneficial for staff well-being:

> *"I've learnt the value of having a strong pastoral relationship with your tutor group. It just makes life as a teacher much better. It's good for your own well-being and you feel like you are doing something valuable and supportive and right for the kids. It's right for the kids that they should be heard and for that forum and I should know them as well as I possibly can*."

Laura made a similar point, reflecting on how much difference having conversations with the students can have on behavior and relationships. In both Val's and Laura's view, the willingness to engage in conversations about themselves has only come about because the students feel more relaxed and feel safe in the environment. Both Pete and Phil, as Heads of House, recognize that students are more open than they were before. Pete Hurran explained:

> *"Kids are much more willing to share and they know each other and they care about each other more. They know about each other's lives."*

Phil Edmonds gave an example of student, who has a reputation for disruptive behavior, *"opening up in a way that previously would not have happened.*"

This suggests that there is a growing sense of trust between students and staff, and between students. Lack of trust has caused a lot of problems in the school in the past, so building trust is seen as benefiting relationships, which improves behaviour and learning. Improving trust grows from knowing each other better, but cannot just be taken for granted. As Pete stated:

> *"If you just bring kids together for their learning and they don't know each other it does not work."*

Dorian said that he is seeing changes in the behavior of students, giving an example of a disruptive student asking for the first time ever that morning, "Hello sir, how are you today?". In Dorian's opinion that is a lesson for life:

> *"If he learns to do that to get a positive response from somebody rather than using negative behavior to get the attention he craves so much and he realises that difference, then what a life-long lesson that is."*

Laura gave another example of a student with very poor attendance making an effort to get into school and coming to find her to explain why he was late, but to reassure her he was in school.

Older students are also increasingly becoming role models for their younger peers. Examples ranged from Year 11 students reflecting to those in younger years not to make the mistakes they had in not completing work at the time and leaving revision until very late, to admonishments about attendance and behaviour. There is also the suggestion that the new Year 7 entry will experience a very supportive environment from the established members of the tutor group that they join.

Monitoring and Evaluating Whole-School Implementation

In September 2014, for the start of the new school year, the new tutorial programme, with team or circle time as a core element was implemented across the school in all tutor groups. Preparation has included professional development days, Laura and Giles sharing their ideas and experiences and all tutors being expected to trial it within their groups. All tutors were offered the opportunity of observing Laura or Giles groups, but take-up was disappointingly low. The lack of confidence of some staff was reflected also in a comment about 'having done circle time', implying that the 'box had been ticked' and did not require revisiting. Despite this, Pete and Phil consider that the majority of staff are now convinced of the benefits and 'buying in' to the approach.

Monitoring and evaluating the benefits and impact of the new programme is presenting other challenges. Giles described how when he first introduced circle time with his tutor group, the Head of Year found it difficult to monitor how far he was following the tutorial programme along with other tutors. The responsive and flexible approach required by listening to students and allowing them to take the lead, can result in it not being evident immediately that the programme is being followed. This would appear to be an inevitable consequence of shifting the emphasis to the process from content. Monitoring and evaluation, therefore, has to reflect this shift and seek to identify impact and the wider benefits.

Dorian wants tutors to develop the confidence to take risks and to try out ideas, being prepared to 'nobly fail' when they 'throw in' an idea, a question, a poem, a piece of music. Thought is being given to how the 'learning walks' used to quality assure subject lessons can be extended to the tutorial programme. It is also evident that students can play a very important role in evaluating impact and reflecting on progress. Dorian, also

identified the essential qualitative nature of improving well-being when he described his personal vision and aims:

> *"What I want is for students to be walking up and down corridors in between lessons opening doors for one another, talking about what they have just been learning and looking forward to the next lesson in a happy, confident and secure way. That they feel comfortable, there is no pushing and shoving, it is nice and calm and there is a positive buzz. That's my vision for the atmosphere."*

It is too soon to be able to say whether or how soon this will be achieved, but listening to the students suggests that the impact has been very beneficial and widespread in a short space of time.

Some learning points from the Orchard School Tutorial Programme

1. A learning culture that encourages staff to be innovative in finding solutions leads to organisational developments that transform what staff do and how they do it.

2. Students want to be engaged within a community that is mutually supportive and caring.

3. Improving relationships improves well-being of students and staff.

4. Improving well-being improves attendance, behavior and learning.

5. Once a sense of community has been nurtured within a group of students they will establish their own unwritten 'ground rules' of mutual respect and trust and 'look out for each other.'

6. A process that engages all students on an equal basis is more important than content, but requires a change in approach that is initially difficult to introduce and requires confidence and patience from everyone.

7. Implementing change requires risk-taking.

8. Students learn better when they are actively engaged and participate in the process.

9. ‘Real’ listening to students ultimately has an impact on all aspects of the culture and ethos of the school.

10. Students have a very important role to play in monitoring and evaluation and in assessing impact.

Moving beyond outstanding

How Well-Being is transforming outcomes

“We know that academic success on its own is not enough because we know that there are some children who are doing really well, above national averages, but their well-being is really low. That’s not good enough. On the tables it looks great but as human beings and as young learners it is not enough.”

Isabel Davis, Executive Headteacher of the Bedford Nursery School Federation.

Introduction

Peter Pan Nursery School was judged to be ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted in February 2013, which Isabel Davis attributes to always asking staff the question, “*Do you think that every child in your care is doing the very best they can be?*”. For her, *“when we can prove that, then we are outstanding”.*

However, it became clear to them as a staff team that, if they are to achieve their vision of laying the foundations for children as independent, life-long learners within a learning environment and community, ‘doing the very best they can’ required knowing every child holistically, including how they are feeling and progressing emotionally and socially.

Isabel has a very strong vision, which is very evident from visiting the nursery, observing the children, talking to staff and parents:

> “*For here, what I want is children taking responsibility for their own learning, adults taking responsibility for their own learning and parents taking responsibility for their learning and their children’s… (Our job is to give) them the tools to be able to do that and having very high*

expectations of what all those children can achieve and there aren't any limits on any of those groups of people whatever their background or whatever they've done in the past. They can achieve really, really highly and the way that they do that is from having all those skills or support from their peers whether they are children, or adults or parents from the support network around them and know how to ask the questions of how they can improve".

What Isabel and her senior colleagues wanted was a way of building on what had been achieved, but that helped them develop every child holistically and to begin to provide the foundation elements for each child to grow as learners and human beings.

As a nursery, they had been using the Leuven Scales to assess Well-Being for a number of years but felt that they were paying 'lip-service to it' and 'glossing over' the implications as they were not really using the termly assessments to plan activities. It was not 'embedded in practice', which is an essential aspect of what Isabel considers to be her role to be as a leader.

So they decide to become part of the Early Excellence project, which uses the Leuven Well-Being and Involvement Scales to assess the performance and progress of every child through careful observations and uses the information to plan interventions. Isabel explains:

> *"This project was about finding a way to assess children that wasn't just about academic success."*

Academic performance data is still used, but the Well-Being and Involvement assessments have very quickly become more important to all staff in informing what they do each day for the benefit of the children.

The Context

Isabel Davis became the Headteacher of Peter Pan Nursery School in September 2012, having been Deputy Head from 2009 and then Acting Headteacher. Nursery schools in Bedford were affected by further financial restructuring early in 2013, which required reductions in some salary costs to protect the provision to children. As a consequence it was decided that Peter Pan and the neighbouring Southway Nursery School would become a 'hard' federation from September 2013, with Isabel as Executive Headteacher. Since then, and despite

initial concerns about the rapid pace of these changes, Cherry Trees Nursery School has also become part of a 'soft' Federation with the other two nursery schools with Isabel as the Executive Headteacher of all three. The plan is that they will formally federate next April in 2015.

The three nursery schools are within walking distance of each other and serve the same part of Bedford with very similar communities. They also share, as would be expected, the same commitment to early years philosophy and have common approaches, but have had their own distinct identities, cultures and ethos. These rapid changes have had, therefore, a major impact on Isabel's role as she now leads the three nursery schools, aiming to embed a shared culture and ethos in all of them.

The children who attend the nursery schools come from very diverse communities, with many families having English as a second language. Many families have an Asian background with Panjabi, Urdu or Bengali as a first language and an increasing number coming from other parts of Europe, particularly Poland and Lithuania. Jinder Sumal (who is an Early Years Educator at Southways Nursery) explains that each community has its own networks, places of worship and settings, but they also work together to create a harmonious place where issues are resolved and education is valued. Working with the parents (particularly the mothers) is a central aspect of the approach being taken by the three federated schools to support the well-being of the children and their progress and development. The role of the Family Support Workers are a key part of the interventions that are used to help those children identified by the on-going assessments.

Defining Well-Being

There is a common language in the way that all staff speak about Well-Being that indicates that it is the norm for them to talk together throughout each day. The language used also describes how high well-being can be observed in others. It is an active language of positive attributes and engagement. Well-being is about '*feeling and looking comfortable in your skin' so that you 'radiate vitality, excitement, look relaxed and appear very open and untroubled'.* Having a *'relaxed posture and a quiet confidence*' means that children have '*an ability to be self-contained and open at the same time' .* They '*feel happy and confident to get on with things themselves,*' regardless of what their friends are doing, but with the ability to play co-operatively as well. Children require *'an element of independence, being happy to move around.*'

The children are encouraged to express how they are feeling and given '*the appropriate vocabulary to express their needs.*' Well-being is seen as promoting '*self-esteem, confidence, resilience, which is the basis of how they are going to approach learning as they get older'.* Jinder Sumal explained that, *"When we are looking at a child we are looking at them holistically, we are looking at their characteristics of learning."*

Explained in this way, it becomes easy to understand how the focus on well-being has become central to assessing and monitoring the progress of children. Staff are very aware that the well-being project has given them a language for thinking and speaking about the children, which has changed their perspectives and increased their awareness. They are more alert to children demonstrating high well-being and think about what has contributed to this occurring. Equally they are very sensitive and alert to children whose well-being appears low at any point in time and what actions can be taken to raise it. When children arrive at the nursery, parents are asked how the child is feeling and staff pick up immediately on any child who appears to be unhappy, withdrawn or particularly quiet. Ultimately, the focus on well-being, embedded within all the practice of the nursery, means that all children 'are enabled to achieve'.

The Early Excellence Project and Leuven Scales

The Leuven Scales have been developed over a number of years by Professor Ferre Levers of Leuven University, Belgium. The scales are designed to assess the level of Well-being and involvement of children by observation, but have also been applied to other contexts (e.g. elderly people.) For each scale, descriptors are provided for different behaviours on a five point scale. The observer is required to make a judgement of the level for each behaviour from their observations. These are then collated to give an overall assessment of well-being and involvement.

What is making the real difference is how the scales are now being used. Involvement in the Early Excellence Project has provided the training for all the staff, but it is the way that this has been taken up and is being applied that is bringing about the transformation. It is also evident that the project is consistent with the culture, ethos and values of Peter Pan Nursery and is increasingly becoming consistent across the Federation.

Lesley Boyle, who is Deputy Head for the Federation and also leads the project in Peter Pan Nursery, explains that as early years professional they have always used observation as part of making assessments, but involvement in the project has

meant that they '*have now taken our practice that little bit deeper*'. They have become aware that even that '*children who can look busy may not be engaged in high level learning'* because '*when you watch what is happening with that child, the child is quite distracted, is looking around, there is a little bit of (time wasting), not really focusing, not really concentrating'.*

The training has involved them improving their observational skills and working together to moderate each other's assessments and judgements. Initially this involved watching videos of children provided as training materials, but they have increasingly used recordings of their own children made by members of staff. Lesley describes how they '*sometimes have very heated discussions about whether it is a (Level) 4 or a 5', for example, and how this 'really does help us learn from each other'.*

To embed the training, they now, once a week, take it in turns to video a child. *'In a meeting we talk about that child and what we think is happening, what the levels of well-being and involvement are'.*

Lesley explains how this differs from their practice in the past:

> *'For the past 5 years we have given children a well-being level from discussions but based on a general feeling and knowledge whereas these are taken at a deeper level when we actually go and look at those children and track them'.*

The common language and perspective has developed from this rigorous approach and contributed to achieving increased consistency in assessments and judgments. Every child has two formal Well-being and Involvement Assessments every half-term. These are undertaken by the child's key worker and moderated by someone else who looks 'to see if there are any discrepancies'. They recognise that everyone's well-being and involvement varies throughout the day, but want to see how they are doing overall. They also are disciplined in resisting the temptation to begin to observe another child rather than the one who is being observed. This is particularly important since there is a tendency '*to see children with very high or low involvement and miss those in the middle*.'

Lesley emphasises that they have a team approach, describing how the observations of children's well-being are used to inform their planning meetings each morning and the evaluation meetings at the end of each day. Staff also talk to each other *'throughout the day about the children we have noticed whose Well-being might be a little low*', trying to find explanations or to reinforce or continue activities when they become more involved.

Susie Hoefkins, Assistant Head at Cherry Trees Nursery, described the increased satisfaction for teachers of improving observational skills and how focusing on well-being, means that '*you start feeling it'* and how it instills that empathy with the child:

> *'You feel like you're going on the journey with the child. You're more involved with the child, even if you are just observing. You can see the cogs turning and they are really thinking something through. It's really exciting to get that feeling, because you're thinking I've created this environment and they are using it in such an exciting and creative way. It's what teaching is about.'*

When the Well-Being observations are completed, the results are collated and RAG rated. Children with low well-being and involvement are rated 'Red' and prioritised for interventions. Information from the observations are also used to inform the planning of the interventions.

What has been of particular note is that this is identifying children who were being missed using the performance data. It is identifying children not being stretched and those whose Well-being is not as high as it should be. This is the main reason why the Well-being and Involvement assessments are now considered to be more important than the performance data on its own. In addition, Lesley undertakes an impact analysis of all the interventions and has found that:

> *'Children we have put forward for these interventions, using the Well-being and Involvement criteria, have actually made more progress than the children that we identified before just from our (performance) data'.*

Interventions

The Well-being and Involvement assessments alone do not make a difference. It is how this information is being used to increase the well-being and progress made by each individual. When a child is identified as having low well-being or not fully engaged in learning then consideration is given to what interventions should be made. These will include actions taken by the nursery staff as part of the learning activities of the nursery day, but also include a range of specialist intervention activities, each designed to promote a particular set of developmental skills. Interventions have come from the ideas and suggestions of different members of staff and make use of their varying skills and expertise, and include:

- Extra breakfast or tea club before the nursery starts or after it finishes, which focuses on social and emotional development and communication and language;
- Forest School that involves outdoor learning about the natural world, such as building dens, making things out of mud, bonfires, whittling and making badges using natural resources. This requires that the children work together to complete the various tasks;
- Swimming to build confidence and participation;
- Nurture groups for those whose well-being is low, to help them explore their feelings;
- Talking partners, which focuses on communication skills and teaches language structures.

In addition to the interventions with the children within the nursery, Family Support Workers look at the family holistically and provide support to help parents think about the family dynamics and behaviours and how these might be modified to improve well-being. Feedback from parents shows that they notice the beneficial changes in their children from the interventions and also learn how adopting similar approaches at home can be beneficial.

The cultural building blocks

Peter Pan Nursery has a very strong culture and ethos that is rapidly becoming embedded within Southway and Cherry Trees Nursery Schools as well. The Well-being and Involvement focus is consistent with this, building and enhancing all the main aspects. Isabel Davis describes these aspects as *'building blocks'* that you pay attention to when building well-being.

The first is the design and management of the indoor and outdoor environment. Isabel has a background in art and she has applied her talents and skills to create a learning environment that supports different types of learning, stimulates creativity, independence and collaboration. Isabel summarised the importance of paying attention to the environment:

> *"Environment is crucial, inside and outside. To make sure it's cared for, respected, reviewed all the time. To make sure the environment meets the children's learning and the parents and that it's purposeful, and there is always a reason why the environment is the way it is."*

It is also constantly being improved by the staff from the experiences of each day and new areas are being added to increase the range of learning opportunities. Testament to the importance of the environment to the culture is provided by Susie Hoefkins and Jinder Sumal, from Cherry Trees and Southways respectively, who both identified the improvements to the environment of their nursery schools as a main benefit to come from the federation.

Learning is **personalised** to every child. One benefit of the Well-being and Involvement assessments is that the staff of the nurseries know all the children much better than before and are, therefore, better able to meet their individual learning needs. In Isabel's words they are now better able to *'drill down into the data'* and if they are not at their expected levels then they are more able to identify '*what else can ….. make that difference'.*

Team working and personal professional development are also central to the culture and a key aspect of Isabel's approach as a leader. She gives a lot of thought to staff dynamics - *'who works well with each other*' - in order to create better teams that work well together and are able to learn from each other. She will regularly change staff around and give opportunities to different individuals to promote their ideas, take responsibility and develop their skills and learning. Staff learning is the focus of professional development and performance management and there is a collective expectation to learn from each other and that things will change to improve.

Isabel finds that staff are 'energised' by being involved and engaged in what happens. She sees her role as being there to ensure that whatever they do becomes embedded and that staff understand it and why that we are doing it. They are now at the stage where '*testing to see that it works*' has become second nature and *'they don't even know that they are doing it'.* Isabel summarises their learning culture:

"Whenever we change an environment or type of pedagogy we use, we look then to see if it has made a difference and if children are responding to it and whether it fits in with our overall ethos and our overall understanding of how children learn. If things don't work we don't carry on doing it, even if it's something that nationally everyone else is doing. If we feel it isn't having an impact we wouldn't do it."

Establishing **good relationships with parents** is also central to the culture. Isabel meets with all parents before every child starts at the nursery to create an initial point of contact. The key worker for each child builds a one-to-one trusting relationship so that if there are any problems they will be put right.

The final building block of the culture is the approach to **behaviour and safety**. Isabel sees this as being about children learning boundaries and rules and how human relationships work. "*I think that's something that schools all the time need to be working on".*

An embedded culture is more than the sum of its parts and Isabel summarises her vision for learning and the way they work together as a staff team to use the environment to maximise the learning of every child:

"Without that deep understanding of the role of the child and the adult in that environment then you will get two very different outcomes. … It's about all the scaffolding that the children have got about the rules, the boundaries, where they can take the toys. They know so many unwritten rules from picking up from other children and the adults. That means their learning can be deep, it can be uninterrupted, they can feel such high levels of well-being because of everything else that is going on as well."

Staff Well-being

It seems inevitable that developing a focus on the well-being of the children will also result in staff reflecting on their own well-being. Reference has already been made to how the project has increased the sense of purpose and satisfaction for staff as they observe the increased levels of involvement and engagement in the learning of children. Staff comments about the improvements in their well-being also have a learning focus and relate to how well they are able to undertake their roles. There is an increased awareness and sensitivity to how other colleagues are feeling each day and how this might affect their performance.

Marina Allen (Family Support Worker) emphasised that *'high well-being enables us to enable others'* and described how she considers this in planning her days work, particularly when she makes family visits. For example, she recognises that her effectiveness is likely to diminish if she makes a sequence of visits to families that make significant demands on her personally and hence her sense of well-being.

For Jinder Sumal, the key point is how the staff learn from the children. Learning from the children informs the planning of the next day's activities, but, as Jinder explained, this has a much wider significance as, "*If there are no children then we don't learn. We don't progress as a society.*"

Staff well-being does not appear to be related to effort and how hard the staff are working. On the contrary, the focus on well-being appears to have increased the engagement and involvement of staff across the Federation (as it has for the children,) and this results in turn in increased effort and commitment. As Isabel acknowledges:

> *"They (the staff) work very hard ….. They work tirelessly to ensure that every angle of every child's needs are met. They worry that they are not meeting them enough and that's what makes the difference."*

The impact of the Well-being and Involvement Project

Isabel described *'the biggest buzz'* that she now has from walking around the nurseries since the introduction of the Well-being and Involvement Project as knowing that *'because of the skills that the staff have they enable the children to access their learning independently at the highest level, because the children's well-being and involvement is so high.*' She also knows that it is consistent, evident every time she makes those walks and is not dependent on her presence.

Staff meetings in all three settings have evaluated impact and all have identified three big impacts from the project:

- Staff knowledge of the children has increased significantly;
- Observations of children now focus on looking at the characteristics of effective learning and what might be missing for every child individually;
- Children's learning is deeper because the environment is more attuned to their learning.

Equally important, from the child's perspective, Bev Rinvenuto said, "*Children come into nursery much more positive and don't want to go home*".

As described above, the aims of what can be achieved with the children are very high. As Lesley Boyle explained, they want the children to have '*that intrinsic motivation, that self-belief, that they can problem solve something, to be able to argue, to assert your own opinions'.* That children progress to other schools able to do that has been evidenced by complaints from primary schools they have fed into that *'the children from Peter Pan can't conform'.* This is taken to be a '*huge compliment'* by Isabel, Lesley and their staff teams.

Parental engagement and responses

The involvement of parents in the well-being was described as 'only just beginning' with the first of the planned series of workshops for parents starting towards the end of the summer term in 2014. However, because working with parents is normal practice for all the staff of the Federation, it is evident that many parents have begun to develop an understanding of what the well-being and involvement project means for their child(ren.) In addition to the contact with parents at the start and end of each day when the children arrive and leave, what is happening with well-being and what it means are explained on home visits. Staff find that parents particularly like the interest being taken in their child and the progress they are making.

Marina Allen (Family Support Worker) has found that the confidence of parents to come into school and ask questions has increased, which she attributes to the Well-being project. Parents are also very aware of the range of interventions that are available and often will ask if their child can 'join' one of them, even if they have not been assessed as requiring any additional support.

A small group of parents of children attending Peter Pan Nursery were interviewed for the case study. They identified a number of aspects that they valued highly, including:

- the very good communication with them and the way, as parents/carers they are involved;
- the creativity and the way it is encouraged;
- the range of activities and how they learn about so many different things;
- how children are encouraged to be inquisitive;
- the use of free play;
- the science experiments (e.g. chicks hatching from eggs; caterpillars growing into butterflies);

- children want to carry on what they have been doing at the nursery at home.

Inevitably, the comments and reports from parents tend to reflect what has been important for their child and hence for them, but this sample of feedback is a testament of the difference the nursery is making for the children who go there:

"*They are interested in every individual child. There is much more concern now in the child, and interest in their development".*

"We get to know how they work. I feel much more involved now. We used to just get a report and that was it.".

"It's nice to see what children are doing and that they are happy".

"I've seen a big change in my little one (since she started nursery earlier this year,) numbers shapes, singing rhymes"/

"I've taught my child everything in Spanish (at home) but she has learnt everything here in English".

"My grandson's only been here since April but now he is settling down more and enjoying the company of the other children. He socialises more".

"I like the nursery because they are involved in a lot of different activities that she enjoys".

"They give a lot of support. You can always go up to a member of staff and they will always make time for you. They are very approachable".

Conclusion

To move 'beyond outstanding' you have to understand that '*good progress is not enough*', as Isabel Davis repeatedly states. The use of the Well-being and Involvement scales has given to all staff in the three nursery schools in the Bedford Federation a shared understanding and language for knowing and observing the progress of children. In addition they have a range of strategies to use and interventions to help children to progress based on an assessment of their individual needs. Their previously 'outstanding' practice has improved and continues to become better.

This has been achieved by '*everybody working together*' and *'being very clear about what everybody's roles and responsibilities are*'. Improvements do not happen '*by osmosis'*, but as Isabel explains, '*there actually has to be a very clear plan about how we get from A to B*'.

Isabel is also very clear that her role as a leader is to make sure that everyone understand the vision, what their role is and what they have to do together. She has learnt that *'you can never say things too many times, as there is always somebody who hears it slightly differently'.* Isabel's role as the Executive Headteacher of the Federation is:

> *'to articulate that vision again and again and again and again and apologise to those people who might not yet have understood it as they may be thinking about something else'.*

That '*everyone takes responsibility for their part'* is evident from the impact that the Well-being and Involvement project has had in a short period of significant change affecting the structure and organisation of the three nursery schools in the Federation.

Some learning points from Bedford Nursery School Federation

1. A focus on well-being provides a deeper understanding of every individual and improves involvement in learning, confidence, motivation and resilience.
2. The Leuven scales for Well-being and Involvement provide a very valuable, common set of criteria for assessing each student using a common language and perspective.
3. Staff need to develop, through team working, high level observation skills of every child's performance and behaviour that are constantly discussed with each other and continuously moderated.
4. There needs to be in place a range of interventions to provide additional support to any child who is not achieving to their potential.
5. The design of the learning environment is crucial to how children learn and experience learning.
6. People with high well-being learn better, are more involved and energised and are more likely to help and support others.

7. Children with higher well-being continue their learning outside of school and stimulate the involvement of their parents and others.

8. A focus on well-being and involvement can have a significant impact on performance and progress even during a period of change.

9. Parents respond very positively to understanding what their child is doing and being involved to make a contribution.

10. Professional development and a learning culture improves the well-being and motivation of staff.

11. A strong vision, culture and ethos has to be constantly explained and reinforced. It does not happen on its own.

Agenda for change
The next steps

3

Schools of Tomorrow is committed to doing all it can to take forward the aims of the 2012 Manifesto and the resulting four-quadrant framework. This final chapter sets out our plans for 2015, and also how you might contribute.

We want to work with, and to learn from, all who share our goals.

Re-defining outstanding
Re-thinking quality

A Summary Of Our Learning So Far

This fourth publication, at the end of the first year since SoTo was established, has considered the fourth segment of the SoTo Framework's quadrants and offered an opportunity to reflect further upon the four propositions presented by John West-Burnham in the first publication, 'Towards a new understanding of outstanding schools,' (which are repeated in full at the beginning of this publication on page iii.)

In brief, the evidence in our three subsequent publications, supports the four moral propositions to guide the development of the outstanding school of tomorrow:

1. Each of the three case studies within this publication have found that having a focus on well-being shifts their perspective to consider learning and the educational experience of each individual student holistically. Every individual student matters equally and learning and interventions are personalised for greatest impact and improved outcomes. Students and staff are energised, become more involved, and help each other more when their well-being improves. (Proposition 1)

2. All four publications have featured case studies of schools striving, in different ways, to tackle inequities in factors that determine educational success and inhibit life-chances. For example, Lyng Hall Community College in Coventry use of learning mentors to re-engage students who have very poor attendance and troubled behaviour (publication 1); St Saviour's Infant and Nursery School in Bath has used attachment theory to give an increased understanding of the performance and behavior of children (this publication.) (Proposition 2)

3. When learning is at its best it is not limited by place, or time, or context. The third publication – Identity and Learning – considered how learning is changing, particularly with the increased use of digital technology. Children and young people are increasingly personalising their own learning and learning collaboratively with friends, family and others (including those met on-line through shared interests). The second publication ('Growing Engagement') considered how schools can engage with families in learning, working to break down barriers that have developed in the past. (Proposition 3)

4. Different styles of effective leadership are evident in all the contexts presented in each publication. There are, however, common elements that are consistently present. These include a clear vision; strong values; dispersed leadership present at every level; collaborative, team working; a focus on learning, including adults. These are being explored further and developed in the pilot leadership development programme that started in October 2014 with a first cohort of leaders. (Proposition 4)

This provides good evidence for accepting the four propositions as a firm moral basis for developing a framework for the outstanding schools of tomorrow. Within the publications there is considerable detailed information of the characteristics and criteria relating to the four quadrants of the SoTo Framework (highest levels of achievement; highest levels of well-being; highly effective preparation for adult and working life; highly effective family and community engagement). All are aspects of learning and how people and communities engage in learning to form actual or virtual cultures of learning.

Together, this is providing a rich resource to be collated and analysed to inform the creation of the SoTo Quality Framework. This is being developed with our partner organisations to recognise the re-definition of outstanding and re-think our understanding of quality. It is due for launch in summer 2015.

Our plans for 2014/15

Next events and publications

We will publish Beauchamp Papers 5 and 6 to continue to build understanding and evidence around the School of Tomorrow Framework and link these to launch events.

- February 11 2015 Birmingham University
  Leading change in the curriculum: Richard Gerver
- June 3 2015
  Re-thinking quality

Leadership for Tomorrow

We have launched a 4-module 12-month development programme for leaders aspiring to lead Schools of Tomorrow. The first cohort has started. We will recruit a second cohort shortly. Please contact us for information.

Quality and Recognition

We have established a working group to explore how to establish criteria and credibility for some form of School of Tomorrow Quality 'Fellowship' offering peer challenge linked to validated self-assessment by participating schools. We also hold a view that pupils themselves have a key role to play in such validation of their school.

Learner Hubs

We will continue to find ways to involve young people directly in contributing to our work through our learner hub schools. Currently 11 schools have student researchers looking at the ways their schools think about the future. In the coming year this work will focus on contributing to our work on quality and recognition. We expect to appoint a student ambassador to lead on this development in 2015-16.

Partnerships

We will continue to develop active partnerships with organisations who share our aspirations, particularly in relation to quality. We have in place or are developing partnership agreements to pursue joint goals here with:

Momentum World

RSA Education

SSAT

Structure and Membership

Schools of Tomorrow CIC is a community interest company, limited by guarantee and owned by our members, who elect a council each year. The council are responsible for appointing the directors of the company. and for advising the directors on the strategic development of the company.

Become involved

What can you do to help?

Your Personal Check List Of Actions

☑ Support the 2012 Manifesto

Visit our **website** to sign up to it.

☑ Join our mailing list

Free regular update mailing for all Manifesto supporters.

☑ Become a member

You can do this through the **website** or by emailing us at **info@schoolsoftomorrow.org**

☑ Make a donation

You can do this through our **website**. Every little helps us. We make no profit, and rely entirely on voluntary input for all our work.

☑ Work with us

Consider joining one of our working groups, but we'd also be pleased to discuss other ways you might be able to help out.

Contact us

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Or visit our website:

www.schoolsoftomorrow.org