

BENGEWORTH CE ACADEMY

How Bengeworth Academy used Trauma Informed approaches to change their approach to behaviour management.

WHY WAS CHANGE NEEDED?

The school had spent a great deal of time developing and embedding the values that they wanted to embody. These values were evident and embraced across the school.

There was a passion to support all pupils fully, to have high quality teaching and learning and for approaches to be research and evidence based.

However, leaders began to question the approaches being used to manage behaviour as being at odds with their values. Zone Boards, employed across the school, were felt to be exposing and shaming for some pupils.

The zone board system aims to provide children with a visual tool to help them to understand the behaviour expected of them. There are a variety of ways that this might be displayed publicly, with pupils' names being moved within a scale or across zones depending on behavioural criteria set by adults.

A move up (possibly to the 'green zone' or 'sunshine') is intended to reward the child by recognising compliance, and a move down (often to the 'red zone' or 'rain cloud') is a public punishment for non-compliance.

'They were doing a disservice to the young people. Where was the learning? Three years ago, if a child was in the red zone a red letter went home. Most often the letter wouldn't be delivered. The letter represented shame for the child and potentially the parent too.'

Rachel Seneque, Director of Inclusion & Provision

WHICH TRAININGS WERE USED?

Headteacher and Head of School attended 2 day Senior Lead Training

TISUK Diploma Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools and Communities

In-house dissemination of information

SCHOOL INFO:

Church of England
'First School' (R-Y5)

Lead school in MAT,
sponsor of new academy

Evesham,
Worcestershire

519 pupils

27% Pupil Premium

High proportion of
EAL pupils 29%

Average proportion of
SEND pupils



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HOW WERE CHANGES MADE?

Hayley Potter, Headteacher and Kirsty Shaw, Head of School, attended the TISUK two day Senior Leaders Training and could immediately see a perfect marriage between the evidence based, relational approaches advocated by TISUK and the school's values. Here was a framework and toolkit to support whole school change.

The school set about a programme of CPD for all staff, with the Director of Inclusion and Provision undertaking the TISUK Diploma and disseminating to staff at the same time. Training for all included trauma awareness, an understanding of ACEs and Protective Factors and the vital importance of emotionally available adults. This culminated in the launch of a Relationships and Behaviour Policy in Sept 21. Children were at the front and centre of the new policy.

Initially some staff were reluctant to move away from the existing behaviour approaches. They felt that the zone boards had an impact and that it would take time for new approaches to work. Pupils had a limited language for emotions and staff were not initially well equipped to help with ways to support 'Can you show me?'

TISUK approaches formed the basis of the CPD for staff, with regular training sessions delivered on alternate Friday afternoons. Staff discussions were invaluable, with ideas and suggestions proving powerful in developing a shared commitment. Social stories and pictorial cues were created for the youngest pupils to support and develop their vocabulary, with little booklets made for Reception pupils.

Now staff were focused not on 'what sanction do I need to impose,' but 'what can I do to help?'

To fully embrace this new practice leaders could see the need to review the curriculum, to create a more global approach.

Teachers began to provide explicit teaching of stress regulation, emotional literacy and mental health.

Additions to the new curriculum included:

- CARE Fridays, daily wellbeing check ins, weekly mindfulness and reflection.
- Stress regulation explicitly taught, including the use of breathing techniques.
- Language, listening and vocabulary development for the youngest children.
- Regular curriculum reviews and planning for focus weekly celebration of Acts of Kindness, wider opportunities for mindfulness, yoga, mental health awareness etc.

Learning about mental health and wellbeing, as well as pupil

"House points are very positive and children love this. The children are starting to understand the consequences of their behaviours and how this impacts on others."

Staff Member

"The relational policies have given the freedom to decide on logical consequences with the children rather than a blanket punishment."

Staff Member

"Now children are using the same tools, and understanding the impact of their behaviour on others, while acknowledging the values more as part of their reconciliation."

Staff Member

"All children feel valued. There is a reduction in shame, a focus on the positives and children have ownership over rewards"

Staff Member

development, was allocated specific time within the curriculum, was planned for the whole school and run in a two week cycles. This approach has been felt to be a 'game changer', underpinning development for staff, consistency across the school and quality delivery for pupils.

A new role of Pupil Mental Health Ambassadors was introduced for pupils who were carefully selected by staff. They were trained by the school's Educational Psychologist in order to fulfil their role meaningfully.

The role of Staff Wellbeing Lead was also introduced to acknowledge the importance of the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and to ensure support within a mentally healthy community.

Ongoing CPD for staff ensured there was consistency in all using PACEful approaches, as well as expanding confidence in using a range of strategies such as the language of WINE (I wonder, I imagine, I notice...), a richer vocabulary for emotions, the use of Big Empathy Drawings and Sandtray and restorative conversations.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

"It's been amazing - less issues, children taking responsibility for actions and finding solutions, more intrinsic focus and drive and rewards"

Throughout all the changes, TISUK skills and strategies, alongside the wide body of theory linked to relational approaches, has directly informed practice and policy. The school has held firmly to their values which now closely match their relational approaches to learning, behaviour, emotional wellbeing and mental health. This is the ethos of the school.

"Children appear to be more independent in finding solutions to friendship issues because of the discussions they've been involved with adults. Parents are now more involved in understanding and enjoying the rewards children are receiving (positive email, post card home etc). Children are highly engaged and motivated by house points and marbles. I like having the freedom to use my own class rewards too - gem jars, a 'fast pass' to lunch, working at the 'hot desk' etc."

The school's core values are successfully embedded due to the persistent drive of leaders, particularly the Culture and Ethos lead. Pupils described how these values permeate all aspects of school life and provide them with a framework with which to make the right choices at school and beyond. They spoke with pride about their experiences, with particular emphasis on the warmth of the staff and the care they provide. Other schools in the Diocese have implemented the same sequence of review and development of values as adopted at Bengeworth.

Challenge Partners Review report 7.2.22

"Removal of the stigma of 'red' ensures conversations and time is given to resolutions and building relationships with more challenging children."

Staff Member

"The restorative conversations have had positive outcomes and children are becoming more able to articulate their views and propose resolutions. I like being able to personalise their rewards and encourage feelings check-ins and the use of calm corners."

Staff Member

Removal of reds has led to better focus and improved behaviours for those who would have received red and given up knowing they couldn't work back from that."

Staff Member