

CLEMENTS PRIMARY ACADEMY

How Clements Primary School used Trauma Informed Practice to reduce school exclusions and support the wellbeing of children and staff

WHY WAS CHANGE NEEDED?

The school was increasingly concerned about the level of exclusions. By Easter 2019 the school had the highest number of FTE (fixed term exclusions) across the 16 Partnership schools in their trust and had made three Permanent Exclusions.

The rate of total fixed period exclusions (4.11%) was in the highest 20% in 2017/18.

The rate of repeat fixed period exclusions (3.08%) was in the highest 20% in 2017/18.

Of the 12 pupils with at least one fixed period exclusion in 2017/18, 75% were excluded on more than one occasion and 8.3% received 10 or more fixed period exclusions during the year.

Of the 51 fixed period exclusions in 2017/18, 42 were for persistent disruptive behaviour.

The two permanent exclusions were: 30th November 2018 and 10th Oct 2019

The Headteacher, Mrs Vicky Hogg, remained passionate about meeting the needs of all pupils and felt that change was needed. She could see the impact on staff who were working hard to manage the challenge and wanted to explore new ways of working which aligned more closely with her core beliefs.

'We'd had some attachment training, we had worked instinctively but had no trauma training or whole school knowledge of what might be happening or how we could truly make a difference. When we did the TISUK training it was suddenly...this is why! This is the science. Here are the reasons. It's not just that I am being kind...I am changing beliefs and behaviour.'

Vicky Hogg, Headteacher

WHICH TRAININGS WERE USED?

3 x staff members completed the 11 day TISUK Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools and Communities

Headteacher and 2 colleagues attended 2 day Senior Lead Training

Whole Staff Training for all the staff team

SCHOOL INFO:

Primary Academy

Unity Schools Partnership

Haverhill, Suffolk

263 pupils

34% Pupil Premium

64% from deprived backgrounds

SEND Unit with 18 places for children with Cognition and Learning needs (full)

16 pupils with EHCP (10 in SEND Unit)

25% on SEN Register

Highest level of children with SEND, particularly SEMH in their trust



www.clementsprimary.co.uk

HOW WERE CHANGES MADE?

The Headteacher and the school's SENCo began with a visit to Castle Hill, Ipswich, a school that had worked with TISUK over time, achieving the TMHI award in May 2019.

"The visit to Castle Hill was pivotal as the school was so calm and happy. You could see the positive relationships and reasonable adjustments were made for children. It just felt right."

Vicky Hogg, Headteacher

From this beginning a plan was formed to move the school forward to become a trauma informed, mentally healthy setting with a shared way of working that supported and connected all staff.

In summer 2019 all staff read Paul Dix 'When the Adults Change Everything Changes'. This became the foundation for conversation and reflection which resulted in a new restorative Behaviour Policy in July 2019.

A core aim of the new approach was to include all staff so in addition to the Senior Lead and Practitioner Trainings TISUK delivered Whole School Training in June 2020.

The focus of ongoing training, revisiting, reflecting on practice and approaches has continued so that practice is refined, consistent and embedded.

The Leadership provide a clear model of how to be in relationship and is rigorous in the drive to maintain agreed approaches.

'You can never let the ball drop. It is morally the right thing to do, to drive, to insist, to ensure.'

Expectations are agreed and captured in a Relationship Policy which has PACE approaches at its core.

The anchor for all developments has been the values of the school:

Ready: We will be present and available for children, colleagues and the wider community and will act decisively and supportively.

Respectful: We will model throughout all interactions, considerate, professional and respectful behaviours with all members of the school community.

Safe: We will ensure a safe school community by developing and maintaining positive relationships and engaging with the PACE approach to all interactions within the school community.

To this end our school is committed to educational practices which PROTECT, RELATE, REGULATE and REFLECT.

Extract from the Relationships Policy

"It has given me an insight into the way our young people's minds are affected by trauma and the tools to help them deal with it effectively."

Joy Hote HLTA, Employed since 2003

"Having the understanding that there is more going on with some children and being part of TIS helps staff to navigate what's lying beneath the surface for those children having difficulties in their everyday lives."

Nicola Pooley
Speech and language TA
Employed at Clements since 2014

"It has changed how I see, and react to, tricky behaviours. Without this approach we would have never built up the relationships with the children like we have. It is transformative."

Jordan Pinker
SENDCo Employed since 2015

"A challenge, b

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The impact of introducing TISUK approaches includes removing the pressure that staff previously reported they experienced in managing punishment and consequences. Instead of thinking about what they are going to do in a situation, now their thinking is 'what am I going to do to support...?'

In May 2021 Clements School achieved the TMHI Award Visit as a clear endorsement of the quality of the practice across the whole school. TISUK has become the Golden Thread.

In October 2021 an Ofsted inspection rated the school as GOOD, stating

"Clements Primary Academy is a caring and inclusive place to learn.

Parents overwhelmingly feel that their children are well cared for and supported. A parent summarised what many said, saying that 'children flourish at Clements'.

Behaviour in and around school is positive. Leaders have ensured that all staff have appropriate training to manage behaviour consistently across the school. Staff use shared scripts to deal with unacceptable behaviour effectively, and expectations are high. This results in positive adult and pupil relationships and minimal disruption to pupils' learning.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know to go to a trusted adult if they are worried."

The change in the school is reflected in the school's data showing that since February 2020 there have been no Fixed Term or Permanent Exclusions.

Outcomes are improving, for the first time ever the school was in line or above national averages in all data in July 2022.

In May 2022 the school achieved a further endorsement, with the award of the IQM Inclusive School Award beginning with the statement: Clements Primary Academy School is an excellent example of inclusive practice.

In embracing TISUK and adopting these approaches, changes have been rapid and impacted across all aspects of the school. What is especially noteworthy is that this has been achieved by supporting and valuing the contributions of school staff who have been there throughout.

"Trauma informed school has given me the insight to fully appreciate the impact of trauma in human development and well-being. It has given me the practical knowledge and tools to support individuals going through some of the most challenging times in their lives. The course in itself was hard work and very heavy on the emotions but priceless in terms of its usefulness."

Sofia Farizo, TISUK Practitioner and Behaviour Support Assistant

"Even on the trickiest days, as I drive out of the car park gate and pass the school, I often look at the building and am reminded just how proud I am of how far we've come and all that we've achieved. I'm incredibly proud to be part of an amazing team of people!"

Marie Crooks, Year Three teacher