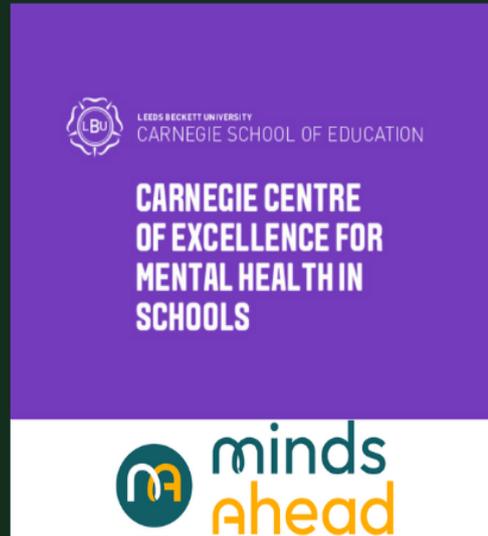




LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY  
CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



# MENTAL HEALTH INSIGHTS WORKING PAPER

January 2024



## EDITORIAL

The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for mental health in schools was launched in 2017. Over the years, we have grown a mental health and wellbeing community now made up of over 1400 members.

Our community is free to join and open to all school mental health and wellbeing leads or colleagues in schools and further education colleges, who have strategic responsibility for mental health and wellbeing.

Our vision is to develop a community that supports and empowers school-based colleagues who are committed to strengthening mental health and wellbeing for their whole school communities.

For this January 2024 edition, we have asked the community to send case studies about implementing mentoring programs, counselling services, and receiving supervision for the staff.

Mentoring programs and counselling services are two ways in which schools can support young people's mental health.

Mentoring involves pairing young people with an older peer or adult volunteer who acts as a positive role model. The mentor could provide support to the student, helping them to build confidence, relationships, and overall resilience.

In addition to mentoring programs, schools can also provide counselling services to students. The counsellors are either full or part-time and they work closely with teachers and parents to ensure that students receive the support they need.

Implementing mentoring programs and counselling services in schools can be challenging. One of the main challenges is funding. Schools may not have the resources to hire additional staff or provide training for existing staff. Another challenge is stigma. Some students may be reluctant to seek help due to the stigma associated with mental health issues. Schools need to create a safe and supportive environment where students feel comfortable seeking help.

Another challenge is staff training. Staff members involved in mentoring programs or counselling services must be trained to provide effective support to students. This training can be time-consuming and expensive, and it may be difficult to find qualified trainers.

Finally, evaluation is another challenge. Schools need to evaluate the effectiveness of their mentoring programs and counselling services to ensure they are meeting their students' needs. This evaluation can be difficult, as it requires collecting and analysing data over an extended period.

It is equally important to ensure that school educators are receiving supervision when looking after young people's mental health.

Supervision for teachers is crucial as it provides them with the necessary support and guidance to help students who may be struggling with mental health issues.

A report<sup>1</sup> by the Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE) at UCL Institute of Education highlights the need for educators at all levels to receive supervision. The report suggests that supervision can help teachers manage their workload, reduce stress, and improve their overall well-being.

I am delighted that we have some very insightful case studies exploring these concepts.

Olivia Draisey has bowled us over with the mentoring and supervision programs they have managed to embed in Jo Richardson Community School.

Laura Anthony has inspired us with an update on her wellbeing steering programmes and the mentoring and supervision that has grown out of it.

Both senior mental health leads have coordinated complex programs and managed to embed them into the culture of their schools as well as work with external agencies.

Finally, Summer Fox ACE Lead at Miltoncross Academy School and Regional ACE lead for London has shared an extraordinary mentoring program that has been rolled out through 45 schools in The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) and talks about the research and planning that went into this much lauded program.

Note: For future editions we will have different themes as we intend to continue to produce case studies to shine a light on best practice.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/why-supervision-must-teachers-all-levels>

In every edition, along with case studies we welcome Think Pieces and any Research conducted about how we can change culture & reframe our thinking and approaches in supporting the mental wellbeing for our students/staff and parents.

Guest Editor

Clare Erasmus

*Designated Mental Health Lead Advisor; Educator and Author of The Mental Health and Wellbeing Handbook for Schools: Transforming Mental Health Support on a Budget - May 2019 Jessica Kingsley Publishers and The Designated Mental Health Lead Planner: A Guide and Checklist for the School Year - Aug. 2021 Jessica Kingsley Publishers*

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# **TKAT A Champion for Every Child (ACE)**

## **Mentoring program**

By Summer Fox ACE Lead at Miltoncross Academy School and Regional ACE lead for London

“The TKAT ACE programme dramatically increases the chances of emerging issues being identified early and increases children’s resilience to external pressures.” - Dame Rachel de Souza, Children’s Commissioner.

“A Champion for Every Child” or ACE is a 1:1 mentoring programme that provides pastoral and academic support to around 5,500 primary and secondary pupils within the TKAT trust who are entitled to free school meals. The 1:1 nature of the programme enables each session to be tailored to the individual's needs, it also allows children to speak more freely about their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgement from their peers and allows them to be seen and heard as an individual. It is believed to be one of the most comprehensive trust-wide mentoring schemes. It is also more welfare-focused than the National Tutoring Programme and more sustainable than initiatives funded through one-off recovery premium funding. On average the staffing and running of the ACE tutoring programme uses around one third of a schools Pupil Premium budget.

ACE has enabled schools to employ ACE tutors; some members of staff have ACE tutoring as their only role. Other schools have utilised the staff that they already have and upskilled them to be able to provide high quality ACE tutoring within their existing roles.

ACE is a pastoral support programme which improves attendance and outcomes. The programme is based on a simple but compelling principle, “To ensure that every PP pupil and their families have regular one-to-one contact with their ACE Tutor, which builds relationships and overcomes barriers.”

In the primary schools, for pupils participating in the TKAT ACE programme the data showed there was a larger increase in their Reading and Maths scores compared to non-ACE pupils and non-ACE PP pupils throughout the year. In secondary schools, pupils participating in the TKAT ACE programme saw a larger increase in their English scores compared to non-ACE pupils and non-ACE PP pupils throughout the year.

To monitor the impact of the ACE programme TKAT built a partnership with ImpactEd who supported the collection of data through an accessible platform, this data is collated in a way that allows the trust to look at the information at a trust, school, and individual level. This has been a useful tool to ensure schools are aware of their target areas and that ACE tutors are aware of key issues for the individual child they are working with.

### **Training and requirements**

ACE tutors are not qualified counsellors, this enables schools to utilise the staff they already have and can make recruitment easier. ACE tutors receive training from that academy trust which is designed specifically for ACE tutors and consists of:

- Enhanced Safeguarding (1h 15 mins)
- Communication (2h)
- ACE introduction to the role (1h)
- Action Your Potential (1h 30 min)

Once an ACE tutor has completed these 4 training sessions, they are accredited ACE tutors. In addition to this, ACE tutors receive regular supervision to continually develop their skills and safeguard their wellbeing, this can be 1:1 or within a group. There is also the opportunity to become a mental health first aider.

While training is provided the prerequisite set of skills that would be required are:

- Organised
- Resilient
- Flexible
- Confident to advocate for themselves and others.
- Patient
- Reflective

Sessions typically take place throughout the school day, having a dedicated ACE room is helpful to ensure that meetings can take place in a calm and safe environment where students feel settled and prepared. This also allows the ACE team to have ownership of the space to create displays to promote successes and talking points. Each ACE session is typically 30 mins.

Example timetable for a full-time secondary school ACE tutor:

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>8.30</b>	Staff briefing	Tutor meetings	Staff briefing	Planning for the day	Safeguarding briefing
<b>Tutor</b>	Preparation for the day	Preparation for the day			
<b>P1</b>	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting
	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting
<b>P2</b>	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Pastoral and SLT attendance meeting	Student meeting
	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting		Student meeting
<b>Break 1</b>	Duty/ student logs	Duty/student logs	Duty/student logs	Break	Duty/student logs
<b>P3</b>	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting
	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting
<b>P4</b>	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting
	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting	Student meeting
<b>Break 2</b>	Break	Break	Break	Duty/student logs	Break
<b>Tutor</b>					

<b>P5</b>	Contact home Student meeting	Contact home/ Line management	Contact home Student meeting	Contact home	Contact home Student meeting
<b>After school 3-4</b>	Department meeting Supervision	Year team meetings (every 2 weeks)	Extra-curricular activities		Catch up on logs and contact home

### **How ACE supports pastoral, academic and mental health**

Students are Red, Amber, Green, rated based on their attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing. The ACE tutor takes time to build a relationship with the child and family through regular contact and discussion of things that are important to them such as hobbies and interests. These relationships are built through a range of activities, games and conversations which leads to open and honest communication. During this time, the ACE tutor will also communicate with other professionals who know the child such as teachers, SENCO and other pastoral staff ensuring that they understand the child's needs, the RAG rating is discussed and reviewed throughout this process as more information is gained.

Each half term the ACE tutors support the child to set a SMART goal. The student will talk to the ACE tutor about what they would like to achieve that half term and the ACE tutor can support this conversation by showing them their attendance and behaviour data. Students will choose their own goal and ACE tutors will help them to ensure this is the right level of challenge supporting ambition but ensuring that it is attainable. There will be a conversation around how this can be achieved and who can help. This smart goal can be academic, based on attendance, behaviour, or wellbeing but it is chosen by the child giving them ownership.

Each meeting following this will review the students' progress and help the students to identify any barriers that are preventing them from achieving their goal and help them to find ways of overcoming them. These may be physical barriers such as a lack of equipment or uniform or they can be emotional barriers such as low self-efficacy, poor relationships with

staff or emotional dysregulation. ACE tutors support reflection to help the students to identify their barriers and will plan future sessions around overcoming these. This could be supporting parents with acquiring uniform, sitting in a specific lesson to observe a relationship, working through a resource such as the anger cycle or blob tree.

A student's wellbeing needs always come first, only once these needs have been addressed can ACE tutors begin working on academic support. ACE tutors are not teachers and are not able to provide academic tutoring, but they can support with revision techniques, managing exam stress and ensuring healthy revision practices are communicated to the child and parent.

When goals are achieved and progress is made this is celebrated as often as possible with achievement points, phone calls and messages home, verbal 1:1 praise and postcards. This praise from a trusted person builds confidence, resilience, and pride. If a goal is not achieved an ACE tutor will work with the child to understand what prevented it and support the child to find supportive ways of overcoming these barriers, this also promotes resilience.

ACE tutors can support the mental health of the children that they work with as the strong relationships and 1:1 meetings give children a safe space to talk freely about issues that they may not otherwise have had an opportunity to discuss, such as self-harm. While the ACE tutors are not counsellors, they are able to raise safeguarding concerns and support in making referrals to other professionals, this allows for early intervention as ACE tutors are often able to notice early warning signs. ACE tutors also have access to *Action Your Potential* which has an array of resources designed to support a range of mental health needs and sleep, this organisation also runs parent workshops.

### **Impact across the trust**

ImpactEd evaluations collect student and ACE tutor feedback on students' school engagement, wellbeing, motivation, and a custom ACE category. This is in the form of an online questionnaire which students fill out at the beginning and end of the academic year. ACE tutors also complete questionnaires for each of their tutees at the beginning and end of the academic year.

Using ImpactEd as an external organisation to evaluate the ACE programme it was found that in primary schools across the trust there was an increase in student wellbeing of +2.6, this put them +2.5 above the national average.

In ImpactEd's report they stated that "TKAT ACE pupils saw increases in all Social & Emotional (S&E) measures except school engagement, between Autumn and Summer. This was most notable in goal orientation which increased by 5.5%. School engagement saw a decrease of 1.1% over the course of the evaluation, but this score remained above the national average (by 9.0%), at the final timepoint. "Changes in every measure were statistically significant."

Tutor report surveys reported increases in all measures at both primary and secondary. This was most considerable in goal orientation at secondary. At primary, no measures saw an increase of less than 5.0%.

### **Case study one – Gray's Farm Primary Academy**

Gray's Farm is in Kent and has 424 students, 141 of whom are Pupil Premium. There are 4 part time ACE tutors.

All the Pupil Premium students have access to an ACE tutor, the regularity of this contact is based upon the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating. The rating is made up of several factors, the individuals pastoral needs and social behaviours are assessed, and the child's attendance is monitored to ensure the right level of contact with the ACE tutor is provided. Children with a Child Protection plan or those who have any connection to social work are automatically red.

Children identified as Red are seen by their ACE tutor at least once a week, this is usually one structured 1:1 session with more regular check ins during break times or lessons. Children in the Amber category are seen every 2 weeks and those in the green category are seen every 3 weeks, and this is a combination of 1:1 and group work.

## **Parent contact**

Parent contact is an active ingredient in the ACE programme, at Gray's Farm this is done through face-to-face contact on the school gate. Parents are aware that they can seek out their child's ACE tutor at any time and they are now seeking them out to give the school updates on life at home. Parental engagement is an area that is continually being developed.

## **Projects**

Through the ACE programme Gray's Farm have been able to run several projects.

- ACE open mornings - parents can come in and catch up with the ACE tutors and learn about the work that is being done.
- Lego building competition - students had to design a sustainable building that benefited the community, some included homeless cafes that also feed dogs and community swimming pools. These were shared in assembly, and they won some Lego for the ACE department.
- Gardening - especially beneficial for those who do not have a garden at home
- Coffee morning - building the school community and encouraging parental engagement.
- Pre-loved uniform swap where parents could access school uniforms that had been donated and professionally cleaned.
- Attendance - tracking those below 90% attendance, contacting home if the child is late or absent.

## **Impact so far**

Monitoring the impact of a pastoral programme can be a challenge, it is evident that staff and students are proud of their ACE programme. Students have said:

"It's fantastic because it helps me calm down."

"Brilliant and so helpful for my mental health."

"ACE is amazing because it is fun, and I get to express my feelings."

“I love ACE because it helps me concentrate on what I am doing and let out my emotions.”

“I like it because I get to speak, and I don't always get to do that.”

Gray's Farm has also been able to offer support through ACE to children who are not Pupil Premium but require some short-term intervention.

- SAT's Gap between PP and non-PP is closing.
- Year 1 phonics there is no gap between PP and non-PP.
- No longer the need for a school play therapist
- Number of school counsellor referrals has reduced as they are able to provide individualised support to students that is appropriate for their needs; students with small worries can talk to their ACE tutor and manage their emotions and learning coping skills through ACE rather than needing an external referral; greater prevention of escalation of poor mental health.
- Increased safeguarding
- Increased communication throughout school
- Students are better able to regulate their own emotions.
- Supporting students to access clubs and extracurricular activities within school.
- Increased punctuality

## **Case study two - Miltoncross Secondary Academy**

Miltoncross is in Portsmouth and has 919 students, 353 of whom are Pupil Premium. There are 4 full time ACE tutors and 3 part time ACE tutors. All the Pupil Premium students have access to an ACE tutor, the regularity of this contact is based upon the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating. The rating is made up of several factors, the individual's pastoral needs and social behaviours are assessed, children with attendance below 95% are automatically red, as are children whose behaviour is below 80% positive.

Children identified as Red are seen by their ACE tutor at least once a week, this is a 20 min session that is tailored to meet their needs, this may be an activity or a guided conversation. Children in the Amber category are seen every 2 weeks and those in the green category are seen every 3 weeks. These sessions are the minimum number of sessions each child is entitled to, subsequent support may take place through check-ins, facilitating restorative conversations with other adults, parent meetings and supporting them within the classroom.

ACE tutors work closely with the other pastoral teams within the school such as the Pastoral Welfare Officers, Safeguarding Leads, SENCO, and attendance leads. This allows the school to work together to ensure the best support can be provided by all the relevant people.

### **Parent contact**

Parent contact is an active ingredient in the ACE programme, at Miltoncross this is done through regular phone calls home. The amount of contact required is also RAG rated, red means that contact should be made 3 times that half term, amber twice and green once. This is the minimum number of times that contact should be made. ACE tutors also have face to face meetings with parents where this is thought to be more beneficial, home visits are also completed for our hard-to-reach parents who do not engage in school. This is more common for children who are persistently absent from school, this process helps us to safeguard those children who are not entering the building and gives us an opportunity to explore the reasons that they are not attending and build plans to overcome these barriers. Two members of staff are present at each home visit and ACE tutors liaise with the safeguarding team to ensure that this visit is appropriate.

## Projects

Some of Miltoncross's projects include:

- Weekly hot chocolate for students who are in school every day and on time to their lessons.
- Thank you post cards - students write messages to teachers.
- Times tables challenge - each half term the student who was the fastest and the student who made the biggest improvement wins a trophy, this competition is displayed on a leaderboard which encourages students to take part.
- 'We are proud of...' Each student writes 2 things they are proud of on a bauble, this is then displayed on and around the Christmas tree to instil pride and support self-esteem.

## Impact so far

Staff, parents, and students enjoy the ACE programme, some feedback has been:

"Teachers don't always notice when you do something well, but your ACE tutor does."

"I feel more confident sending my child in knowing that you are there."

"Seeing the change in his confidence has been amazing - thank you."

"My ACE tutor helps me because they listen, and I can be honest."

"Every day there is something different, no two sessions are the same."

- Increased safeguarding.
- Increased communication throughout school.
- Students are better able to regulate their own emotions.
- For KS3, staff were able to see an increase in goal orientation by 8.7%, motivation by 7.8%, school engagement by 6.5% and wellbeing by 6%
- For KS4, staff saw an increase in goal orientation by 4.7%, motivation by 1.1%, school engagement by 2.8% and wellbeing by 8.2%.

*Data provided through partnership with ImpactEd.*

### **10 top tips for setting up a mentoring programme.**

- Pilot the programme with a small sample first (e.g. one year group)
- Allocate a dedicated space.
- Protect mentors time if they have more than one area of responsibility.
- Ensure whole school understanding.
- Allocate a member of the senior leadership team to support the programme.
- Keep admin requirements minimal and easy to access/use.
- Analyse the impact.
- Explore partnership opportunities with other organisations.
- Continued Professional Development opportunities for staff.
- Provide regular line management/ supervision support for all ACE tutors.

For more information on TKAT ACE contact: David Linsell: david.linsell@tkat.org

### **Further reading**

<https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/best-practice/pupil-premium-tutoring-a-champion-for-every-child/>

<https://sites.google.com/chs-tkat.org/tkat-ace/home?authuser=0>

<https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/best-practice/a-champion-for-every-child-a-case-study-of-one-to-one-tutoring-provision/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TKATACE>

Twitter - @TKATACE

Instagram - @TKATACE LinkedIn -

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/tkatace/?viewAsMember=true>

TKAT ACE website - <https://sites.google.com/chs-tkat.org/tkat-ace/home>

# Implementing a Supervision program for staff

By Olivia Draisey, Jo Richardson Community School

One of the key factors in supporting student wellbeing is staff wellbeing. A common analogy is that on a plane, you are told to put on your own oxygen mask before supporting others; this applies to supporting wellbeing too. If staff are not in an emotionally resilient mindset themselves, we cannot hope that such resilience can be passed to our young people.

Consequently, it is important to identify those in school who may require even more support in maintaining their emotional strength and empower them to access it. Increasingly, teaching as a profession is taking more responsibility for student and family wellbeing and consequently, giving more of themselves to supporting the wellbeing of others. As a result, in our school, we have several options for support and supervision that range from universal (all staff) to targeted (few staff).

1. Universal: Employee Assistance Programme - We are signed up to the Employee Assistance Programme which offers 24-hour support from trained professionals who will answer calls and discuss concerns that you have. Where necessary this may lead to further counselling sessions. This is something the school will pay for per member of staff.
2. Universal: Headteacher drop-in – Our headteacher has an open-door policy and allocates one morning a week where she is guaranteed to be in the room to discuss any concerns with staff.
3. Universal: Dedicated MH Lead for the school – Staff can also seek support from the MH lead who can direct to additional support. This is an additional responsibility in school.
4. Universal: Staff Wellbeing Group - All staff are invited once a term to attend and discuss an issue relating to MHWB. This may include new staff policy, our EAP or anything else that has come up surrounding the topic area. These too act as a supervision for those in attendance.
5. Universal: Anna Freud Staff Consultation – As a school we are also part of the Anna Freud Early Support Service who offer 1:1 staff consultation. This is a free service initially set up in conjunction with Mind.
6. Targeted: Occupational health – Like all workplaces, we may seek support for OH in cases where work is affected. This might include access to private therapy. This is a paid for service.

7. Targeted: Middle Leader Line Management Meetings – To support those with additional responsibilities, their line manager meets with them every other week. These meetings are designed to provide an opportunity for staff to relay any concerns and act in themselves much like a supervision session.
8. Targeted: Supervision with MHST – As we are a school with access to a Mental Health Support Team, we can recommend supervision with them. This is a free service.

Importantly, this article is about the benefits of supervision, thus, it is relevant to explain more on how this looks.

For us at JRCS, we trialled this with our safeguarding team who are managing an increasing workload of difficult, upsetting and emotionally draining cases. Some of which are hard to leave behind at the school gate when you leave for the day. For them, supervision with the MHST was offered once a half term. This included the option for further sessions if desired. These were run in a group forum; the safeguarding team would come together and have an open space to discuss cases they were finding challenging. Over time, this became 1:1 session too as staff felt more comfortable to be more open in this forum.

Staff reported that these sessions were useful to alleviate some of their own worries and to help them feel less alone with their management of difficult caseloads.

Effective supervision or even access to a discussion-based support can reduce workplace stress as you are showing the staff member that they are not alone in their work; they are valued, and their emotional and mental wellbeing is of importance.

# A snapshot on our Wellbeing journey

By Laura Anthony, Senior Mental Health Lead

## **Lead and role in school**

Laura Anthony, Senior Mental Health Lead and Coaching Manager

## **Type of school**

The Hertfordshire & Essex High School and Science College. Secondary Academy (made up of an all-girls year 7-11 and co-ed 6th form)

## **Key stage**

KS's All through

## **Area of need Identified.**

Continuing our work, we began last year to support everyone in our school community to develop their own 'positive sense of self.' Crucial to this is everyone knowing that they are seen and 'have a voice' which is contributing to the enrichment of our whole school community.

## **Desired outcomes:**

**Short term** – The school environment continues to be shaped positively by those who experience it day to day.

**Long term** - To embed a deep-seated ethos and culture to encourage personal growth and importantly, a sense of belonging amongst students, staff, and our other stakeholders.

## **Numbers involved in the intervention.**

Whole school

## **Time duration**

Specific interventions such as counselling, coaching, and peer mentoring tend to be led by the individual need, our whole school intervention has no time limit but runs as a constant.

### **Intervention put in place.**

Last December I wrote about starting up Wellbeing Steering Groups to give a voice to our students, staff, and parents/carers to rebuild the whole school community that the pandemic had visibly dented. We quickly recognised that we needed to hear all their authentic voices to understand how to effectively move our school forward.

Here is an excerpt from my December 2022 article published in the MH Insights journal:

*With 'belonging' and 'staff wellbeing' as two strands of this year's ADP, our starting point was to engage the many voices from within our school community, to truly hear and understand how everyone was feeling. Accordingly, we set up three Wellbeing Steering Groups for Students, Staff and Parents. The student group was run by eight sixth form Wellbeing Ambassador Prefects, who had proactively reached out to the larger student body by going into each of the forms to get a sense of what being a student at Herts & Essex is really like.*

*We were so impressed with the content of the student feedback; we collated a document of these findings and took this to our online Parental Wellbeing Steering Group. This enabled us to have discussions with parents around what their young people were feeding back to them at home about their day-to-day experiences in school, and importantly, their views around this. This forum was hugely worthwhile as we had been able to address parental concerns. For those struggling themselves to adjust to the Primary/Secondary transition, at the suggestion of a new Year 7 parent we were then looking at forming a 'buddy' system to enable more experienced parents to offer support to those just starting out on the secondary road.*

*The addition of our Staff Wellbeing Steering Group was very much focused around the bigger picture – what do we want wellbeing for our staff to look like on the ground, now and in the future?*

A year on, we have had time to fully experience the immeasurable benefits these groups continue to provide. As explained before, these are not our sole interventions. Like many other schools we rely on our much-loved Peer Mentor scheme (where 6th formers support our youngest students); and counselling (School funded; students can self-refer or are put forward by staff or parents/carers from an excellent local provider one day a week); alongside in-house coaching and mentoring, to provide much needed one-on-one support.

What our Wellbeing groups have added is a tangible sense of positivity & enthusiasm for us being the brokers of our own change. Our student Wellbeing Steering Group now has a Wellbeing Ambassador representative in every form and year group who contributes to the Whole School Wellbeing Forum, which is overseen by our sixth form leadership team. Last year the leadership team were a dynamic group of just 8 students but this year they have re-shaped into an active team of thirty, evidencing a growing desire amongst our student body to support each other and be a part of this far-reaching work.

Their activities, which take place in Tutor time, most recently have focused on how a constant aspiration for 'perfection,' impacts individuals. Discussions centred on whether failure can make a positive learning experience and how this makes them feel about themselves and school. Having first discussed it with their peers in their own forms, all our Wellbeing Ambassadors met, and with sixth formers leading groups of the younger students, the following four questions were mooted and discussed:

1. How would you feel about asking for help about a test that you did not understand?
2. What stops you from asking for help?
3. What would make you feel safe enough/change, for you to ask for help?
4. What do you think is the most important thing that the school wants from you?

Then A3 sheets of paper were filled with how they felt on this topic. It will be for the sixth form team, (with our usual staff support), to now utilise these 'nuggets of gold' and continue moving this work forward with the younger students, in the hope that greater resilience and understanding can be built.

At the same time students are creating a 'wellbeing room' that will be available to everyone needing moments of respite from the busyness of the school day.

Having all been safeguarding trained, the sixth form Wellbeing Ambassadors will man this space during break and lunchtimes.

It needs to be noted that the training of our students is a crucial stage in providing support.

As the SMHL lead and coaching lead I did the basic coaching training, (active listening etc), and my colleague who is Safeguarding Lead did that aspect. Training was in Tutor times over a period, and I attended all the Wellbeing Ambassador meetings just as a sounding board. One of the things we have realised is that the year 7's and 8's need a bit more support in this role, and so a year 12 and year 13 student are being allocated to each form to offer that support.

Hand in hand with the student wellbeing work this year we have embedded staff being able to access school funded telephone Supervision. The supervision is from the same local counselling body we normally use but a different therapist to the one who works with our students. Previously, access was provided via staff contacting me, but we decided to do a rolling programme this year focused on pastoral staff, and the take up has been much better because it is easy.

I notify them of the day /time, and they say 'yes' or 'no' to whether they want to pick it up. Many more are doing so and are even then having a follow up some 6 weeks or so later. This has always been available, but we are determined this year to be more pro-active on our offer. By setting a schedule and making access to this intervention easy, staff have been happy to make use of their pre-arranged appointments, with a number finding them so beneficial that they are following up with a second some six weeks later.

This is a snapshot of just two initiatives that are in place, all of which are giving purpose and value to our whole school community.

# Implementing mentoring programmes

By Olivia Draisey, Jo Richardson Community School

One of the greatest challenges in supporting positive wellbeing for all the students we serve is finding the right support at the right time. For some young people they come to us open and ready for intervention, for others we must await the window of time where they feel comfortable to open up. When that time comes, we must also be prepared to face the challenge of finding the right kind of support, for some there are barriers to them accepting help. These barriers could be due to stigma, cultural differences or simply a lack of education around the challenges they face. Consequently, at JRCS we have opened our school up to a varied number of mentors to have as many opportunities as possible to get the right support.

We have the more commonly known mental health routes with school counselling, our dedicated mental health support team and pastoral colleagues leading interventions in self-esteem and resilience. However, we recognised that this was not enough to cover the breadth of young people who were struggling with their wellbeing, and it also did not meet the needs of those who were resistant to support. Thus, we reached out to a range of external partners who approach the topic of wellbeing and mental health in a variety of ways.

We have found that with the wide range of support on offer we have been able to support even more young people than ever before. Importantly, students on our waiting lists for counselling or the mental health support team are significantly reduced because of these changes.

All external support at JRCS requires parental consent, primarily the support is 1:1 mentoring, and success is measured using our in-school progress measures. This includes attendance, punctuality, behaviour/mindset/homework scores, attainment in some cases and qualitative conversations with the child, teachers, and family. Mentoring opportunities are allocated to students via year team referrals, each week all pastoral staff meet at 'Student Support Panel' where these students may be discussed, and the appropriate form of mentoring considered. Year teams then complete referral forms which are set by the external provider. Our current provision includes:

- **West Ham Foundation** – This is a branch of the football club which is focussed on building stronger communities though harnessing the power of football. As a school we part-fund a West Ham Hub Officer who works in school every day as a mentor. They are in a full West Ham kit which brings its own status in our school building. Along with this, this opens more opportunities for free resources such as bespoke mentoring with additional mentors (group sessions), player appearances and school holiday events.
- **Youth League** – A support service which provides mentoring for BAME students (and wider where required) focussed on changing mindsets. This is free in our borough, and they offer a 1:1 each week - students are referred by their year team based on need.
- **Construction Youth Trust** – A construction and careers focussed service that mentors 10 students who wish to go on to study a construction focussed career. In addition to half termly 1:1 mentoring, this service supports our meeting of the Gatsby Benchmarks by providing regular employer facing opportunities in school. These are workshops in a range of areas, including interview preparation, apprenticeships and much more. This is a free service in our borough.
- **LifeLine Projects** – This service is all about empowering young people to make safer and healthier choices through broadening their horizons, offering a safe space for discussion, and ensuring all young people can reach their full potential. The focus is around young people at risk of serious youth violence.
- **Subwize** – A service for young people at risk of ‘Hidden Harm,’ this is a confidential service around drugs and alcohol misuse. These sessions take place in school and are around educating the young person to make different choices.

Whilst allowing external partners into the school building can be a daunting task, with adherence to the school's Safer Recruitment Policy (and a dedicated admin team who check DBS and identification documents to ensure anyone working in school is safe to do so) and a staff body open to welcoming support, we can turn the tide on poor student wellbeing.