

The Well-Being and Health for Learning Programme

Validation Report

St Bartholomew's School, Newbury

November 2013

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Health for Learning
Programme**



<p>1</p>	<p>School context and community</p> <p>St Bartholomew's is a large 11-18 comprehensive school serving the community of Newbury and the surrounding areas of West Berkshire and the Hampshire/Wiltshire borders. It is a high-achieving school academically, and has a sixth form of 420 students. The school was designated a Business and Enterprise College in 2002, and gained Academy status in 2011. For the past three years it has been housed in superb new buildings, the design of which reflects the desire to engender a sense of community – with a space large enough to accommodate regular whole-school assemblies – while maintaining a human scale with individual house blocks.</p> <p>The school's mission statement gives pride of place to the goal of valuing and developing every individual equally.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>WBHLP layers and slices</p> <p>For this initial year of work on the WBHLP the school decided to focus on the Emotional/Mental Health layer of the programme as this provided the best fit with their current priorities.</p> <p>Within this layer the school's work was organised around the following slices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People • Parents and Carers • Policy and Ethos • PSHE Education • Taught Curriculum • Whole School Staff
<p>3</p>	<p>Action plan and progress reports</p> <p>In addressing the emotional and mental health needs of the young people, a key target for the school was to review and develop the content of the Personal Development Programme (PDP) with a particular eye to issues that may affect emotional wellbeing. Following from this review, and consultation with the Champion Group, work was undertaken to prepare a sequence of lesson plans around the theme of body image, eating disorders and their relation to emotional and mental health. These lesson plans were written with WBHLP support and in collaboration with a group of Y13 Health and Social Care students, to be incorporated progressively across the KS3 PDP programme. They have been trialled and well received, and this model of programme development in consultation with older students has proved its worth, with potential application to other topics in the future – surveys of KS4 students have shown, for instance, that they experience exam stress as a real issue affecting their wellbeing.</p> <p>The principal focus for the involvement of parents and carers has been to raise their awareness of, and involvement in, Careers provision. Communication has been shared with parents/carers through various routes, including the school's 'Bartholonews' newsletter, parents' meetings and electronic communications such as the Sixth Form Blog, to strengthen home/school partnership in the field of careers planning. Plans are also in place to involve parents/carers actively as a resource, drawing on their knowledge and experience to share information on career routes and the labour market: in this respect the school is taking a lead in organising a Careers Fair in collaboration with other local secondary schools.</p> <p>With regard to policy and ethos, the primary initiative has been to develop and implement a Social Networking Policy, in order to address an area of concern that has a significant impact on the wellbeing of both students and staff. This imaginative measure includes among other things a support package for parents and carers, a formalising of the school's own controls and behaviour codes such as an embargo on the use of phones during the school day, and guidance for staff on managing the risks inherent in the use of social media. The process of drafting and consulting on this</p>

	<p>policy has been carried out with care, to ensure it has the assent of all parties, and it is now ready to be presented to the governors for ratification.</p> <p>In addition to the work around emotional health and body image referred to above, the school has devoted a great deal of care and energy to developing the whole delivery of PSHE education or PDP. The achievements in this area have been impressive. The focus has been on supporting tutors to deliver the programme confidently and with real impact: the WBHLP has supported the provision of training for tutors on interactive teaching and learning styles in PSHE, and for PDP Leaders and House Heads on SMSC and the criteria applied by Ofsted in this area of learning. Alongside this the PDP leaders for KS3 and KS4 have conducted a thorough review of the content, structure and success criteria for pupils' learning in PDP, leading both to the creative and imaginative development of a new framework of modules for the teaching programme – a process that is well underway and continuing – and also to the introduction of 'Milestones', an innovative and thoughtfully planned scheme for recognising, monitoring and recording pupils' progress in PDP.</p> <p>Applying the focus on emotional and mental wellbeing to the wider taught curriculum, attention again centred on staff training needs and on raising awareness and understanding of emotional health issues that may impact on young people's learning. In collaboration with the WBHLP, a series of 'In Focus' seminars was planned and organised, addressing a range of topics relating to emotional wellbeing and the ways that these impact on students' readiness to learn in school. These sessions were open to school staff, parents and carers, and to staff from other local schools. They were successful and well received and the proposal is to continue them in the current academic year.</p> <p>The emotional wellbeing of the staff themselves has not been neglected – staff have appreciated the benefits of social events organised and funded by the school in January and in the summer. The system of mutual support for staff through the 'Barts Buddies' scheme has been successfully refreshed; and an enterprising group of students has set up a staff coffee shop, with orders taken for drinks and cakes and delivered directly to staff – just one example of an impressive trend for St Barts students to take initiatives and responsibilities, a striking theme that emerged repeatedly in the evidence seen on the validation visit.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Key people and their contributions</p> <p>The WBHLP at St Barts has been led, coordinated and driven with great energy and dedication by Maureen Sims, Deputy Head, and Dave McGall, Head of the General Education Faculty. These two have effectively identified the ways in which the opportunities offered by the programme coincide with the goals and priorities of the school, and their organisational skills, together with their ability to inspire and enthuse others, have played a key role in the success of this year's work on the programme.</p> <p>The strong impression gained on the validation day was that St Barts is a school community that strives to function successfully on a human level, and in which the WBHLP's values of care for and nurture of individual wellbeing are well embedded. Such an ethos can only be maintained with a collective commitment, from senior leadership and across the whole body of the staff, and the climate set in the school reflects credit on all. Particular and notable contributions have been made by the Key Stage Leaders for the Personal Development Programme, Lisa Boggett and Sarah Davies, who have devoted a great deal of time and energy to understanding how the PDP can best reflect the needs of the young people themselves and also maximise the skills of the teaching staff delivering it. Their work on developing and reshaping the programme content, and on supporting students' progression by an imaginative application of the principles of assessment for learning, has given the programme a solid foundation and a strong sense of direction for the future.</p> <p>Spending time in St Barts, one quickly gains the sense that this is a school where students are given, and positively embrace, wide ranging opportunities to participate and take responsibilities in the life of the school community. Representing this aspect of the school's life on the validation day were</p>

	<p>Y13 students Hollie, Nikki and Olivia. They spoke persuasively and with pride about the role they and their sixth form colleagues take on as School Officers, and especially about the range of ways in which they work to support the integration of all students within the community and to counteract all forms of bullying or alienation which may prevent individuals getting the best out of their school life. As mentioned above, the contribution of the members of the BTEC Health and Social Care group to the development of lesson plans on body image is one more example of a trend for positive participation by students which is a healthy feature of life at St Barts and has played an important role in the success of the WBHLP.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Impact and outcomes: what worked well</p> <p>The school has made clear and substantial progress on all the targets undertaken for its work on the WBHLP. In a number of key areas specific goals have been achieved, but – more importantly – there are many areas where work is more open-ended and initiatives have been put in place that will enable sustained progress and development in the future. What is clear is that the appetite and the drive for this further development remains strong.</p> <p>Notable highlights that emerged on the validation visit include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The collaborative work with sixth form students to devise a sequence of lesson plans addressing the real concerns about physical and emotional health raised by issues of body image and eating disorders – a striking example of a peer-led approach to young people’s health needs • The work carried out on shaping and drafting a Social Networking Policy, which reflects a recognition of, and attention to, the real-world lives and needs of students and staff alike • The very significant steps taken to promote and enhance students’ learning in PSHE, through training and support for tutors, through the review and impressive development of the scheme of work for PDP, and through the Milestones scheme, involving students themselves in reviewing their learning and personal development against clear success criteria • The planning and instigation of the ‘In Focus’ series of seminars, giving expression to the school’s determination to understand and address the ways in which emotional and mental health impacts on learning, and cooperating in this endeavour with other local schools • The scope given to the students to engage actively and positively in the life of the school, and the enthusiastic and enterprising ways in which the students embrace these opportunities • The underlying school ethos, which conforms so well with the aims of the WBHLP, of recognising, valuing and supporting all pupils as individuals – exemplified, for instance, in the use of the house system and the physical layout of the school’s fine new buildings to create a sense of belonging within human scale units, and in significant touches such as the display of flags representing the countries of birth of all the members of the school community.
<p>6</p>	<p>Future plans</p> <p>As noted above, many of the strands of work initiated through this first year of engagement with the WBHLP are ongoing and have acquired a momentum that will carry them forward. The continued development and implementation of the revised Personal Development programme will remain a priority, as will implementing and testing the effectiveness of the Social Networking Policy. The focus on developing Careers provision, and engaging parents and carers in this, will be maintained as the school works towards renewing its Investors in Careers status. The school proposes to continue to host the ‘In Focus’ seminars, and so to pursue its emphasis on the link between emotional health and wellbeing and successful learning.</p>

	<p>Unsurprisingly, the Champion Group leaders wish to continue to enhance the existing levels of student participation and to further develop the scope for peer support and peer mentoring, building on the high expectations that already prevail with regard to student engagement in the life of the school.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Conclusion and recommendations</p> <p>There is ample evidence to show that St Bartholomew's has committed whole-heartedly to the aims and ideals of the WBHLP and has made energetic and creative use the opportunities provided by the programme to further the school's own vision of a learning community in which individuals count. The work on the programme has been a shared enterprise across many sections of the school community and the outcomes already achieved have been significant and impressive, as well as creating the conditions and the momentum for a lively process of continuing progress and development in the future.</p> <p>I am very pleased to recommend the award of the Wellbeing and Health for Learning Programme's certificate for the Emotional/Mental layer and I congratulate St Barts on the dedicated and enterprising work that has gone into this achievement.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Graham Paton Associate Consultant</p>