

CASE STUDY

Engage with your staff - don't just tick a box

Mike Williams, Headteacher, Trinity St Mary's C of E Primary School, South Woodham Ferres, Essex, discusses the importance of staff wellbeing

'Trinity St Mary's is a one form entry Church of England Primary School situated in the heart of South Woodham Ferres, a small village southeast of Chelmsford, Essex. We are a warm, welcoming school where everyone matters.

'The last two years have been a rollercoaster and we can all recognise the high levels of stress that continue circulating around schools in the wake of the pandemic. It had been some time since I had the opportunity to check in with all the staff, and I wanted to get a real sense of how they were feeling about the school and their work, and what I could do to help. I take wellbeing seriously, it is such an important part of school life, and has a far reaching influence especially on the pupils.

'I wanted my staff to know that I wasn't adding to a busy day with a form filling exercise to fulfil an OFSTED requirement - I was genuinely interested. So, I decided I needed an alternative to the photocopied list of tick-boxes I had previously used.

['Welbee](#) - a powerful online evaluation and staff wellbeing improvement tool, designed to help senior leaders and HR Directors create mentally healthy schools - was recommended by a fellow headteacher, and proved to be exactly what I was looking for, simple to use and effective. The process was straightforward. At the beginning and end of the evaluation period, Welbee sent out the invitation to the 10-minute online staff survey, based on The Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards. Reminders encouraged everyone to participate and once the responses were in, the survey was closed and the school results automatically created - no number crunching, no extra workload and no added stress.

'The staff response was amazing – nearly 100% of staff shared openly and honestly, a much higher rate than if I had created my own survey. They were asked to score how well they were coping with the workload, whether the school had a good working environment, if they felt empowered in their roles, the degree of flexibility within their role, how well they are supported by their managers, colleagues and peers, and whether they knew what is expected of them and felt included in school development and change.

'The report, provided an analysis of the data, benchmarks, suggested actions and heat maps that highlighted areas for attention so I could be proactive and implement suitable solutions.

'Overall the responses were positive - the majority of my staff were engaged, happy and enjoyed working at St Mary's. But there was one area highlighted to work on – communication. Even though the overall score was high, a portion of the staff felt they were not being heard and gave a low score - without the deeper analysis of the results, I would have remained unaware and unable to address the issue.

'The results were clear – there was a problem with my communication with the support staff. The 'Welbee Voice' chat feature on the platform provided an avenue for open, anonymous

conversation – everyone could voice their opinions and give open feedback. The support staff shared their comments and concerns with me, so finding the solution was fast and focussed - they requested face-to-face meetings so I could share key messages and plans with them directly, enabling them to be more involved in making positive change.

‘Having a mentally healthy school is a win-win situation – staff are happy and motivated, which has a direct and positive impact on pupils’ learning and attainment, there’s lower staff absence, so less need for supply teachers and staff want to stay - so little to no recruitment – which all adds up to a reduction in overall costs and an increase in pupil outcomes.

‘Welbee is a low cost, highly effective staff wellbeing evaluation and improvement tool, making staff wellbeing simply part of what happens every day.’

Find out more about Welbee at www.welbee.co.uk.

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About Welbee

Welbee from School Wellbeing Accelerator is a highly effective online evaluation and staff wellbeing improvement tool, designed to help senior leaders and HR Directors create mentally healthy schools, retain and motivate staff, reduce costs, drive up student attainment, and enhance their Ofsted Leadership and Management Judgement. It can also be used by schools choosing to publish a DfE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter - a voluntary declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working within their establishment.