



**March 2022**

### **Children's Wellbeing**

The positive mental health and wellbeing of the children at Verwood C of E First School and Nursery continues to be of the utmost importance to us all on a day-to-day basis; it is included in both our taught curriculum and is intrinsic to the ethos of our school. Over the last couple of years, with all that life has thrown at us all, never has it been more important that we are aware of our own and others' wellbeing and that we show empathy for those who are finding this a struggle.

As you are aware, Children's Mental Health Week ran from 7-11 February. Over the course of the week, children in all year groups participated in planned activities to shine a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health, culminating in a colourful finale where children dressed to express themselves. During this week, children spent time recognising what they can do to take care of themselves and reflected on their own personal growth & how they can support others to grow.

As a school, we endeavour to promote good awareness of what the children need and try to equip them with strategies to keep them grounded and calm. The children are encouraged to express any of their concerns to a trusted adult in the school and you will find a feelings station in each base that is equipped with resources, including the Kindness Monster. The children are able to write or draw any worry that they have onto a piece of paper and then feed it to their base kindness monster. Once the monster has eaten it, the worry can then be discussed and shared with an adult. We also recognise how physical activity is not only good for the body, but is also great for the mind and encourage the children to be active during play times and brain breaks by using our Sport Sanctuaries.

The fundraising collected on 'Dress to Express' day will be divided equally; half will be donated to 'Place2Be Improving Children's Mental Health' and the remaining half will go towards a collection of story books, addressing mental health and a wellbeing resource basket, which will be used to help deliver sessions on Mental Health.

### **What did we get up to?**

In **Nursery** we talked about how we are all different, unique and special. During circle time we had a special chair and children were asked to say a positive comment about each other, for example "I like ..... as he is a kind friend to me and makes me happy."

We all enjoyed dressing up to express our feelings and who we would like to be! We had lots of super heroes and Disney princesses!

In **Oak Base** we have been working on our understanding of our own feelings, as well as recognising how others may be feeling too. We had a go at some mindfulness activities which provided a calm time for the children to explore how they were feeling that day. We also looked at photos of other children and situations they were in and discussed which emotion category they would fit into. The children listened to stories where characters may have fallen out with friends or may have felt lonely and the children came up with ideas on what they would do to make them feel better. We related this to our class charter. The children loved finishing the week with our 'Dress to Express' day and showing their true selves!

In **Sycamore Base** we have been exploring what it means to look after our mental health! We've taken time to practise mindfulness and have been looking at using our breathing to help us find calm. The children have been able to speak about the importance of the Fruits of the Spirit and the 6Rs and how

they help us to look after ourselves mentally and physically! We introduced the term 'trusted adults' and talked about what this means, and how it can be different for everybody. The children created beautiful support balloons showing the trusted adults in their lives! To finish off the week with our 'Dress to Express' day we decided to make our Literacy learning all about expressing ourselves! The children had an opportunity to write whatever they wanted (As long as they included some of our recent writing focuses)! It was lovely to see the variety; we had stories about animals, skateboarding and superheroes!

In **Beech Base** we have been encouraging each other to be brave and expand our comfort zones by trying something new, even if it is something which makes us nervous. We have been reflecting on how it feels to step out of our comfort zones and have created support balloons, which include the people who we can turn to for help when faced with a challenge. We used familiar tales such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' & 'The Ugly Duckling' to help us think about how we grow and change over time and we also used the song 'Reach for the Stars' by S Club 7 to inspire us to set goals for things we want to be able to achieve. At the end of Children's Mental Health week, we enjoyed expressing ourselves and how we feel by dressing up for 'Dress to Express' day.

In **Willow Base** we created a 'Growing Together' wall, where we all thought about things we have learnt, achieved or found out about ourselves since September. They ranged from making new friendships, to learning how to ski! We then wrote these down on a flower and displayed them in the window to remind us of how much we have grown since the start of the year. We also talked about what to do if we are feeling sad, upset or angry. We thought about who we could talk to and also thought up some activities to help us feel better including; colouring, listening to a favourite song or going for a walk with family. Finally, we listened to the story 'Lucy's Blue Day' all about a little girl who wakes up one day feeling sad, but she can't quite figure out why. We discussed how everyone has sad days and that is okay, as long as everyday isn't sad and we know who to talk to about it.

In **Ash Base** we have been thinking about how we have grown emotionally over the last few years and how we can encourage and support each other to continue to grow. We have thought carefully and set ourselves individual emotional targets. We have also been sharing who supports us emotionally and mentally and in what ways. We created our own support balloons which includes the people we can turn to for support and advice when facing tough challenges. We have all enjoyed the S Club 7 song 'Reach' and had a fun sing-a-long in the classroom to its inspiring and uplifting lyrics. At the end of the week we loved dressing up and expressing ourselves in our 'Dress to Express' day. It was great to see what everyone was wearing and celebrate everyone's uniqueness and individuality!

We have enjoyed hearing about the various ways that the children looked after their wellbeing during the half term. Lots of children have written suggestions, like creating artwork and going for bike rides through the forest, onto flower and leaf templates. These ideas will continue to be shared and displayed around the school.

You can find further information on children's mental health on our school website, including a parent support pack, videos on children's emotional wellbeing and this year's official virtual Children's Mental Health week assembly. Please click [here](#) to take you there.

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