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BRIEFING PAPER

# Promoting mental health and wellbeing in schools

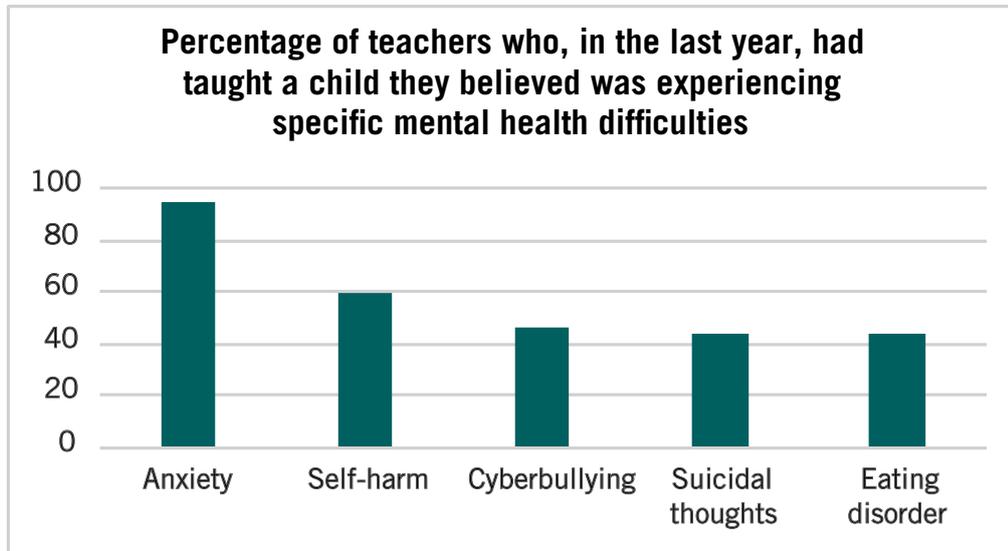
How the Ofsted inspection process can inspire change and what support is needed in schools

Improving mental health and psychological wellbeing in schools is one of the most important issues currently facing our society. One in eight children and young people have a diagnosable mental health condition,<sup>1</sup> with many more experiencing stress and pressures both in and outside of school.

The government has rightly acknowledged the scale of this challenge and has recognised the key role schools play in promoting wellbeing and responding to mental health difficulties. The *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision* green paper took steps to introduce more mental health support in schools and new Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance has seen increased focus on mental health and wellbeing.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Ofsted is currently reviewing its school inspection framework. This presents an ideal opportunity to embed mental health and wellbeing at the heart of their work. Schools and teachers are facing increasing demands on their time and resources, but within this constrained environment, the Ofsted framework still sends a strong signal to school leaders about what they should prioritise. Without significant change to the proposed framework, an opportunity to shape and inspire better mental health provision for children and young people will be missed.

This briefing sets out how Ofsted can develop its proposed inspection framework and approach to assessment to recognise schools that deliver quality mental health and wellbeing support. Drawing on evidence from psychologists who work with children, young people, families, schools and teachers, this briefing outlines how Ofsted inspections could better incorporate a holistic understanding of children's mental health in context. It explains how to use that understanding to better assess and recognise good practice in schools that support the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff.



## Summary of recommendations

The British Psychological Society (BPS) has developed four key recommendations to further develop Ofsted's inspection approach to incorporate assessment and recognition of the good practice schools should be undertaking in relation to pupil mental health and wellbeing. Ultimately, these all underpin our core ask of government and Ofsted:

The Department for Education and Ofsted should introduce new mental health and wellbeing measures into the school inspection regime that are accompanied by the provision of additional psychological support and guidance for schools.

### 1. Ofsted's draft framework and inspection handbook must be expanded to include a greater focus on mental health.

- Specific references to mental health must be included in the grade descriptors for all four judgement areas.
- A psychologically informed definition of mental health needs should be set out that recognises the social determinants and complex nature of mental health.
- Inspectors and schools must take into account the socio-economic and environmental factors impacting a school population and individual pupils' mental health, and ensure young people are not seen as solely responsible for their own psychological wellbeing.
- The framework should define what 'intelligent, swift and highly effective action' in relation to behaviour issues looks like and be clear that this requires flexibility from schools and does not equate to a quick move to temporary or permanent exclusion.
- The framework should clearly set out the need for greater integration between mental health (including Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)), education, and special educational needs and disabilities (including special schools). This should acknowledge all three areas are intrinsically linked, encouraging schools to consider these and provide support to pupils in a holistic way.

## 2. Ofsted’s framework should set out clear, accessible definitions for key terms that draw on the available psychological evidence base and consider replacing value-based terms with more valid, reliable and measurable alternatives.

- The Department for Education and Ofsted should set out a clear, dynamic definition of ‘resilience’ that recognises its fluidity and enables schools to take a whole school approach to supporting pupils’ mental health and wellbeing and move away from viewing resilience as a fixed characteristic of individuals. Resilience is not a characteristic or a skill but is a dynamic interaction between the person and their environment.<sup>3</sup>
- The term ‘fundamental British values’ needs to be replaced with a clear definition of what an inspection is trying to measure.

## 3. Inspectors must take a psychologically-informed approach to inspections.

- The inspection process should consider whether schools provide a positive environment that supports mental health and wellbeing and in which young people feel able to seek help. Pupils and their families should feel involved and consulted in this process.
- Inspectors must be given appropriate training and guidance that enables them to appropriately recognise schools’ provision of support for pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing. This should include a psychologically sound model of inspector training, which could include mental health first aid training (MHFA) as a minimum.
- In the longer term, Ofsted should ensure that every inspection team includes someone with psychological training.

## 4. Schools must be provided with sufficient guidance and support on how to best meet pupils’ mental health needs.

- Schools should be encouraged to make use of existing evidence-based toolkits and effective programmes that have helped deliver positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes.
- The Department for Education should undertake a thorough evaluation of whole school approaches to mental health and wellbeing, including pastoral support, and direct schools to appropriate support services and tools, evidence-based programmes, and methods for supporting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing.
- To ensure good practice, mental health and wellbeing should be embedded throughout the whole school, with a particular emphasis in PSHE lessons.
- As well as the Mental Health Support Teams, additional mental health staff should be available in schools, through the provision of additional staff to schools, as well as schools being encouraged to work together to deliver better support within a local area.

# Ofsted's revised inspection approach

Ofsted has proposed a revised inspection framework that aims to provide greater focus on the 'substance of education' – what is taught, how well it is taught, and if it sets up pupils to succeed. The new framework will assess schools according to four core areas:

- 1 Quality of education
- 2 Behaviour and attitudes
- 3 Personal development
- 4 Leadership and management

The new approach separates behaviour and attitudes from personal development. This aims to enable inspectors to focus separately on how well behaviour is managed to 'create the calm, orderly and safe environment that we know is a basic requirement for good learning' and the opportunities pupils are given to 'build character and resilience, and to prepare children and young people to succeed as adults and active citizens in modern Britain'.<sup>4</sup>

93 per cent of teachers 'agreed that the current education system places a greater focus on academic performance than the wellbeing of children and young people.

86 per cent agreed that the Ofsted framework should be revised, so that there is a greater focus on wellbeing and mental health, with other elements scaled back.'

### Young Minds

Despite this focus on behaviour and personal development, the BPS' analysis of the proposed inspection framework and handbook has found:

- Ofsted's general approach tends to consider children and young people in isolation and does not understand them in the wider social context of their family, school community and neighbourhood.
- A missed opportunity to use the framework to outline appropriate guidance from Ofsted and DfE on what good looks like in schools' support for mental health and wellbeing.

School leaders are not being incentivised to prioritise this crucial area.

- A lack of recognition or prioritisation of mental health within the assessment criteria. Where mental health and wellbeing is mentioned, the reference is often vague and included as one of a number of related issues for consideration by inspectors. Physical health, safety and wellbeing are much more prominent, which goes against the government's stated commitment to parity of esteem.
- The continued use of a number of ill-defined terms such as: resilience, 'fundamental British values', character and 'cultural capital'. There is no shared definition of these terms and therefore no reliable way to measure them.
- Extremely limited use of psychological evidence and research to support the new approach. Some of the psychological evidence that has been used is out of date.

These findings are very concerning at a time when children and young people are in increasing need of mental health support and when the government has committed to making improvements to provision. A recent survey by Young Minds found a significant majority of teachers believe the education system does not provide sufficient resources or recognition to enable schools to prioritise psychological wellbeing.

At the same time, it is essential schools are provided with the resources, support and guidance to deliver better psychological education, support and services for their pupils.

# 1. Reforms required: Expanding the draft framework to prioritise mental health

Ofsted's draft framework and inspection handbook must be expanded to include a greater focus on mental health. This will ensure inspectors afford due attention to the mental health and wellbeing of pupils during inspections and encourage schools to prioritise wellbeing education and support.

Specific references to mental health must be included in the grade descriptors for all four judgement areas.

Although the 'behaviour and attitudes' and 'personal development' judgements include a fleeting focus on mental health and wellbeing, along with areas like resilience that have a mental health element, there is little reference to mental health in their grade descriptors.

## BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

- The Good grade descriptors for behaviour and attitudes should include: 'Schools assess the root cause of any behavioural issues and the multiple factors including the way that institutional responses can maintain difficulties, with specific reference to mental health difficulties, and provide appropriate support to help pupils and their family or carers to understand and address these.'
- They should also include: 'Schools create a learning environment that helps the whole school community understand the factors impacting on their own and others' present and future mental health and wellbeing.'

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The Good grade descriptors for personal development should be updated to reflect the role of mental health, for example:
  - 'The curriculum extends beyond the academic, vocational or technical and provides for pupils' broader development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development *and mental health and wellbeing.*'
  - 'The curriculum and the school's wider work support pupils to promote and protect *mental health and wellbeing.*'

# INSPECTIONS COULD BECOME A MECHANISM TO INSPIRE REAL CHANGE IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- In order for leadership and management to be effective, school leaders must be able, and expected, to demonstrate a focus on creating a whole school approach to mental health and psychological wellbeing that is recognised and understood by all staff.
- In addition, with 31 per cent of teachers experiencing a mental health difficulty themselves, a mark of good leadership and management should be a psychologically safe working environment.<sup>5</sup> School leaders should recognise, manage and support teachers' mental health and wellbeing needs, where needed, as well as providing staff the training and support they need to appropriately handle pupils' mental health difficulties.
- The Outstanding grade descriptor for leadership and management should include:
  - 'All staff understand the importance of mental health and wellbeing and are able to direct pupils to appropriate support. All staff are provided with appropriate training and support to identify the factors that contribute to good mental health.'
  - 'School leaders have clear systems in place to recognise and support staff with mental health difficulties.'
  - 'Schools leaders promote a culture of inclusion.'

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- Similarly, grade descriptors for quality of education should reference all elements of education, including relationships, sex education and health education – with a specific focus on mental health.
- The Good grade descriptor for quality of education should include, under intent, the following: 'Pupils are encouraged to understand the value of good mental health and wellbeing and how to access support should they need it.'
- The grade descriptors should also include: 'Schools create a learning environment that supports high quality teaching and learning that maximises the physical health and mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community.'

**OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN WHY MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IS IMPORTANT AND ACCURATELY SIGNPOST SUPPORT.**

A psychologically informed definition of mental health needs should be set out in the framework and handbook that recognises the social determinants and complex nature of mental health.

- Ofsted states that inspectors will evaluate ‘the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as... pupils with mental health needs’ as part of their assessment of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. ‘Mental health needs’ are not defined and the positioning within Ofsted’s documents is too binary: it suggests a young person can only be either mentally healthy or mentally unwell.
- This approach does not allow for the fact everyone has mental health needs and that these sit within a broad spectrum with varying levels of support required to address them; and, most importantly, that mental health fluctuation it is a part of everyday experiences.
- The lack of definition also serves to enhance misconceptions about what constitutes a mental health need. For example, some young people do not view ‘feeling stressed’ as a mental health need and see it as part of school life. Those pupils may need support as well as those pupils who may have more severe mental health needs, such as those who are self-harming, but require more specialist support.
- The guidance should be updated to state inspectors will evaluate: ‘the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as... pupils experiencing challenges with their mental health, including those identified as feeling stressed, experiencing anxiety, depression as well as other mental health conditions.’
- This approach should be replicated elsewhere in relation to references to mental health.

Inspectors and schools must take into account the socio-economic and environmental factors impacting a school population and individual pupils’ mental health and ensure young people are not seen as solely responsible for their own mental wellbeing.

- Ofsted’s, and the government’s, approach to young people’s mental health and wellbeing places too much responsibility on the young person themselves for their own mental wellbeing, and on them to identify any issues and seek support for them.
- There is significant research which demonstrates that good mental health is dependent not only on individual attributes but also the relationship between them, and social, economic and environmental factors. For example, if a child is living in a disrupted family environment, has experienced a loss, or if their family is struggling due to adverse economic conditions, they will be more likely to experience mental health difficulties.<sup>6,7,8,9</sup>

A study by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families found the risk of poor socio-economic outcomes was greater for children who had experienced neglect or abuse. Additionally, children who had experienced neglect were 70 per cent more likely to have time off work in adulthood as a result of a long-term sickness compared to those who had not experienced maltreatment during childhood.

- While supporting young people to recognise and seek help to address their own mental health difficulties, schools should also be working to identify and support those pupils they believe are suffering from, or are at risk of suffering from, mental health difficulties. This is particularly so if a young person is dealing with external family or other social, economic or environmental pressures.
- Ofsted guidance should be updated so that inspectors consider the socio-economic demographics of a school and use this knowledge to inform their evaluation of the school's approach to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils.
- In addition, the personal development grade descriptor for a Good school should include: 'The school has clear systems in place for teachers to identify a pupil they believe to be suffering from, or at a heightened risk of suffering from, mental health difficulties and for that pupil to be referred to the appropriate psychological support.'<sup>10</sup>

Hardcastle et al.'s research demonstrated that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can impact the way a child processes information, makes decisions and interacts with others, contributing to less favourable outcomes throughout childhood and adulthood. This includes health harming behaviour such as alcohol consumption, poor child and adult mental health and earlier physical ill health.

Ofsted's framework should define what 'intelligent, swift and highly effective action', in relation to behaviour issues, looks like and be clear that this requires flexibility from schools and does not equate to a quick move to temporary or permanent exclusion.

- BPS members working with schools have found that staff often feel bound by behaviour plans and are unable to be flexible in their approach to supporting individual pupils because they believe they must rigidly adhere to their plan or be penalised by Ofsted. This is counter to an intelligence-led approach to behaviour management.
- Additionally, autistic children can be removed or excluded from lessons unjustifiably. BPS members have found that, for some schools, the process from first significant behaviour concern to exclusion can take only six weeks – insufficient time for a young person's difficulties to be addressed and for improvements in behaviour to be demonstrated.
- In order to support schools to take a more adaptable and intelligent approach, the grade descriptor for an Inadequate school should include: 'Schools are inflexible in their behaviour policies and do not make reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs'.
- In addition, behaviour plans often do not take into account the impact of mental health needs despite the fact that these will likely impact the way in which pupils behave and their perceived attitude to learning.
- The handbook should be clear that inspectors will expect behaviour plans and policies to include specific references to mental health needs.

There should be an additional clarification in the framework that clearly sets out the need for greater integration between mental health (including with CAMHS), education, and special educational needs and disabilities (including with special schools). This should acknowledge that all three areas are intrinsically linked, encouraging schools to consider these and provide support to pupils in a holistic way.

- The framework discusses mental health, where evident, as a siloed and separate area to education. In order to ensure a whole school approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing, and to align with the government's new Health Education guidance, Ofsted must be clear that mental health and education are intrinsically linked and that schools should demonstrate an understanding of this.
- Department for Education research on supporting mental health in schools and colleges showed that where schools integrated positive mental health and wellbeing support in everyday life, pupils were able to develop stronger emotional literacy and manage their emotions more effectively.<sup>11,12</sup>

The National Assembly for Wales' report on children and adolescent mental health, recommends schools become 'community hubs' for emotional resilience and mental wellbeing, with mental health embedded in the new curriculum in Wales.

- Pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) are also considered separately in the handbook. Ofsted should be clear that children with SEND might be more likely than their peers to experience

mental health challenges, and appropriate support should be provided that cater for this. A whole school approach to mental health must take account of pupils with specific additional needs, such as SEND.

- Ofsted should also assess how well schools are linked with mental health support, such as CAMHS, who can bring more specialist mental health knowledge into the school environment and, where necessary, provide support for those with more specialist mental health needs. Greater emphasis should be placed on collaboration between schools and other children and young people's mental health services – while acknowledging that schools can sometimes struggle to successfully build these links. Schools should not be penalised if their attempts to build relationships do not succeed, but instead be encouraged to do so and appropriately judged for their efforts.<sup>13</sup>

The National Children's Bureau reiterates that there is a strong evidence base from systematic reviews that support schools in engaging with the whole community. It states schools should engage pupils through encouraging a stronger pupil voice, authentic involvement in learning, decision-making, and peer-led approaches.

## GREATER EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND OTHER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

## 2. Reforms required: Better definitions and understanding of complex terms

Language matters. Assuming there is a common ‘everyday’ understanding of key terms can mask complexity and differences in understanding. Ofsted’s framework should set out clear, accessible definitions for key terms that draw on the available psychological evidence base and consider replacing value-based terms with more valid, reliable and measurable alternatives.

‘Resilience is defined as the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges that threaten its function, viability or development.’ **Masten, 2018**

The Department for Education and Ofsted should set out a clear, dynamic definition of ‘resilience’ that recognises different types of resilience and enables schools to take a whole school approach to supporting pupils’ mental health and wellbeing.

- While Ofsted will assess pupils’ ‘resilience’, there is no consistent, formal, psychologically informed definition of the term set out in the inspection guidance or more broadly by government. Sometimes it is a term used in its own right in government publications and other times, it is given as an example of good ‘character’. Resilience is not a characteristic or a skill but is a dynamic interaction between the person and their environment.<sup>14</sup>
- Government’s general approach is to focus on children being able to ‘bounce back’ from knock backs or to persevere if they do not succeed at something first time. However, this approach is not appropriate for many children and young people and does not account for their wider socio-economic context and its impact on their mental health and wellbeing.
- It is unsuitable to apply a single term in this way to both children who may be more able to ‘bounce back’ from troublesome events and to those who may have suffered serious trauma, have attachment issues or experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). A study by Hughes et al. has highlighted the harmful effects of ACEs throughout life, showing that individuals with at least four ACEs face increased risk of poor health outcomes, including violence, mental illness, and substance abuse.<sup>15</sup>
- Similarly, the Ofsted handbook should define what is meant by ‘character’, which is also a difficult term to measure objectively.

The term ‘fundamental British values’ needs to be replaced with a clear definition of what an inspection is trying to measure. The Department for Education and Ofsted should consider an objective, measurable definition, or series of definitions, that allow flexibility to account for pupils’ different cultural backgrounds, as well as guidance to schools on how they should help pupils to develop these values.

- There is a risk that, without a suitably psychologically informed definition, this could be misinterpreted by schools. BPS members have seen examples where well-intentioned efforts to demonstrate British values have inadvertently focused on a narrow definition that can leave some pupils, particularly those that are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME), feeling alienated or like they do not belong – which in itself can impact mental health and wellbeing.
- Ofsted should instead place greater emphasis on universal values in schools, which include a belief in mutual respect and tolerance of others.

**IT IS UNSUITABLE TO APPLY THE SINGLE TERM RESILIENCE TO BOTH CHILDREN WHO MAY BE MORE ABLE TO ‘BOUNCE BACK’ FROM TROUBLESOME EVENTS AND TO THOSE WHO MAY HAVE SUFFERED SERIOUS TRAUMA.**

### 3. Reforms required: Towards a psychologically-informed inspection process

In addition to the framework and guidance being updated to give more focus to mental health and wellbeing, this needs to be reflected in the approach taken by inspectors during an inspection. It is essential that inspectors take a psychologically-informed approach to inspections.

The inspection process should consider whether schools provide a positive environment that supports mental health and wellbeing and in which young people feel able to seek help. Pupils and their families should feel involved and consulted in this process.

Inspectors should frame questions positively, understanding pupils' self-esteem and attitudes towards school and learning:

- 'Do you feel confident about your abilities?'
- 'Do you feel optimistic about the future?'
- 'How do you feel about yourself? How does the school support you in this?'
- 'What do you feel you're good at?'

In particular, inspectors should ensure they focus on the following areas during inspections:

- Speaking with pupils first and seeking to gain understanding and to build rapport, while also being aware that a lack of trust may impact how a child responds to questions and what they feel comfortable discussing.
- Asking pupils and teachers what helps them to feel safe.
- Asking pupils if they know where to go or who to speak to if they need support or if they have concerns about their mental health or wellbeing.
- Assessing pupils' mental wellbeing by asking questions to understand their self-esteem and attitudes to school and learning.
- Ensuring language used is accessible and appropriate, to enable pupils to feel comfortable and able to understand what is being asked of them, without feeling pressured to respond in a certain way.

- Speaking to leadership teams and other staff to understand if a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing is in place and if all staff have a full understanding of the value of this and how support should be provided.
- Observing pupils not just during lessons but also between classes and during breaktimes to understand how pupils behave and how their wellbeing is managed when not under direct supervision.
- Speaking to pupils that have recently been off-rolled, excluded or placed in a pupil referral unit, and their parents or carers, to understand the steps that led to that decision being made by the school and to understand if all appropriate support and management options were considered and attempted beforehand.
- Considering how the school sign-posts pupils to mental health support through displays and assemblies, and regular reminders through tutors/other pastoral staff.

To ensure the effective implementation of the above:

- Inspectors must be given appropriate training and guidance that enables them to appropriately assess pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing, and a school's provision to support this. This should include a psychologically sound model of inspector training, which could include MHFA as a minimum.<sup>16</sup>
- In the longer term, Ofsted should ensure that every inspection team includes someone with mental health training.

## 4. Reforms required: What good practice looks like

If the inspection process is to place increased focus on mental health and wellbeing and hold schools to account on this, then schools also need to be provided with sufficient guidance and support on how to best meet pupils' mental health needs. The BPS has produced a best practice guide: *What good looks like in psychological services for schools and colleges: Primary prevention early intervention and mental health provision*, which reviews the evidence and discusses the practical ways in which psychological wellbeing can be addressed in school settings, as well as the implications for commissioning and delivery of provision.<sup>17</sup>

- The Department for Education should undertake a thorough evaluation of whole-school approaches to mental health and wellbeing, including pastoral support, and direct schools to appropriate support services and tools, evidence-based programmes, and methods for supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- Good practice in mental health and wellbeing support is underpinned by evaluation and experience. To ensure good practice, mental health and wellbeing should be embedded throughout the whole-school, with a particular emphasis in PSHE lessons.
  - *The Lancet's* research on mental health interventions in schools in high-income countries highlighted that where mental health services are embedded within the whole school system, there is a higher likelihood of a continuum of integrative care that improves both mental health and educational attainment.<sup>18</sup>
  - The PSHE Association's guidance on teaching about mental health and wellbeing outlines key aspects of teaching about mental health effectively and safely. This was relaunched in March 2019 to match the government's new statutory PSHE requirements regarding Health Education, Relationships Education and RSE. This promotes pupils' wellbeing through an understanding of their own and others' emotions and the development of healthy coping strategies. It also contributes to safeguarding, providing pupils with knowledge, understanding and strategies to keep themselves healthy and safe, as well as equipping them to support others who are facing challenges.<sup>19</sup>
- As well as the Mental Health Support Teams being introduced by government, additional mental health staff should be available in schools, as well as schools being encouraged to work together to deliver better support within a local area.
  - The Scottish Government has pledged a £250 million health investment package, £30 million of which will fund counsellors in every secondary school, as well as an additional 250 school nurses to offer emotional and mental health support and provide more advice for young people and their families.
  - The Welsh Government has identified an increasing body of international evidence which demonstrates the substantial negative impacts ACEs have on an individual's physical and mental health. A report in 2016 by Public Health Wales found ACEs could be responsible for almost a third (27 per cent) of adults reporting a low wellbeing score. This means eradicating ACEs in Wales could potentially reduce the number of individuals who report low mental wellbeing by over 100,000.<sup>20</sup> The Welsh Government has since set up an ACEs support hub to help organisations and communities across Wales understand more about ACEs and their impacts, as

well what action can be taken to prevent them. The Society is pleased that the DfE has made a clear commitment to fund the training of more educational psychologists. However, the retention of existing educational psychologists in Local Authorities needs consideration.

In Oxfordshire, children and young people have seen improved access to mental health services after the region was chosen as an NHS trailblazer site to pilot improvements to children's mental health services. As well as reducing CAMHS waiting times, this will deliver new teams into primary and secondary schools to support pupils' mental health needs.

- Schools should be encouraged to make use of existing toolkits and evidence-based programmes that have helped deliver positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes.
  - This could include making use of existing clubs, such as breakfast clubs or pupil forums, as a means of discussing mental health and wellbeing with pupils and using this more informal setting to assess whether young people might be struggling or at risk of developing mental health difficulties.
  - The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families has created a toolkit to measure and monitor children's mental wellbeing, helping to highlight its significance amongst school and college staff. This in turn helps schools and colleges to make better use of data and determine the wellbeing needs of students and how best to address needs. Overall, this reinforces attainment that improves student wellbeing, enabling children and young people to thrive and realise their full potential.
  - Recently, in the Republic of Ireland (RoI), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) published a set of guidelines (2017) aimed at promoting student wellbeing during the first three years of post-primary education. This new 'Framework for Junior Cycle' is designed to help schools build on their existing wellbeing provision
- Existing secondary school programmes in the RoI being delivered to address wellbeing include '*FRIENDS for Life*' and the '*Junior Social Innovation Action Programme*'. The latter comprises a specially designed Junior Wellbeing Planning Pack designed to activate the six indicators of wellbeing identified in the new NCCA guidelines<sup>21</sup>, including being: active, responsible, connected, resilient, respected and aware. '*FRIENDS for Life*'<sup>22</sup> on the other hand, is a 10-session, evidence-based, positive mental health intervention/programme recommended by the WHO (WHO, 2004) and designed to promote emotional resilience and reduce anxiety in children and adolescents. The (teacher-delivered) programme has been evaluated in a number of studies in Ireland (and elsewhere) with positive results (e.g. National Behaviour Support Service, 2013<sup>23</sup>) and is currently being supported by the National Behaviour Support Service (Department of Education and Skills), the National Educational Psychological Service, the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) support service and the National Council for Special Education.

for 13- to 16-year-olds, by delivering, in the first instance, a minimum of 300 hours of timetabled learning and engagement with wellbeing – increasing to 400 hours by 2020. This reflects a particular 'policy, practice and research' focus in recent years, on child and youth health and wellbeing in an Irish context including, in particular, mental health.

Geelong Grammar school in Victoria, Australia has launched a major four-year project examining how Positive Education programmes can enhance adolescent mental health. Their approach 'brings together the science of Positive Psychology with best practice teaching to encourage and support individuals, schools and communities to flourish'. This approach focuses on specific skills that help students strengthen relationships, create positive emotions, enhance resilience, promote mindfulness and support a healthy lifestyle.

# About the BPS

The British Psychological Society is the representative body for Psychology and Psychologists in the UK. We are responsible for the promotion of excellence and ethical practice in the science, education, and practical applications of Psychology.

We have over 60,000 members and subscribers across the UK, ranging from students to qualified Psychologists.

We support and enhance the development and application of Psychology for the greater public good. We set high standards for research, education and knowledge, and seek to disseminate this to increase wider public awareness of Psychology and its importance. As part of this work we want to ensure that the value of Psychology to society is recognised by policymakers and used to inform policy development across government.

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