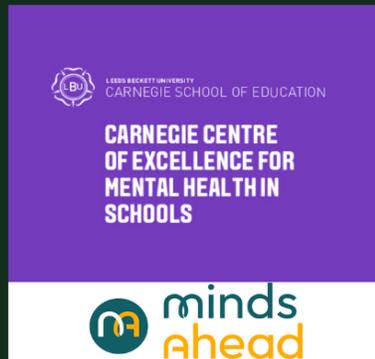




LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



MENTAL HEALTH INSIGHTS WORKING PAPER

July 2025



Editorial

Since its inception in 2017, the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools has cultivated a robust community, now boasting over 1,500 dedicated members. Each member is committed to advancing mental health and wellbeing initiatives within educational settings.

Bridging Practice and Policy: Mental Health in Schools Insights

The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools, based at Leeds Beckett University, publishes '**Mental Health in Schools Insights**'. This publication serves to connect educational practice, policy, and processes by disseminating valuable good practices and pertinent case studies related to mental health in schools. These papers are designed for a broad audience, encompassing:

- Senior mental health leads
- Teachers
- School leaders
- Pastoral leaders
- Governors and trustees
- Advocates
- Influencers
- Policymakers

The Summer 2025 edition has invited schools that have partnered with [BounceTogether](#) to contribute case studies demonstrating their use of *BounceTogether's* Training, Research, and Analytics Platform to foster positive mental health within their settings

We lead off with an introduction from Bob Wilkinson, MD of *BounceTogether*, outlining the importance of data driven change. He captures the essence of the case studies in these lines: *These stories demonstrate that the right data, when used wisely, is not just a tool for inspection or accountability. It is a catalyst for deeper understanding, early identification, and meaningful dialogue.*

Starting with a Multi-Academy Trust case study, we read how *Leigh Trust* found this use of strategic wellbeing data transformed their understanding of 'invisible' or 'unseen pupils' into supported individuals; fundamentally reshaping their approach to pupil care.

This is followed by a case study from *St Paul's School* in London, which highlights how data from *BounceTogether* surveys enables the school to track pupil wellbeing scores both termly and yearly. This allows for early detection of potential declines in emotional wellbeing throughout the school year, facilitating proactive support, especially during transitions or the examination period.

Then Mark Leswell - Research Lead at *Swale Academies Trust* explains how the trust developed a yearly plan integrating mental health into school improvement. This began with self-assessment audits for baseline data, providing school leaders with clear insights to prioritise action over analysis. They also offered evidence-based guidance, framing these insights into practical steps. A particularly proactive measure was implementing a validated parent/carer wellbeing survey via *BounceTogether*, systematically gathering feedback on provision effectiveness through the same efficient platform used for student data.

Next, *St. Begh's Catholic Junior school* shares how they transitioned from relying on instinct and anecdotal evidence to making data-informed decisions. This shift confirmed they were on the right track with an attendance initiative they were implementing

Stowe School empowered their pupils by implementing the *BounceTogether's* online Student Wellbeing Ambassadors Program (SWAP), where students take control of their own learning. They are then responsible for initiating informed discussions about wellbeing with their peers

The Doveshell Federation also uses *BounceTogether* data to identify patterns and outliers, spotting both individual needs and broader trends and then swiftly followed up with targeted trauma-informed care. Their case study really highlights how the data has allowed for greater precision in identifying children who need SEMH support.

All these case studies share a common theme: surveying and collating the voices of school stakeholders on wellbeing issues is essential, the effectiveness of this data is maximised only when paired with appropriate interventions. These interventions focus on raising awareness of mental wellbeing, fostering trust and relationships, promoting open communication, and cultivating a culture of care within the school community.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as I did curating it with Bob.

Looking ahead to our December 2025 edition, we will be calling for case studies and research documenting ***The Impact of Mental Health Leads in all schools and colleges in UK and schools abroad***

The deadline for submissions is **October Half Term**, so please do share your experiences and contribute to this important conversation.

Guest Editor

Clare Erasmus

Introduction: The Evidence Edge - Schools & Student Mental Health

By Bob Wilkinson, Managing Director of BounceTogether

Mental health is now a core pillar of effective education, not an optional extra. Recognised as vital for pupils, staff, and the whole school community, emotional wellbeing directly impacts learning, engagement, attendance, and life chances across all schools.

At *BounceTogether*, we believe that listening to pupil voices sensitively and thoughtfully, is essential to understanding and supporting mental health. Yet, we also recognise that wellbeing is not a “one-size-fits-all” endeavour. Each school we partner with brings its unique context, nuances, challenges, and remarkable innovations, which is why we are extremely proud to showcase this diverse set of case studies from multi-academy trusts, independent schools, primary and secondary settings with their distinct and unique approaches.

These case studies shine a light on what happens when schools not only care deeply about wellbeing but also act on it purposefully. They show how wellbeing can be embedded into the *DNA of a school*: informing strategy, guiding practice, and nurturing culture. Whether through trauma-informed interventions, targeted anxiety support, pupil-led mentoring, or staff wellbeing planning, each example reflects an unwavering commitment to creating emotionally healthy learning environments.

These stories demonstrate that the right data, when used wisely, is not just a tool for inspection or accountability. It is a catalyst for deeper understanding, early identification, and meaningful dialogue. The kind that leads to real change. I believe that with platforms like *BounceTogether*, schools now have access to robust, validated wellbeing measures that can be acted on quickly and meaningfully.

We are immensely grateful to the schools and trusts who have contributed their insights to this publication. Their openness, innovation, and relentless drive to improve the mental health of their communities is both inspiring and instructive. These are not just stories of impact; they are blueprints for a better future in education, where emotional wellbeing is no longer treated as an afterthought but as an essential foundation for learning, growth, and human connection.

As we continue to learn more about what works in wellbeing support, one thing is clear to me: measurement matters, voices matter, and the commitment of school communities can drive real, lasting change.

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Case Study Leigh Trust: Transforming 'unseen pupils' to supported individuals

By Anna Bateman, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services

Introducing Leigh Trust

Leigh Trust encompasses seven primary schools across Birmingham and Walsall, serving over 3,800 pupils, within some of the UK's most economically deprived communities. Our pupils represent richly diverse backgrounds (93.6% BAME) with over 62% experiencing poverty. Our schools vary in their OFSTED ratings from outstanding and good to requiring improvement, reflecting a wide array of challenges and opportunities in supporting pupil wellbeing and mental health.

Our Core Challenge

Historically, Leigh Trust has a strong culture of pastoral care, but we faced a critical challenge: invisible pupils. These children, like *Tyra*, who quietly met academic expectations and maintained reasonable attendance, or *Mohammed*, receiving occasional interventions without deeper understanding of his broader needs, were not visibly in crisis. They did not trigger immediate safeguarding or behavioural concerns and consequently remained beneath our radar. Our goal became clear: we needed nuanced, detailed insights into pupil wellbeing beyond observable behaviours.

Collaboration with *BounceTogether*

In 2024 we partnered with *BounceTogether* to gather high quality wellbeing data. After a Year 4 pilot, we quickly scaled the approach across every year group in the MAT, using three complementary measures:

- **Leuven Scale** (EYFS)
- **Adapted ELSA wellbeing questions** (Years 1–3)
- **Stirling Children’s Wellbeing Scale** (Years 4–6)

Our Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) network co-designed the rollout schedule and frequency of assessments. *BounceTogether’s* training and intuitive platform strengthened both SMHLs and our new Family Services team, enabling comprehensive analysis of pupil data. Automated email alerts flagged any concerning responses so that staff could follow up within 24 hours. A Trust wide guide now standardises assessments and ensures that key safeguarding questions trigger a timely response. For example, if a pupil answers ‘*No, never*’ to ‘*I feel safe at home*’ (Years 1–3) or ‘*I think lots of people care about me*’ (Years 4–6), a designated adult speaks with that pupil on the same day.

Our relationship with *BounceTogether* has gone from strength to strength because of a shared commitment to the wellbeing of pupils and supporting pupils who would not usually be visible. They have been on hand throughout, with tech issues, analysis support and a reassuring voice on the other end of the phone.

Insights Unveiled

The insights from *BounceTogether* have been illuminating. They revealed unexpected narratives of anxiety and hidden vulnerabilities, often within pupils who outwardly appeared settled. *Tyra*, who was academically capable and quiet, surfaced through the data as a pupil silently managing anxiety about family responsibilities. Similarly, we discovered Year 6 pupils

like *Mohammed*, whose interventions had previously lacked detailed evaluation. The data highlighted his deeper emotional challenges, reshaping our understanding of the impact of interventions and the importance of detailed, individualised follow-ups.

Shifting Practice: Strategic Impact

Armed with granular wellbeing insights, we moved from a reactive, behaviour led model to a proactive, strategic system linking safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, attainment, and wellbeing data. Interventions now carry clear, measurable objectives, and robust pre and post data show tangible impact. Services that cannot evidence effectiveness are being deprioritised, allowing resources to be redirected where they are most needed.

Initial apprehension—leaders feared we were ‘opening Pandora’s box’—was real but short-lived. Because we had a clear plan for follow up support, staff confidence grew rapidly. We now hold two full cycles of pupil data, Trust wide staff wellbeing data and, shortly, a parent survey that will explore barriers to engagement and ways to reduce isolation.

Reflection and moving forward

Strategically leveraging wellbeing data is no longer optional; it is foundational. At Leigh Trust, this data driven approach has deepened our existing culture of care, enabling us to pinpoint precisely where support is most needed. As we move forward, these insights will underpin community building initiatives, enhancing capacity and securing targeted funding for our most vulnerable families.

For Leigh Trust, strategic wellbeing data has transformed unseen pupils into supported individuals, fundamentally reshaping our approach to pupil care. The journey has undeniably been transformative, and it is only just the beginning.

Case Study St Paul's School: Navigating a whole school approach to pastoral care and wellbeing

By Alyson Maunder, School Counsellor

St Paul's is an independent school in southwest London, offering a well-rounded education for academically able boys aged 7 to 18 years. The school comprises St Paul's Juniors (Years 3–8) with over 500 pupils, and St Paul's School (Years 9–13) with around 1,000 pupils. Our pupils come from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, creating a rich and diverse community.

Delivering High-Quality Pastoral Care

In St Paul's Juniors, the Pastoral Deputy Head works with Heads of Year and form tutors, who play a central role in monitoring the progress, development, and wellbeing of every pupil. This ensures that each child feels known and supported as an individual. Their work is supported by a dedicated pastoral care and wellbeing team, including a full-time counsellor and nursing team. Pupils can raise concerns through an online reporting tool, providing a secure and private way to seek help. Additional support is provided through peer mentoring and a buddy system to help foster friendships and a sense of belonging.

In St Paul's School, each pupil is assigned to a vertical tutor group which is overseen by a personal tutor who provides ongoing pastoral support throughout their time at the school. These tutors are supported by an experienced pastoral care and wellbeing team, creating a consistent framework of support.

Our Approach to Wellbeing Excellence

We believe that only by being happy and healthy can pupils truly achieve their goals and aspirations. Traditionally, we have monitored wellbeing by observing changes in emotional, social, and academic behaviours, alongside regular check-ins with tutors or a member of the pastoral/safeguarding team. Communication with families and external agencies is also key to providing effective support.

Within St Paul's Juniors we suspected that some pupils might be going undetected within our existing wellbeing monitoring system – for example pupils who display no observable internal or external signs of distress, or find it difficult to speak about their concerns, or mask internal unrest. To address this, we sought ways to systematically capture and measure wellbeing across the whole pupil body, with the aim of ensuring that no pupil's wellbeing would fall under the radar.

The *BounceTogether* wellbeing management software provided the tools we needed to track, understand, and improve wellbeing. After evaluating the surveys available on the *Bounce Together* platform, St Paul's Juniors adopted the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale—a short, positively worded survey designed to assess emotional and psychological wellbeing in children aged 8 to 15. The survey takes less than five minutes to complete and enables us to monitor, measure and track wellbeing trends over time. As time is a precious commodity in school, it was essential that the benefits of whole school wellbeing were introduced to staff and that that survey completion was made as simple, practical and effective as possible. To assist form tutors, they were given a script for facilitating the survey and for leading post-survey check-ins with pupils.

Whole school wellbeing measures are now scheduled termly, and *BounceTogether* provides immediate access to pupil's survey responses, which can be analysed by year group, form group, individual pupils, or specific groups such as SEND pupils. The++

alert feature has been set up to immediately notify identified pastoral team members should a pupil's survey response indicate a cause for concern, such as a pupil saying they have no one who cares about them or nothing to look forward to in their life.

To aid with survey analysis, we export survey data into colour-coded Excel spreadsheets, allowing staff to easily identify pupils whose scores suggest a significant change in wellbeing (example given below). Heads of year and form tutors can then sensitively follow up during regular pupil check-ins, ensuring early intervention and tailored support. The ability to track changes termly and yearly in pupil wellbeing scores enables us to detect a decline in a pupil's emotional wellbeing and to then take a proactive approach to support. This has proved particularly helpful during times of transition or when approaching examination season. The wellbeing survey data is also used to evidence positive change in wellbeing post a pupil receiving interventions such as counselling, social skills groups, peer mentoring etc.

Pupil First Name	Pupil Last Name	Nov-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Oct-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	% Change Oct24 - Mar25
A	A1	45	53	48	52	51	48	2%
B	B2	38	28	27	37	43	46	-14%
C	C3	41	45	35	48	34	26	41%
D	D4	50	51	49	52	48	53	8%
E	E5	49	48	54	47	48	49	-2%
F	F6	48	49	46	47	55	56	-15%
G	G7	40	40	39	40	49	45	-18%

Through implementing whole school wellbeing, we have amplified pupil voice, been able to identify actionable insights to support and improve our school environment and been able to identify potential pastoral and safeguarding risks early. We are currently migrating our existing pastoral system into CPOMS, and on completion, we will be exploring the ability to feed selected *Bounce Together* survey data straight into a pupil's CPOM record. This will further enhance our capability to deliver early targeted support, evidenced-based interventions, and safeguarding support to identified pupils.

Emphasising Evidence and Relationships in Mental Health Provision: A Multi-Academy Trust Case Study

By Mark Leswell - Research Lead, Swale Academies Trust

With one in five students experiencing mental health difficulties in England, a 63% increase since 2017, multi-academy trusts face unprecedented challenges. This case study examines how Swale Academies Trust (19 schools in the Southeast of England) developed an impressive mental health strategy balancing a response to multifaceted data with relationship-centred approaches, offering insights for leaders navigating evidence-informed practice and authentic connection.

The National Context

NHS data reveals that 20% of 8–16-year-olds had probable mental health disorders in 2023, compared to 13% in 2017 (NHS Digital, 2023). With only 32% of referred children receiving treatment and 78,577 young people waiting over one year for CAMHS support, schools have become a primary mental health support system (NHS England, 2024).

Integration, Not Addition

Swale Academies Trust rejected mental health as an add-on, instead weaving it into existing systems and structures, e.g., safeguarding and SEND structures. Mental health became a fundamental strand integrated into the school's core operations rather than a separate responsibility.

This philosophy requires senior leadership ownership, with Designated Safeguarding Leads and SENDCOs championing mental health to drive whole-school change. The trust invested in comprehensive mental health training for Trust and School leaders, recognising that leaders

cannot authentically advocate for provision without understanding young people's psychological wellbeing complexities.

Evidence-Informed Implementation

The trust developed a systematic annual cycle integrating mental health into core school improvement processes. Beginning with comprehensive self-assessment audits providing baseline data, the strategy provides a sophisticated support structure balancing central oversight with school autonomy.

Annual Implementation Cycle

Term	Focus	Activities	Outcomes
1	Priority Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust-wide mental health lead meeting Priority identification aligned with SLT roles Strategic planning for survey implementation 	Shared priorities established; Survey schedule confirmed
2	Data & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:1 meetings with school leads SEHS-S survey implementation via BounceTogether Data analysis and action planning Integration with SSG reviews 	Individual school action plans; Student identification for support
3-5	Review & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress support against KPIs Diagnosis of implementation challenges Best practice sharing SSG evidence-based discussions Parent survey analysis 	Mid-year adjustments; Support interventions deployed
6	Evaluation & Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual evaluation meetings Planning for following year Audit tool piloting 	Next year's priorities; Refined strategies

*SSG = Safeguarding, SEND,
and Governance (SSG)

Primary schools used the Social Emotional Health Survey-Primary (SEHS-P), while secondary schools adopted the SEHS-Secondary (SEHS-S-2020), both measuring students' "covitality" across four domains: Belief in Self, Belief in Others, Emotional Competence, and Engaged Living (Furlong et al., 2013; Furlong et al., 2020). These validated tools provide rich data for identifying support needs.

The trust partnered with *BounceTogether*, a platform providing automated survey analysis. This enabled efficient, rapid data analysis, essential for timely interventions. Leaders received immediate insights without manual data processing, allowing them to focus on response rather than analysis.

The trust provided schools with evidence-informed response guidance, providing a framework to support leader agency in focusing on actionable insights. This data formed part of the multi-faceted approach, integrating with other metrics, including perception gaps between staff and student assessments to inform targeted interventions

e.g., Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

Each school's action plan became a living document with specific, quantifiable KPIs tracked to support leaders in highlighting the impact of their work.

The Human Dimension

Schools combined this data-based decision making with a human-centred approach. This recognised that relationship-based identification often proved highly effective, a particular strength in our primary phase.

Trust schools leverage Family Liaison Officers, pastoral, and welfare managers, Thrive practitioners and mental health first aiders who know their children deeply and can rapidly unpick issues whenever they arise. Weekly "Headteacher Mental Health Moments" and a

two-year Mental Health publication responding to pupil feedback maintained visibility whilst honouring primary education's relational ethos.

Bridging Service Gaps

Both phases developed extensive in-school provisions to address service shortfalls. All schools offer a whole-school approach, a range of targeted interventions and counselling; examples include animal therapy and play and Lego therapy.

The trust invested in training and supervision for DSLs and frontline staff, acknowledging the emotional role in supporting complex cases, with *The Employee Assistance Programme* supporting staff wellbeing, recognising that emotionally healthy adults are prerequisites for supporting children.

Strategic Communication

Wider stakeholders are fundamental to our successful approach. Our responsive approach to insights includes recognising parental information gaps. With schools offering leaflets outlining universal mental health offers and specific concern signposting, exemplifying this proactive approach. The trust also implemented a validated parent/carer wellbeing survey, using *BounceTogether*, gathering systematic feedback on provision effectiveness through the same efficient platform used for student data.

Measurable Impact

The strategy yielded tangible outcomes. Various schools have achieved external recognition for their provision,

e.g., The Wellbeing Award for Schools, SEND attendance remains in line with national non-SEND averages in many of our schools and measurable improvements are seen both in our whole-school provisions and across our targeted interventions.

Insights for Trust Leaders

1. Integration over addition - Embedding within existing structures creates sustainable change
2. Phase-appropriate approaches - Different methodologies can maintain shared principles
3. Leadership mental health literacy - Trust and school leaders require specific training to effectively champion, implement, and sustain mental health initiatives
4. Technology as enabler - Automated analysis platforms like Bounce Together make data-informed approaches feasible without overwhelming staff
5. Balanced data use - Evidence should inform without burdening
6. Evidence-informed Implementation - Principles of effective implementation support embedded, sustainable, scalable practices

Conclusion

Swale Academies Trust demonstrates that effective mental health provision successfully integrates evidence-informed practice with relationship-centred care. By embedding support within existing safeguarding structures, using validated assessment tools, and maintaining human connections, the trust created a sustainable model balancing systematic rigour with authentic care, offering a practical blueprint for other multi-academy trusts. "The primary phase of this project was led by Louise Hopkins, School Improvement Executive, whilst the secondary phase was led by Nicki Hodges, School Improvement Executive."

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Case study: Using Pupil voice to measure impact of initiatives

By Catherine Mallard – Headteacher

St. Begh's Catholic Junior School is in Whitehaven in West Cumbria. We have 245 students. Our school community is close-knit with most families having deep roots in the local area. We have a large local employer (Sellafield) dominating the local job market. This provides financial security for a good proportion of families, but many are left out.

As well as strong pupil and family stability, we have staff with many years' experiences at the school. Those of us who fall into this camp can see the stark shifts in the way children present at school now, compared to say 10 years ago. If we had to choose one over-riding condition causing these changes, it would be increased levels of anxiety. We see its effects on attendance, with ever-growing numbers of children struggling with the transition to school in the morning, struggling with specific aspects of the school day or struggling to attend at all. We see it also in our interactions with parents who can be themselves struggling, wanting quick fixes, or seeing it as a problem with school itself. We had started to see this up-turn before COVID, which then brought its wide-reaching effects on mental health and caused a particular shift of mindset around school attendance for parents and children.

It became clear in the aftermath of COVID that we would need a dedicated member of staff to support pupils' mental health and attendance. We were lucky enough to have the ideal person to fill this role in one of our HLTAs who has completed Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training. Establishing the role was not at all instant, but we are now at the place where there is protected time each morning for her to support children into school and lead attendance meetings, as well as time for group and individual intervention in the afternoon.

We initially invested in *BounceTogether* to support our observations and add some assessment and measurement into our provision to fine tune and improve targeting and effectiveness. It would be a way to shine light on any issues being faced by children who may go unnoticed, even in a school that prides itself on knowing pupils well.

Despite the pressures of school life and the challenge of supporting pupils with high-level needs, the school initially struggled to meet its goals. By working closely with *BounceTogether's* Customer Success Lead, progress was made toward achieving these objectives. Regular check-ins provided opportunities to discuss challenges and receive advice on useful surveys. *BounceTogether* also helped formulate a tailored annual calendar and offered day-to-day support, such as guidance on designing surveys. Additionally, as a CPOMs school, they supported the integration of **Bounce Alerts**, ensuring any concerns raised through surveys automatically trigger CPOMs alerts.

Using *BounceTogether* to gather pupil voice has been both easy and effective. Creating and assigning surveys is simple, and students find it user-friendly. Initial surveys provide valuable insights, which can then be explored further through discussions. We recently used it to evaluate a new curriculum initiative offering Year 5 and 6 pupils practical learning experiences on Monday mornings (e.g., outdoor learning, food, sports leadership). This aimed to improve Monday attendance and reduce anxiety by providing positive experiences. We used *BounceTogether* to gather feedback at the end of the autumn term to assess the success of this approach.

The pupil voice data collected showed a positive response to these sessions, particularly among children who had previously been reluctant attenders. This insight confirmed we were moving in the right direction and gave us the confidence to embed the initiative more formally into our weekly timetable.

It's always a work in progress and we are still not at the stage where we are routinely assessing and evaluating the impact of each strategy we have in place to support mental health at St. Begh's. However, *BounceTogether* has added significant value by enabling us to move from instinct and anecdotal evidence to data-informed decisions. This has helped us better tailor the support we offer, such as prioritising morning intervention for pupils identified through surveys as having anxiety spikes at the start of the day and directing that support more precisely to those who need it most.

By combining what we see day-to-day with structured pupil feedback, we are gradually building a more responsive, data-informed culture around mental health that continues to evolve and improve.

Case Study Stowe School: Rolling out a Student Wellbeing Ambassador Program

By Aiden Harvey-Craig, Head of Psychology

Our school has a mentoring programme whereby Year 11 students are invited to apply to be mentors for younger students joining the school. They are recruited towards the end of Year 11 with a view to taking up this role at the beginning of Sixth Form, when the younger students are just starting at the school. The idea is that they help these younger students settle into school and cope with the demands of secondary school life.

Whilst this system was seen to be beneficial, with both the mentors and the mentees benefiting from the conversations and support offered, our DSL was keen that some formal training be offered so that the mentors could give informed, evidence-based advice to their mentees where appropriate.

Bounce has been working with Aidan Harvey-Craig, the author of **'18 Wellbeing Hacks for Students'**, to develop a programme to train wellbeing ambassadors. This is called the Student Wellbeing Ambassador Programme (SWAP). It is based on the simple, evidence-based wellbeing techniques from Aidan's book with a view to giving teenage students practical ideas that they can share with their peers. These might be simple breathing techniques to relax, advice on getting a good night's sleep, the value of noticing and naming your emotions, or how to look out for thinking traps.

BounceTogether put this course into an online format in such a way that schools can use it in a variety of ways, depending on their needs. For example, it can be a taught course, led by a teacher, or it can be entirely student-led. For the latter format, the online course includes a school homepage where teachers can enroll students and monitor their progress.

This latter format was particularly useful for our school given the timing of the mentor programme. What it meant was that, once students were recruited at the end of Year 11, we could let them know about the SWAP training, get them all signed up and then let them take the course in their own time across the summer. Then, at the beginning of September we run a half-

day session where mentors get to discuss what they have learned and talk about how ideas might be used in different situations, including some role-play.

The feedback so far has been incredibly positive. When asked, *how would you rate the Student Wellbeing Ambassador Programme overall?* The mentors gave the course an average of 4.21 out of 5. And some of the qualitative feedback includes statements such as:

'I liked learning different techniques to support my mentees'

'I liked it because I felt it was very informative and helped me understand how behaviour can be affected as well as helping me to take note of ways it can affect my daily routine and how things I thought were very minor in my life actually have a big impact and it made me more aware.'

'Nice distinction with videos, quizzes, and research. The research parts were especially fascinating since in pieces of information, you normally don't get to see the research behind the information which is interesting to see.'

'I really liked the idea of writing your life story out and being more comfortable writing and thinking about your emotions.'

The next step for our school will be to measure the impact on the mentees and look at how the SWAP programme helps new students settle into the school.

What we have found particularly powerful about the SWAP programme is that it puts students in the driving seat and really gives them agency. They drive their own learning on the course and then they are the ones generating informed conversations about wellbeing with their peers.

Case study the Doveshell Federation: Using data to identify patterns and outliers - spotting both individual needs and broader trends.

By Callum Cull – SEMH & Wellbeing Lead

At our Federation, children's mental health and emotional wellbeing are high priority. Our commitment is driven by a clear understanding of the increasing mental health challenges facing pupils today, including rising levels of anxiety, trauma-related behaviours, emotional dysregulation, and low self-esteem. To ensure our pupils are fully supported, we have developed a comprehensive mental health strategy that incorporates both universal and targeted interventions. A key element of this approach has been our partnership with *BounceTogether*, a data-driven platform that enables us to measure, monitor, and respond to pupil wellbeing in a timely, informed manner.

A Whole-School, Trauma-Informed Approach

Led by our Executive Headteacher, our federation ensures a strong focus on emotional and mental wellbeing across our schools. This vision is embedded into the school culture and sustained by a dedicated mental health team, including a full-time Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Lead, our Inclusion Lead (qualified Trauma and Mental Health Informed Practitioner), and two trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs). Our SEMH Lead is not only a qualified TISUK practitioner but also a counsellor, psychotherapist, and ELSA, making our federation uniquely positioned to provide expert, trauma-informed care.

The mental health support we offer spans both universal and targeted provision. All children benefit from emotionally available adults, trauma-informed practices, and a supportive school ethos. In addition, targeted support is offered through ELSA and psychotherapy sessions. These interventions are available through our internal referral system, with teachers and parents working collaboratively with the SEMH team to identify and support pupils with emotional needs.

Integrating BounceTogether: Data-Informed Wellbeing Support

In recent years, we have recognised the vital role that consistent measurement and evaluation play in supporting children's wellbeing. This is where *BounceTogether* has transformed our practice. As an evidence-based tool, it allows us to assess emotional and mental wellbeing through pupil-completed surveys such as the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale, providing insights into children's emotional states, outlook, and social desirability.

These surveys are administered as part of our universal wellbeing offer, with data collected and analysed across year groups and demographics. This enables SEMH staff to identify patterns and outliers - spotting both individual needs and broader trends. For example, pupils scoring below average on certain surveys can be identified quickly and referred for timely intervention.

One notable case involved a pupil who consistently scored below average on their Stirling Children's Wellbeing questionnaire. Following an emotional well-being check-in led by our SEMH Lead, the pupil disclosed the recent loss of a parent. The SEMH team collaborated with the class teacher and parent to develop a bespoke support plan, including access to psychotherapy and ELSA sessions focused on bereavement. Through targeted work, the pupil developed an understanding of the stages of grief and built emotional resources to support his psychological wellbeing. His pre and post BounceTogether survey data clearly demonstrated the positive impact of the support provided.

Supporting All Learners Through Targeted and Universal Interventions

The data from *BounceTogether* not only informs our one-to-one interventions but also helps us plan and evaluate group sessions. Children needing support with specific areas such as anxiety, anger, or emotional awareness can access group programs led by trauma-informed staff. These safe spaces allow pupils to explore emotions, learn regulation strategies, and build resilience.

Children with more complex needs may be referred for external specialist support, but the early identification made possible through *BounceTogether* ensures no child falls through the cracks.

Furthermore, BounceTogether plays a critical role in measuring the success of our interventions. Pre and post assessment questionnaires are used within ELSA and psychotherapy sessions to track individual progress. Children identify SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) goals related to their emotional wellbeing, and the follow-up data helps them reflect on their personal growth. This not only boosts self-esteem but allows us to continually evaluate and refine our mental health provision.

Conclusion: A Culture of Care, Informed by Data

Our partnership with *BounceTogether* has enhanced our ability to respond to pupils' mental health needs in a strategic, data-informed manner. It has strengthened our trauma-informed practices and allowed for greater precision in identifying children who need SEMH support. Most importantly, it empowers pupils to take ownership of their emotional development and feel heard in a safe, nurturing environment.

By integrating BounceTogether into our wider mental health provisions, we are not only promoting positive wellbeing across our federation but also ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive - emotionally, socially, and academically.

- The Doveshell Federation is St Thomas' Moorside Primary School & East Crompton St James Primary School.