



## **Yardley Hastings Primary School**

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We began working with 'Making Me' about a year ago. In that time, it has had a huge impact on our school. We already prided ourselves on valuing social and emotional development but the activities and routines that 'Making Me' provides have embedded the development of social and emotion literacy into our school day. It has provided us with a simple, very effective and extremely time efficient method of ensuring that a child's emotional wellbeing and development is at the core of everything we do. It has given children and staff alike a framework for dialogue about how children are feeling, their emotional wellbeing and how this affects learning.

The daily 'feelings flowers' provide a very effective, time efficient method of understanding children's wellbeing as they come into school. We have been able to notice issues that, whilst seemingly insignificant, can make a huge difference to a child's wellbeing, and hence learning, throughout the day. The Casey stories have given all the children a much needed vocabulary to articulate and identify how they are feeling. We have also found, perhaps more importantly, that daily recognition of a range of feelings has given children the confidence to understand that being a little up and down is acceptable and to feel happy every day is not realistic. All our children now accept that the odd bad day is fine! The initial training we received on the Windows of Tolerance has enabled us to explain to some children who are worried about their wellbeing that 'up and down' is fine! The extremes are when we need to seek further support. This has been particularly effective with some of our more anxious children.

As well as emotional literacy, as a federation, we have identified that resilience amongst our older children is a skill that is so necessary for the pressures of modern life, transition to secondary school and lifelong learning. The 'Making Me' shield of Resilience work has been a powerful tool to support our older children. The language used with these resources has helped children to improve their resilience. It is referenced throughout the school including lunchtimes, where Shields of resilience stickers are awarded to children who demonstrate a proactive approach to dealing with setbacks, especially amongst their peers.

All the training delivered by Making Me has been excellent and they have supported staff, children and parents alike. The initial whole staff training on brain development and how emotional development affects learning was extremely informative to staff at all levels. The children's sessions were very engaging and appropriately pitched. Parents loved the workshops and are still talking about them a year on. In a recent survey, we received very many positive comments about the schools' approach to emotion wellbeing and the 'Making Me' routines in school:

*"I am hugely supportive of the Mindmap initiatives that have been rolled out in school over the last year - building emotional awareness and being able to talk about feelings are vital life skills for emotional resilience. This is so important and I hope it continues to be a thread that weaves throughout all school years."*

*"I could not be happier with the wellbeing support at school. I think XXXXXX would feel happy to approach any of his teachers if he had any worries or concerns."*

*"The school use Casey Caterpillar to help the children with emotional wellbeing support to help them explain their feelings. My daughter feels able to talk to her Teachers if she has any worries."*

'Making Me' is a fantastic charity which provides a clear, extremely time friendly and effective structure to support emotional wellbeing and resilience in school. What's more, which is 'music to a Head Teacher's ears' it is free; you just need to have a fund raising day for the charity. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

Louise Brown

Executive Headteacher