

Head-First helps St Bede's & St Bernadette schools in Lambeth to improve pupil mental health support

Background

The Federation of St Bede's and St Bernadette in Lambeth is part of a wider network of nine schools in the Lambeth Catholic Schools Partnership which deliver a varied PSHE curriculum across all key stages.

What we did

The two schools were keen to incorporate mental health awareness and support within their federation for their Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils.

The two schools signed up to the Head-First programme in 2017 and have since trained over 50 staff members to deliver the Head-First targeted programme – a 6 week (KS1), 8 week (KS2) or 10 week (KS3 and 4) intervention for pupils who need further PSHE support. The schools are currently planning the delivery of the targeted programme in the spring term 2018.

Head-First offered both schools the opportunity to access fully funded Youth Mental Health First Aid Training and both schools now benefit from three fully trained Youth Mental Health First Aiders.

This means that these staff are now skilled in understanding how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental health issues in young people and have the confidence to guide the young person to a place of support. These champions will now feedback to other staff members and encourage them to report back to them about any mental health concerns they may have about the children they teach.

The role of the Youth Mental Health First Aider is to act as a point of contact for the young person who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to guiding a young person to get appropriate support.

- ★ Youth Mental Health First Aiders are invaluable in providing early intervention to help a young person who may be developing a mental health issue
- ★ Youth Mental Health First Aiders are not trained to be therapists or psychiatrists but they can offer initial support through non-judgmental listening, reassurance and guidance
- ★ Youth Mental Health First Aiders are encouraged to take on a role as a mental health advocate within their school to encourage adoption of approaches to 'whole school' well-being and to build on such approaches that may already be in place

If your school would like to take part in the programme, find out more by visiting www.head-first.org.uk or email the project co-ordinator Millie Stockwell at millie@thetrainingeffect.co.uk

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Outcome

As a result of TTE's involvement, 362 pupils across Key Stage 1 and 2 completed surveys, providing insight into the feelings and behaviour of pupils and the delivery of the targeted programme will provide further student benefits.

The two schools now also have the benefit of Youth Mental Health First Aiders to contribute to their pupil support offer related to mental health and emotional well-being.

Victoria Peter, Teaching Assistant – SEN/MAP Interventions said:

“The school's experience with TTE and the Head-First programme has been extremely positive.

“The YMHFA training we received was excellent and the facilitation of a very high quality. It has provided an excellent level of knowledge to staff who attended and improved staff confidence.

“We have really benefitted from the extra support they've offered and have been keen to access their full offer. They have provided a very responsive service with a quick turnaround in respect of data analysis and any requests we have had.

“The programme has helped improve our PSHE offer and improve mental health awareness amongst our staff.

“We look forward to working with TTE on an on-going basis. I would definitely recommend TTE and its programmes to other PSHE coordinators.”

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