

How can we Support Staff Well-being and Mental Health in Primary Education?

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Abbreviation List

AoLE - **Area** of Learning Lead

DfE - Department for Education

ESTYN - The Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales.

LSOs - Learning Support Officers

NASUWT - National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers

NSERE -The National Strategy for Education and Research.

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

ONS -The Office of National Statistics.

PERMA - Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishments.

SLT - Senior Leadership Team

WEMWBS - The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale

Proposal

Context

In March 2020, COVID-19 changed the face of education; the unthinkable happened: pupils, staff and families found themselves in an unprecedented situation. Schools closed, communities shut down, pupils and staff lost all contact with their friends and colleagues, routines were changed, and new rules were introduced. In 2022, The Welsh Government, in partnership with 'The National Strategy for Education and Research' (NSERE), conducted some research on the Impact of Covid-19 on the Welsh Education System. The report highlighted:

The learning and progress of all children were challenged by the situation they faced, but some continued to thrive while others (particularly those who were the most vulnerable, including those from more disadvantaged backgrounds) struggled.

The significantly increased workload placed upon school leaders and teachers had an inimical impact on their health and well-being.

Teachers, schools and local authorities provided exceptional support to learners and their families to mitigate these impacts, although there was variability in the extent and quality of this provision.

Some schools are now showing signs of returning to some standard practices, but the impact of the pandemic continues to be a fundamental issue for school communities. During the last two years, the school where the researcher is based has focused heavily on the well-being of its pupils. Numerous changes have been introduced, which included appointing two well-being champions to provide specialised interventions, a Family Engagement Officer to support the reintegration of pupils and a school-based Well-being dog.

Oldcastle Primary School is an educational establishment situated in Bridgend, South Wales. The school has a two-form entry intake of approximately four hundred and thirty-six pupils, which includes pupils from Nursery to Year Six. The school has forty-five staff, comprising twenty teaching staff, seventeen Learning Support Officers, four Administrative Officers, four Supervisory Assistants and one Site Supervisor.

The school is highly innovative and strives for the best possible student and staff outcomes. In 2017, The Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales (ESTYN) inspected the school. The school was recognised as “an inclusive and highly effective learning community with a strong ethos of cooperation and teamwork’ The report also noted,

“The school provides a wide variety of learning experiences that are accessible to all pupils”, Estyn (2017)

As a pioneer school, Oldcastle was actively involved in the work to create the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government 2022). This involved co-constructing with governors, staff, pupils and community partners to develop a vision and values that underpin educational philosophy for the challenges of the new curriculum.

Justification

The Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning is one of the six key areas of the Curriculum for Wales. The school has appointed a staff member responsible for this learning area whose primary focus to date has been developing this area's teaching and learning element. The school has been awarded the bronze certificate for the ‘Carneige Mental Health Award for Schools’. This is a framework for educational institutions to evidence policies and initiatives that improve emotional and social well-being. As a whole school, we are developing our pupils' and staff's positive mental health by applying for the silver award and embedding the themes within our curriculum.

Upon introducing the mental health award, the researcher acknowledged the disparity in focus between the well-being of the staff and that of their pupils. In light of this observation, the researcher now aims to investigate methods through which schools can promote the well-being and mental health of the staff in primary education.

Intended Impact

In 2021, The Welsh Government provided a guidance document to develop a Framework for Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental well-being, which is now statutory for all schools (Welsh Government 2021). The framework aims to allow schools to address the whole community's well-being. To identify weaknesses, build resilience and support, the researcher will use this guidance as the basis for undertaking the research.

As the research will be conducted with school staff, the data collection will happen during term time. Considering the two-week Easter Break, the data collection will occur over six weeks between March and April.

The proposed research paradigm combines subjectivism in ontology and interpretivism in epistemology and includes a questionnaire to explore the staff's current mindset and opinions of well-being in the school. Participants will be invited to complete a 'Google Form' inviting them to comment based on their thoughts on school pressures, workload and the school environment. Using this technology will allow the participants to be honest without being identified by the researcher. The research objective will be explained, and anonymity will be assured.

Following the questionnaire, focus groups will be conducted to ascertain the staff's understanding of emotional and mental health and well-being and how it can affect us. The groups will then discuss where the pressures are in the system and how these can be addressed. The focus group will give staff a voice when considering the right path when devising a framework for the whole school that will impact all members of the school community. The staff will meet in groups from various learning areas across the school. The focus groups will consist of teaching staff, learning support officers and admin personnel staff from across the school.

The researcher will also meet with senior leaders and one chair of governors from the cluster schools, who are developing a well-being and mental framework within their schools. They will be invited to respond to several interview questions to ascertain similarities and differences between schools and the strategies implemented. This will also allow the schools to share good practice later.

Expected Learning Outcomes

The researcher aims to understand mental health and well-being in education. They will seek to:

Make authentic improvements to enhance the well-being of all the staff at Oldcastle Primary School.

Recognise the direct link between positive mental health in schools and successful educational outcomes will significantly benefit teaching and learning within the school.

Collect information which will provide a range of evidence and reliable data that will be reflected in the whole school framework.

Develop creative solutions to problems, enhancing their problem-solving skills.

Foster personal growth and development, promoting curiosity and encouraging continuous learning.

Ethics and Insider Researcher

When researching with staff, there are many ethical implications to consider that the researcher must ensure to make themselves aware of. The researcher must clearly understand why they are participating in the research and its long-term benefits for the school. According to Costley, Elliott & Gibbs (2010, pp. 6-7), 'Insider-led, work-based projects are approached from the perspective of bringing about contributions to practice that are informed by underpinning knowledge. The purpose of the project is to bring about actual change, either during or at the end of the research project' Staff must also give full consent and be informed that they can withdraw from the research at any point. Staff anonymity is essential with this project, especially as the researcher is an insider researcher. Insider researchers are often intimately engaged with their research domains (Breen L, J. 2007). They have considerable credibility and rapport with the topics of their studies, a fact that may allow a greater level of openness than would otherwise be the case (Mercer, 2017). Being part of the school community can lead to unconscious bias and subjectivity in data collection, analysis and interpretation (Costley et al., 2010). To mitigate any concerns, the researcher has asked the Health and Well-being lead to undertake the focus group discussions. The staff member will have clear guidance on the focus groups' purpose and outcome. Utilising the well-being lead will allow the staff of the focus groups to have open and honest conversations whilst ensuring their anonymity from the researcher. It is essential that staff feel they can make comments without judgement.

Due to the nature and sensitivity of the research, all staff who participate in the focus groups will be provided in advance with information on the school counselling service, which they have access to should they need support outside the school environment.

Introduction.

Within primary education, teachers and support staff are influential in developing young people and nurturing the future generation. However, the challenges and demands faced by educators in an academic landscape that is continually transforming can impact their mental health and well-being.

During the last few years, considerable changes influenced the mental health and well-being of staff in education. In 2020, Covid-19 embraced the world, and school staff faced elevated pressure and anxiety due to sudden changes in delivering education to their pupils. The pandemic increased the workload of all school staff as they had to adjust and adapt to new ways of teaching and safety protocols (NSERE, 2022).

The introduction of the New Curriculum for Wales has had a notable impact on staff well-being in education. While the aspirations of the New Curriculum will reform education in Wales, the curriculum has brought a shift in teaching methodologies and approaches. Research with schools on the early implementation of Curriculum for Wales: Wave 1 report states:

“Senior leaders expressed concerns about the impact of increased demands on practitioner capacity on well-being in the workforce, highlighting the volume of information to digest and the scale and ongoing nature of the curriculum design task.”
(Thomas et al., 2023)

The mental health and well-being of primary school staff are paramount not only for their own personal welfare but also for the pupils they teach and the quality of education they provide to their pupils. Staff who feel valued and supported are likelier to create a highly effective and positive learning environment. However, when staff face mental health, stress and health-related conditions, this can lead to peer isolation, decreased job satisfaction, less effective teaching and resignation from the profession (Zhang and Sapp, 2008).

This study aims to explore and examine the aspects of mental health and staff well-being within primary schools. The researcher aims to analyse the challenges faced by primary school staff, identify the factors contributing to stress and well-being and investigate the current support available for staff in an educational setting.

As an insider, the researcher is not only the head teacher but someone who has suffered with their own mental health from stress and burnout; they seek to develop a comprehensive

understanding of the current state of well-being within the school they lead. The researcher hopes to present evidence-based research and strategies that their school and the cluster of schools they work alongside can implement to provide a supportive well-being and healthy environment for all primary staff. The study aims to find supportive initiatives, which may include peer support networks, professional development, and work-life balance practices.

Furthermore, it intends to acknowledge the challenges highlighted through the current research and those that will be identified by collecting data that contribute to the mental health and well-being of staff in the primary sector. By addressing the challenges, the researcher seeks to improve the lives of the staff they lead and strengthen our young learners' teaching and learning experiences. Through open discussions and a collective effort, the study hopes to prioritise primary school staff's mental health and well-being and develop a nurturing and supportive educational environment for educators and pupils. This approach will enable the researcher to construct a robust Well-being and Mental Health framework designed to provide optimal support for staff members within the primary school context.

Literature Review

Over the last ten years, well-being and mental health have become workplace focal points and priorities. The importance of a work-life balance and a healthy working environment are recognised as some of the essential factors related to job satisfaction. (The Office of National Statistics ONS, 2021) However, the importance of identifying one's mental health is a subject that has been debated for many years. Throughout the research into how we can support staff well-being and mental health in primary education, the researcher will be using the definition from the 'The World Health Organization (1946), describing health as

“a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, as opposed to the mere absence of disease or infirmity” (The World Health Organization, 1946, p.25).

When researching how to support mental health and well-being in a primary school context, it is apparent that the literature on this area is very complex, and several objective and subjective indicators exist. The Department of Health (2014, p.14) defines well-being as

“feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual's experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values.”

This definition will be used throughout as the researcher believes it is a clear statement including subjective perceptions of a person's well-being and objective indicators such as poverty, health quality and education.

Recently, there have been studies and concerns regarding teachers' well-being and mental health in the primary workforce. It must be noted that while undertaking the literature review, research linked to non-teaching staff in the education sector was limited. Some of the most significant research refers to teacher retention and the problems associated with the first five years of their career, mainly linked to accountability (Perryman and Calvert, 2019). The evidence relates to staff working very long hours during term time (Allen *et al.*, 2019). In 2018 (Guardian, 2018, p.12), it was reported that 3,750 teachers in England were on sick leave due to their mental health; this was linked to too many changes in policy, budget cuts affecting staffing and resources, staff retention and unmanageable class sizes. This research is also supported by the 'Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, 2020). In OECD's working paper on teachers' well-being, they highlight the need for more support for teachers due to budget freezes, which limits the amount of support for teachers when faced with new challenges and demands. The report also emphasises that teachers are expected to work with "diverse classroom environments regarding their students' ability levels and social and economic backgrounds" (OECD, 2020).

Some studies reach somewhat different conclusions. Bryson *et al.* (2019) inferred that school staff are more satisfied and content with their jobs than employees in other workplaces. Most research linked to staff well-being in education predates the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the key findings of 'The Teacher Wellbeing Index' (2021) show that 77% of school staff's physiological or physical symptoms due to their workplace were 75 % in 2017 compared with 76% in 2018. The data also showed that anxiety and depression related to their role were 5% lower in 2021 than in 2017 and 2018. Therefore, evidence may suggest that the pandemic has not had as much impact as the researcher initially thought on well-being and mental health. Following a survey conducted by the NASUWT (2020) teaching union (which included responses from over 4,300 teachers in the UK), 88% of teachers reported they were satisfied with their jobs.

In November 2021, 'The Educational Solidarity Network' produced a report of the first 'International Barometer on Education Personnel's Health and Well-being' findings. Over 8,000 teachers were interviewed from the following countries: France, Belgium, Quebec, Gambia and Morocco. The report highlighted that:

“more training and professional development opportunities, greater support from school leaders, higher salaries, and better information on health and occupational health”

was desperately needed (The Educational Solidarity Network, 2021, p.5). However, the overall results were inspiring, as all five countries had a high percentage of staff who would choose to teach again if asked.

A large body of research has identified that staff are optimistic about the profession overall. However, mental health and well-being have significantly affected the education sector. Data from ‘The Office of National Statistics (ONS, 2021) identifies ten areas of well-being, both objective and subjective, that highlight how people are doing in the UK, personally, locally and nationally. This data demonstrates that job satisfaction has improved over the last five years.

Following the launch of The Department of Education (2019), the ‘Teachers Recruitment’ and ‘Retention Strategy’ developed an advisory group to inform the UK government about the general condition of staff well-being in schools and colleges in England. Following the report, in 2021, the English government created a well-being charter for all schools. The charter allowed schools to consent to prioritise staff health and well-being to increase job satisfaction in schools. The aim of the charter was a commitment from the Department of Education and Ofsted to protect and promote the well-being of all staff (The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, 2021).

In Wales, the same advancement was evolving. In 2021, the Welsh Government created a framework for ‘Embedding a Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being’ (2021). The framework is a statutory document requiring all educational settings in Wales to review and address the emotional and well-being needs of all pupils, staff and their community. Schools implemented the framework following the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is now apparent that school well-being is at the forefront of Governments across the UK. The Welsh Government’s Wellbeing Future Generations Act’ (2015) states,

“The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.”

The act sets out seven well-being goals to ensure a shared vision for the citizens of Wales.

When researching how schools have addressed staff well-being, it is evident that many toolkits are available for schools to use. One of the most common frameworks for assessing workplace well-being is the 'The Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale' (WEMWBS). This toolkit measures positive mental well-being as well as any interventions implemented. It also focuses on a fourteen-item scale reflecting personal relationships, health and energy levels, and how one perceives oneself. In 2007, Warwick University embarked on researching the validity of the toolkit. Nine focus groups consisting of 56 members from comprehensive social and economic backgrounds participated in the study. The data was analysed by an expert panel of professionals with a background in psychiatry, public health and physiology. The report stated that,

“The New 14-item scale appears to have good face validity, as it covers the majority of the range of concepts associated with positive mental health, including both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects, positive affect, satisfying interpersonal relationships and positive functioning” (Tennant et al., 2007).

A further toolkit prevalent amongst well-being surveys used in schools is the 'The Wellbeing Measurement for Schools' staff survey produced by the 'Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families'. This survey focuses on staff well-being, the school's attitudes to well-being and its culture, and the staff's understanding of young people's mental health. Although educational settings adopt this toolkit, there is minimal evidence to support using the toolkit or its effect on promoting staff well-being in schools.

It is apparent that most toolkits used to assess well-being in school focus on self-reported indicators of well-being and are often very subjective. There was little evidence in the research that surveys had focused questions related to job satisfaction and one's own happiness, which would demonstrate the degree to which individuals were flourishing in the workplace. It is clear from the research that schools recognise that staff well-being is vital. Teachers who are mentally and physically healthy create more profitable relationships with colleagues and learners, provide happier learning environments and deliver better outcomes for pupils (Glazard & Rise, 2019).

This literature review has identified that six main themes are vital to supporting the well-being of school staff. The most important is total commitment from the senior leadership team to recognise the significance of positive well-being in schools. Other essential indicators were: a positive working environment, effective collaboration and mentoring, whole school approaches with a shared mission; ensuring all staff have a voice in decision making and promoting healthy and active lifestyles. These themes are linked very closely with the PERMA model (2011) created by Dr Martin Seligman. In 1998 Dr Seligman introduced the idea of shifting our perceptions of well-being and mental health to focusing on what is positive and working well in our lives. These five elements or components (PERMA; Seligman, 2011) are positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments. Research has shown significant positive relationships between each PERMA component and physical health, vitality, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and commitment within organisations (Kern *et al.*, 2014).

To conclude, identifying a transparent, consistent approach to supporting well-being in the education sector has been challenging. Toolkits and interventions have an impact, but often these are seen as a 'quick fix', and the long-term effect is minimal. As well-being is commonly defined as; "how we are doing as individuals" (ONS, 2019), it is essential that schools that want to improve the well-being of their staff must not look for a 'blanket' policy or toolkit but look at the individual needs of their workforce and focus on a more holistic approach to well-being.

Methodology

When planning to develop and formulate any research, especially within the field of education, we must be clear about the types of research that might be useful to school-based practitioners and leaders. (OECD, 2020). Work-based research can be impactful and insightful if appropriate methodologies, research designs, and research-based work ethics are considered.

Work-based research enables an organisation's staff and vision to develop and grow. (Fergusson *et al.*, 2020). Researchers use their action-based enquiry to help the organisation find solutions to questions that may have arisen from the organisation's monitoring, evaluating and reviewing processes.

When considering the research paradigms, the researcher should be aware of the philosophical outlook by which humans rationalise and interpret the world's reality (Abdul *et al.*, 2016). One element of a research model is ontology. Ontology describes concepts that

constitute reality and how we understand existence. (Arp, Smith et al., 2015) Ontology can be further broken down into two areas; objectivism, in which reality is not dependent upon the mind, but actual—also subjectivism, in which reality is based on opinion and is therefore subject to personal feelings.

A second research paradigm is epistemology, which studies "worthy" knowledge, identifying criteria to classify what constitutes knowledge (Hallebone and Priest, 2009). Alternatively, this can be divided into two additional subcategories. Firstly, positivism is commonly associated with quantitative research and experiments, associated with things that can be observed and measured in what may have traditionally been deemed more scientific studies (Crossman, 2019). Secondly, interpretivism is a social research paradigm that emphasises the importance of understanding individuals' subjective meanings and interpretations of their experiences and the world around them. This research methodology concerns people's opinions, focusing on their mental health and well-being. Therefore, it is primarily subjectivist in ontology and interpretive in epistemology.

Interpretivism indicates that research is frequently linked to the values and beliefs of the person designing and undertaking the research and thus is likely to impact the research design, the execution of the analysis and the reporting of results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As the insider researcher conducting this study is the headteacher and line manager of the staff taking part in the research, careful consideration had to be given to the process of emotional risk. As an insider, the researcher understands the staff's concerns, interests, and values. This knowledge will help tailor the research questions to be more relevant and meaningful to the staff members. Establishing trust and transparency is essential (Costley et al., 2010) when seeking consent from the staff. As the headteacher, the researcher trusts the staff, which will help facilitate the consent process. The researcher will clearly explain the research's purpose, scope and potential impact, ensuring that the staff fully understand their participation. It is also crucial to address any potential conflicts of interest and how confidentiality will be maintained. During the informed consent process, the researcher will emphasise that staff members have the right to withdraw from the research at any point without facing any negative consequences. This assurance is vital in participatory research, where the personal relationship between the researcher and participants can influence their willingness to stay engaged. (Sikes & Pots, 2008). By reiterating this right, the researcher acknowledges the staff's autonomy and ability to control their participation.

Overall, insider research offers a unique perspective that can lead to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the community or organisation under study. However, the researcher must be vigilant about potential biases, and ethical considerations should guide

the research process to ensure the well-being and rights of the staff are respected throughout the study. (Kruger and Casey 2000)

Insider-led research is particularly appealing in the educational setting and has many advantages. Educational settings allow for various methods to be considered and access to appropriate participants (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). The researcher also has solid professional knowledge and understanding of the establishments and is aware of any previous research that may have been conducted. On the other hand, there are, however, disadvantages and risks associated with objectivity and predetermined thinking and focus (Simmel, 1950). One noteworthy disadvantage of a researcher being in a hierarchical position while undertaking research is the possibility of biased and emotional, skewed findings. When a researcher has authority over a team of people, there is a risk of influencing the study's design, data collection and interpretation to align with their preconceived concepts or desired outcomes. Elisabete A. Silva, Patsy Healey, et al (2016) claim this can compromise the objectivity and credibility of the research.

The research aims to gain comprehensive insights into the factors influencing the overall well-being of school staff, as they play a crucial role in nurturing a conducive learning environment for students. A mixed-methods approach will be employed, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Qualitative data will be gathered through focus groups and semi-structured interviews, enabling in-depth discussions with staff members and senior leaders from cluster schools to delve into their experiences, perceptions, and challenges concerning well-being. Additionally, quantitative data will be collected using questionnaires featuring a 7-point Likert Scale, facilitating the measurement of staff attitudes and emotions regarding various factors affecting their well-being. The multifaceted nature of this study allows for a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies surrounding staff well-being in primary schools. A mixed-method approach enables researchers to address complex research questions that cannot be adequately explored using a single method. (Cohen et al., 2011). This complementary nature of the mixed methods approach not only enhances the validity and reliability of the study but also fosters a more holistic and insightful understanding of the research phenomenon.

The first data collection method includes a survey conducted with fifteen teaching staff and ten support staff members within the school. The questionnaire will identify the staff's current mindset and opinions of well-being in the school setting. The questions using a Likert Scale will allow the researcher to systematically collect quantitative data to determine various aspects of staff's current well-being, including accessing job satisfaction, work-life balance and overall morale. This data will allow the researcher to identify prevalent trends and

patterns, pinpoint areas of concern and compare responses across different groups of employees (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The qualitative method of data collection used will be a focus group. This method will be carried out with seven staff consisting of class teachers, learning support assistants, an administration manager and a senior leadership team member. All focus group participants will be volunteers who are interested in developing well-being within the school. The researcher will not be present during the focus group discussion, allowing more genuine and uninhabited responses as the staff members will not be concerned about potential judgment. Kruger and Casey (2000) explain that without the researcher present, participants may interact more freely with each other, leading to increased group dynamics and cohesion. Instead, the researcher will provide the lead for the Area of Learning for Well-being and the Lead for Humanities, both well-being champions within the school, with fifteen focused questions. The focused questions will cover a range of dimensions related to staff well-being, including work-life balance, job satisfaction, support systems, workload and professional development opportunities. These questions will ensure that no critical aspect of staff well-being is overlooked through a holistic view, acknowledging that multiple factors contribute to how employees feel and function in their roles. This holistic perspective will recognise that staff well-being is not solely determined by one specific factor but is influenced by a combination of corresponding elements. The researcher must ensure that the questions address a range of dimensions; this ensures that the researcher can capture the experiences and perspectives of a diverse group of staff members. Different individuals may prioritise different aspects of well-being, and the questions can accommodate these varying viewpoints, making the study more inclusive and representative. Focusing on multiple dimensions of staff well-being reduces the risk of bias or a skewed representation of the overall well-being landscape. If the questions were narrowly focused on one or two aspects, critical factors influencing staff well-being might be overlooked, leading to incomplete or misleading conclusions. A comprehensive set of focused questions enables the researcher to identify specific areas of concern or areas where staff well-being could be enhanced. The results can inform targeted interventions and improve organisational policies and practices to support staff better.

A copy of these questions can be found in Appendix B for reference. The focus group discussion will be recorded and transcribed for the researcher to provide an accurate account of the discussion; this will ensure that no valuable information or insights are missed during the data collection.

Finally, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the Chair of Governors of two cluster schools and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of both schools. The semi-structured interview approach will combine structured and unstructured elements to balance flexibility and a predefined set of questions based on the information gathered from the questionnaires, focus groups, and the research question. The participants have been chosen as they are also developing a well-being framework for their own school and have undertaken the same training as the researcher.

Ethical considerations are paramount when an insider researcher undertakes any research within their organisation (Costley et al., 2010). Being an insider, the researcher, who is also the school's headteacher, is responsible for carefully managing potential conflicts of interest. It is crucial to maintain objectivity and ensure unbiased reporting of research findings. This requires a balance between the dual roles of a researcher and a school leader, ensuring that the research process remains fair, transparent and free from any undue influence that could compromise the integrity of the study (Sikes & Pots, 2008). All staff will provide consent and be reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Due to the topic's sensitivity, staff members will also be informed of the counselling service offered by the school. All information and names identifying participants will be removed to ensure confidentiality. All data will be stored using a password system. Clear communication and ongoing dialogue with staff will foster trust and promote a collaborative and ethical research process. This will lead to valuable insights for improving staff well-being in the primary school setting.

Findings

Whilst undertaking research with a mixed-methods approach, it is essential that quantitative and qualitative data collection methods are studied. This project collected quantitative data using questionnaires featuring the Likert Scale (Pell, 2005). The quantitative data collected from the questionnaires was used to design the questions for the focus group.

Qualitative data was gathered through a focus group, enabling in-depth discussions with staff members to explore their understanding, perceptions, and challenges concerning well-being within their primary educational setting. As explained previously in this paper, given that the researcher is not only an insider researcher but also the school's headteacher where the qualitative and quantitative data were being collected, the Area of Learning Lead (AoLE) for Well-Being was asked to lead the group and collect the data. This would ensure there were no concerns or lack of objectivity when collecting and analysing the data. The

researcher also collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with senior leaders and a Chair of Governors from two cluster schools.

Using qualitative and quantitative data through questionnaires, a focus group and semi-structured data collection helped increase the reality and credibility of the results through research triangulation (Noble and Heale, 2019).

The initial part of the project was to introduce to the school staff at the researcher's school to the Welsh Government's guidance framework for embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being, which is now statutory for all schools. (Welsh Government 2021). The framework aims to create a nurturing environment that promotes mental, social and emotional health within the school community. The researcher plays a pivotal role in developing this framework within their own educational setting, having undergone specialised training with a company called 'Perform and Grow,' which supported schools in developing the framework. The work undertaken with 'Perform and Grow' served as a stimulus for the researcher by forming a research-driven approach to identifying how to support the well-being and mental health of staff in the primary sector.

Findings from the Questionnaires

Following the work undertaken with 'Perform and Grow,' the project's second stage was to accumulate quantitative data through a questionnaire to determine the opinions among staff regarding the well-being within the school environment. Twenty-two of twenty-five staff members initially provided consent; however, seventeen participants (twelve teachers and five support staff, members) participated in the questionnaire. All participants were willing to engage in the research project, with many asking to be fully involved in developing and creating The Well-being Framework.

The variance between the number of individuals who provided consent and those who participated in the research could be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, as the researcher is an insider and the headteacher, school staff may have felt uncomfortable sharing their views and opinions due to potential bias or fear of consequences (Sikes & Potts, 2008).

A secondary reason could be related to the sensitivity of the topic itself. Some staff members may have felt uncomfortable providing sensitive information about their own well-being and mental health, leading them to withdraw from the research.

Furthermore, time-restraints and staff members' personal circumstances may have impacted completing the questionnaire.

Central to obtaining the correct data from the questionnaires, it was evident from the literature review that shifting our perspective on well-being and mental health towards accentuating the more positive and functional aspects of our lives is the key to making changes. (Perma and Seligman, 2011) By following the PERMA method, twelve questions were created to allow an inclusive space for participants to reflect on their well-being and mental health within their educational setting. Using this approach, the researcher felt that the participants would be more likely to engage in the questionnaire as the questions would resonate with their experiences. This strategy will likely lead to more meaningful and accurate data.

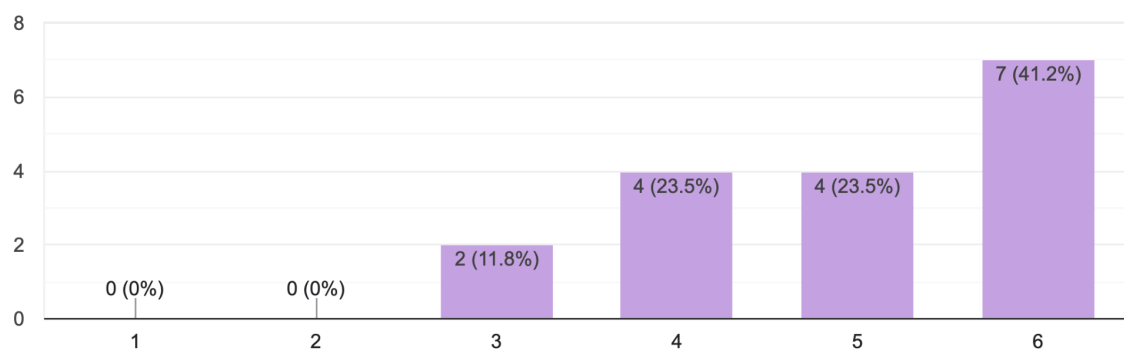
The questions were structured using a 7-point Likert scale. Each question was carefully structured to allow staff to select the option that best aligned with their experience or point of view. This method of collecting data enhances the depth of the data collected. It allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the staff members' perspectives on well-being and mental health within the setting. The full results of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix section of the research paper. Appendix B

The overall outcomes and compiled data from the questionnaire highlighted a positive trajectory and a favourable picture. The analysis shows a remarkable consensus among the staff, with an overwhelming 94.1% of the staff expressing agreement or a strong agreement across all twelve questions, which were crafted positively using the principles of the PERMA method.

Questions one and two were designed to expressly address the active involvement of staff members and the establishment of effective communication procedures within the school environment. The focus of the questions was to discover the extent to which staff felt confident to contribute to the different aspects of the schools' operations and policies.

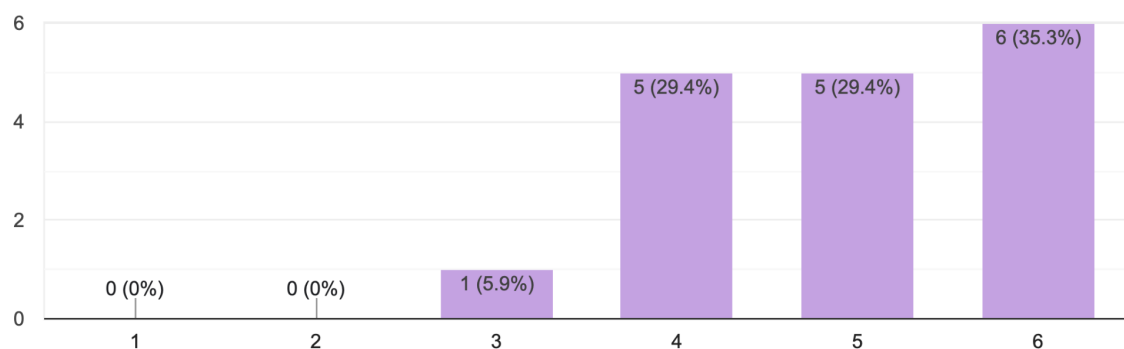
I feel that I can contribute to whole school decisions that impacts on school life.

17 responses



I feel that the school communicates effectively so that I am kept up to date with what is happening.

17 responses

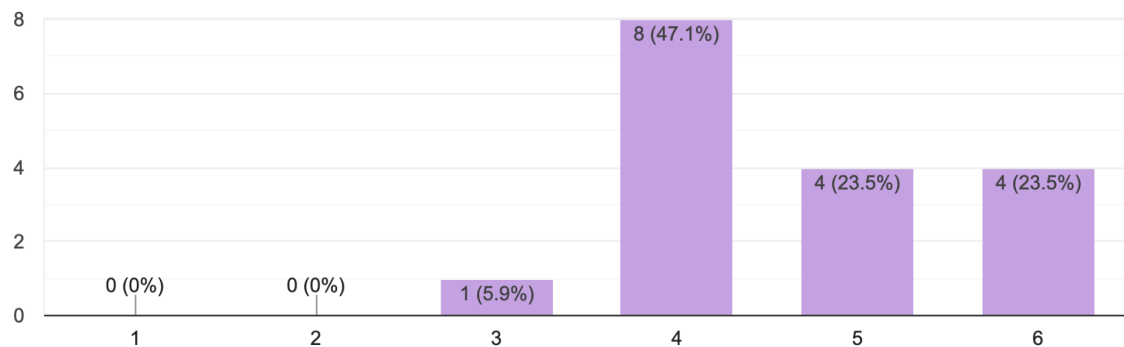


The data obtained for questions one and two showed a positive trend. The findings indicated that, on average, 91.1% of the staff who completed the survey expressed a sense of value and security in their respective roles in the school. The results may highlight a strong perception that many staff feel empowered to contribute to the various parts of school life. This links to the PERMA model (2011), highlighting the importance of effective collaboration and a whole-school approach with a shared mission. The data also shows a small proportion of staff (5.9%) disagreed with the concept that they possess the same confidence level in contributing to the school environment or experiencing effective communication. This highlights the importance of recognising different views within the staff cohort. Although most of the staff feel confident and well-informed, it is essential to recognise some individuals would benefit from support to help foster engagement within the school.

Questions three and four asked participants to reflect on their workload, addressing two crucial aspects: whether they perceived their workload as appropriate and if they believed they had adequate time to complete tasks.

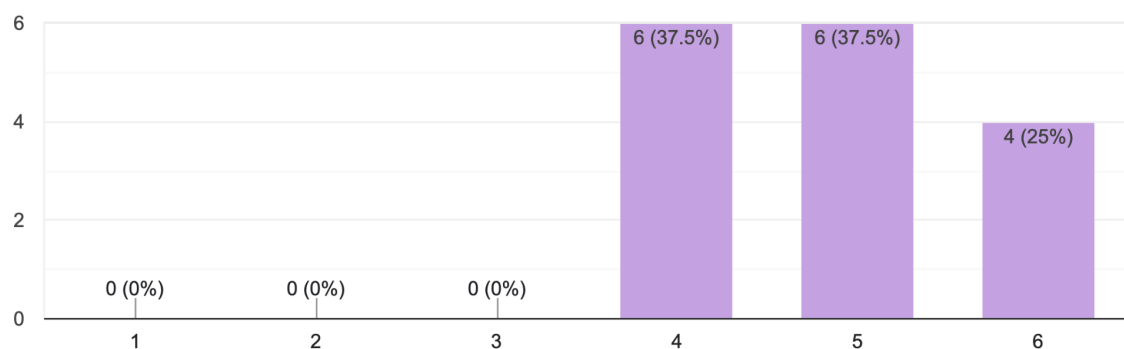
I feel my workload is appropriate.

17 responses



I feel that I have adequate time to complete tasks set by the school.

16 responses



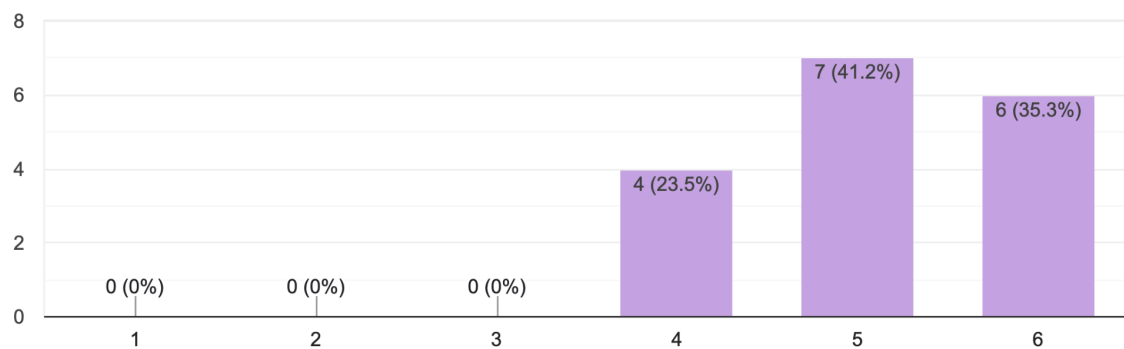
The results were very positive and intriguing, especially in light of current circumstances. Schools in Wales are currently navigating a challenging phase marked by implementing a new curriculum and assessment strategies, which innately created workload demands (Thomas, et al., 2023). Despite this, the results showed a reassuringly positive outcome from staff. 94.1% of the participants felt strongly or above that their workload was appropriate, with 100% feeling they had adequate time to complete tasks. This may suggest that staff have a remarkable ability to manage effectively increased responsibilities. This also

demonstrates the staff's resilience in responding to evolving educational changes and landscape.

Questions five, six and seven of the questionnaires directed participants toward the pivotal aspects of professional development and skill set. Informed by the research from The Educational Solidarity Network (2021), which highlights that more suitable training and professional development would improve well-being across six nations, these questions resonated deeply with the researcher.

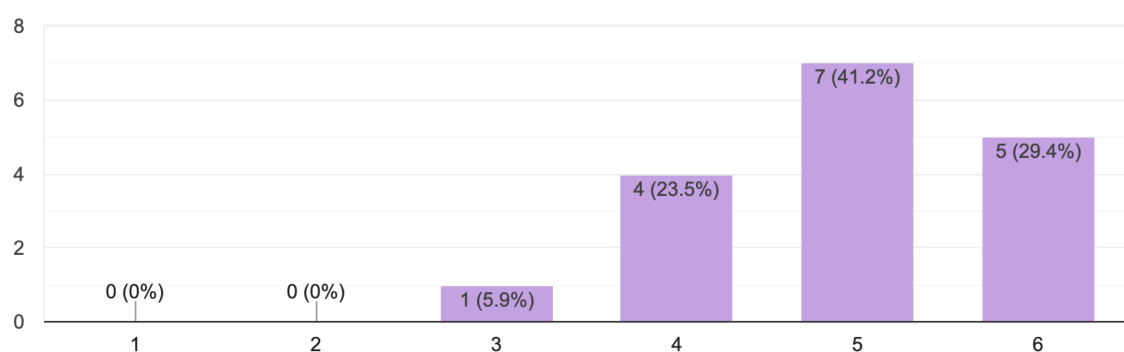
I feel that I have the correct skills to undertake my role.

17 responses



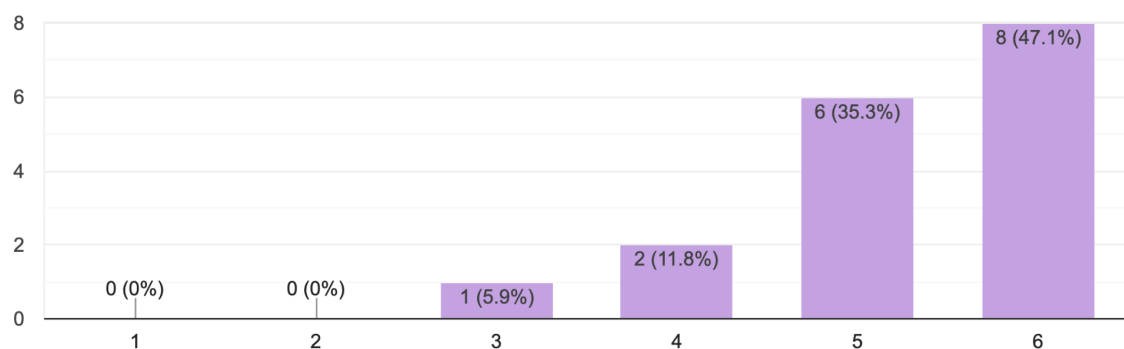
I feel that the correct professional development is provided by the school to allow me to do my job.

17 responses



I feel that the school recognises my skills and uses them effectively.

17 responses



Here, the researcher wanted staff to consider and reflect on three essential elements of their role. Firstly, whether they possessed the accurate educational skills to complete their role; secondly, whether the school provided the correct professional development to support their position; and lastly, whether the school recognised and used their skills effectively. The questions were designed to understand staff members' well-being and fulfilment in their professional capacities.

The data for these questions is highly positive. 100 % of the staff felt confident they had the right skills and experience needed to undertake their role in the school environment. Research shows that staff members who feel confident in their work gain greater job satisfaction and well-being (DfE, 2019). Guaranteeing that staff have the appropriate skills ensures they are confident to provide high-quality education, leading to better outcomes for pupils.

Here, it must be noted that in the participant's school, there has been, throughout the past year, a meticulously designed professional development programme focusing on the new developments within education. In formulating question six, the researcher's objective was to determine and evaluate the impact arising from the programme. The overall results were encouraging, with the exception of just one staff member; the data demonstrates the participants felt the professional development offered was in line to meet their needs. This may indicate a symbiotic relationship between well-being and good professional development within the school.

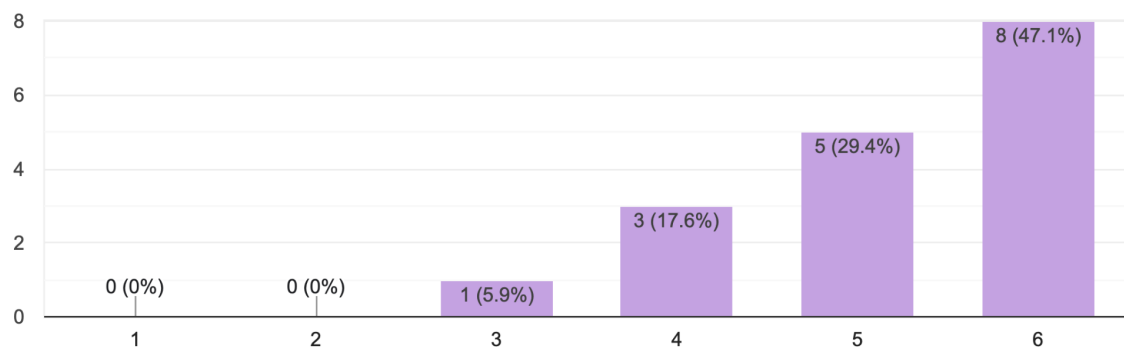
In the concluding part of the questionnaire, encompassing questions eight to twelve, the researcher aimed to thoroughly gauge the perceived safety and support levels among staff

within the school environment. Within posing these questions, it was vital for the researcher to establish the extent of support staff members perceived in terms of maintaining a work-life balance, their sense of safety and security within the premises, the nature of interpersonal relationships within the school community, the degree of support from the senior leadership team and most importantly the awareness among staff regarding avenues of obtaining assistance in the event their health impacts their professional commitments.

These questions were instrumental in assessing staff well-being and highlighting factors that contribute to fostering a supportive and conducive school environment.

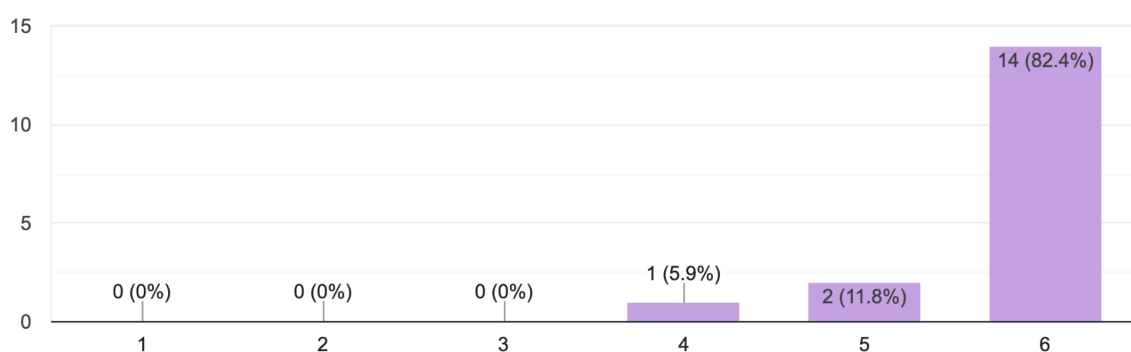
I believe I have the support from the school to ensure I have a work life balance.

17 responses



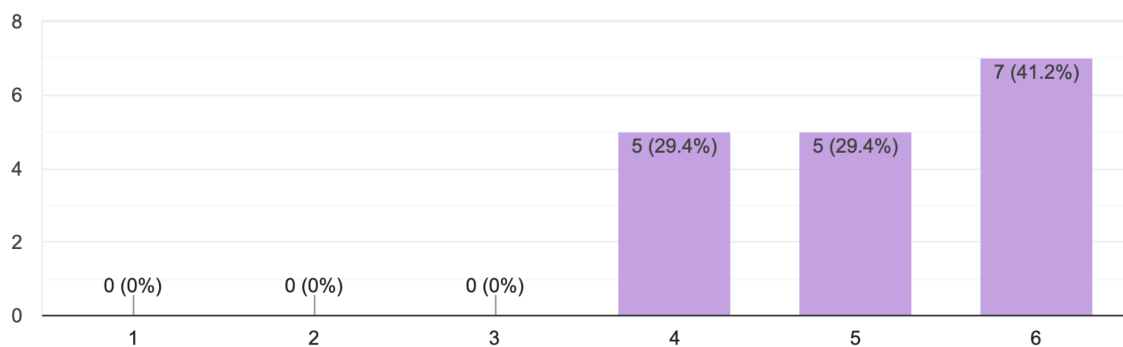
I feel safe at school and within my learning environment.

17 responses



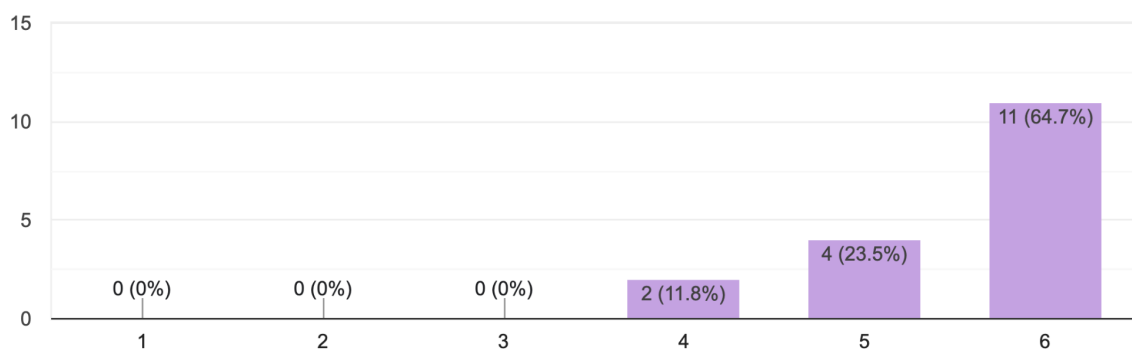
I feel that the school encourages positive relationships, and the social relationships in the school are good.

17 responses



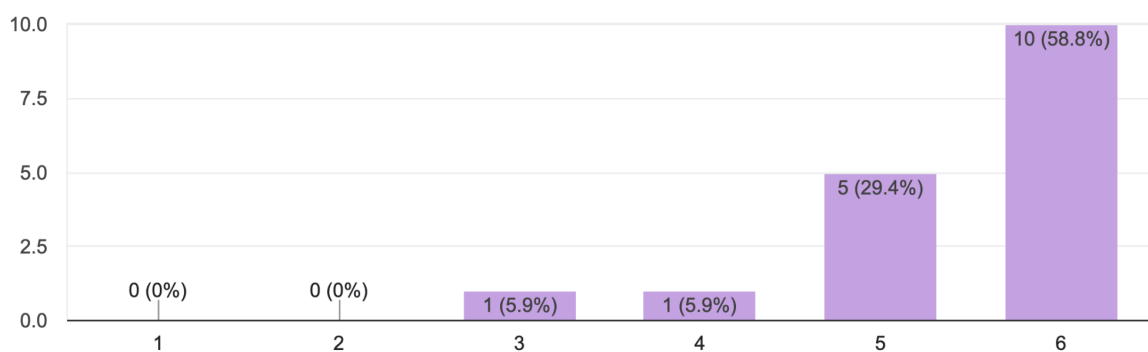
If I approached a member of SLT with concerns, I am confident that I would be well supported.

17 responses



I know where I can gain support if my health impacts me doing my job.

17 responses



Once again, the data set has indicated positive outcomes, demonstrating that most participants experienced a heightened sense of safety and support within their working environment. The data also suggests a recognition of the resources available to staff if they face challenges that impact their working day.

While it remains acknowledged that questionnaires are subjective interpretations of individuals' experiences and perceptions, the responses from the seventeen staff members who completed the questionnaire are notably positive. Sixteen participants indicated positive outcomes, offering invaluable insights into their primary setting, well-being, and mental health considerations. These results align with the researchers' reference drawing from The Department of Health (2014, p.14), which states well-being as "feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual's experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values."

Undoubtedly, a more extensive dataset would have further enriched the analysis by providing the opportunity to explore contrasting viewpoints and potentially uncover any divergent perspectives. The researcher will consider these insights as they proceed with their findings, analysing the intricate relationship between well-being, professional environments and the perceptions that shape them.

Findings from the Focus Group

Following the analysis of the questionnaire results, which engaged the staff members in responding via a Likert scale, the researcher embarked on a pivotal phase to delve deeper into the staff's understanding of well-being and the conceptual internal and external influences that shape the school environment. A central focus was establishing how these influences resonate in their individual experiences and collectively amongst their colleagues.

An equally important part of the research was to explore the impact between staff well-being and pupil outcomes. This aims to show the link between staff's good mental health and well-being and the broader educational progress of pupils within the school environment.

Initially, the researcher intended to undertake two focus groups of five participants, each taken from a cross-section of staff within the school. Unfortunately, only one focus group session transpired due to staff sickness and the constraints of staff cover. This focus group comprised of eight staff members: five class teachers, two Learning Support Officers (LSOs), and the administration manager. Of the five teachers, one staff member was part of the

Senior Leadership Team with a Teaching and Learning responsibility. These staff members were selected to obtain a broader perspective and in-depth idea of well-being across the school.

In determining the participants for the study, the researcher also wanted to consider the timescales of staff working at the school. One staff member within the focus group had worked at the school for thirty years, while one had only been there four months. By including both long-term and recently joined staff members, a broader spectrum of experiences, perspectives, and historical contexts can lead to more robust findings.

Recognising the importance of an array of perspectives, the researcher acknowledged the significance of including the staff member who disagreed with many of the aspects of the questionnaire. Asking them to attend would allow them to articulate their concerns and voice suggestions on well-being within the school. The researcher aimed to ensure that a comprehensive collection of viewpoints could be openly explored by offering a conducive space where staff can engage in thoughtful conversation.

The collaborative efforts of the researcher and the Well-Being lead within the school created fifteen comprehensive questions intended for inquiry within the focus group. While there was initial deliberation over the number of questions, the eventual outcome surpassed expectations. The result was an engaging interaction that enriched the researcher's understanding of the intricate aspects of well-being within the school setting. A copy of the focus group questions can be found in Appendix B.

The discussion was recorded and transcribed to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the data collection. The researcher chose this method to safeguard the authenticity of the staff.

Initially, staff were invited to provide their personal interpretations of how they would define staff well-being and why it was essential in the school environment. A unanimous thread emerged as all participants provided definitions aligned closely with the Department of Health's definition of 'well-being'. There was a strong consensus among the staff that 'happiness' was pivotal to staff well-being.

All participants explained the crucial role of a positive working environment in nurturing well-being. It was clear from the discussion that the emphasis on active listening and open communication with each other was central to a good working environment. There was also

a strong belief that a shared connection between staff empowers them to share ideas and discuss concerns that bolster their overall well-being. It was transparent from the staff's viewpoints that they all had a comparable perception of why well-being was essential in a primary school.

Several noticeable themes emerged in analysing the data derived from the questions centred on the factors influencing their well-being. These themes stood prominently within the data set. The first and most prominent of these themes revolve around the dimension of time. During the discussion, two of the teaching staff explained that several years ago, the school changed its working day, which resulted in the school day ending fifteen minutes earlier. Although this did not directly impact teachers' directed time of 1252 hours (School Teachers Pay and Conditions, 2022), a consultation was held to examine the working hours of the Learning Support Staff.

The outcome of the consultation was an adjustment to the LSOs' working hours, aligning them with the altered school day. This strategic move was to optimise the school budget as, at the time, the school was carrying a deficit budget. The two teachers noted that the change of hours for the LSOs meant there was no dedicated time in the morning or at the end of the school day for collaborative discussions on planning or pupil progress. This, in turn, had an impact on their well-being. One of the LSOs echoed this sentiment and shared their experience of enhanced stress by a lack of essential teacher-LSO interaction. These findings align with those highlighted in the OECD working paper on well-being (OECD, 2020), underlying these issues within a broader educational context.

Another notable concern related to time links to the non-contact time allocated to staff. All teachers receive Planning, Preparation and assessment time (PPA);

“PPA time must be provided in units of not less than half an hour during the school's timetabled teaching week and must amount to not less than 10% of the teacher's timetabled teaching time.” School Teachers Pay and Conditions (2022).

Two staff members reflected upon a period when the school was accustomed to conducting several weekly assemblies, which had now been reduced to one whole school assembly. The reason behind the decreased school assemblies was to allow more allocated teaching time for the pupils. The staff explained that reducing assembly times provided them with fewer opportunities for preparation and marking time. This highlights the pivotal role staff feel

non-contact time plays in developing a conducive working environment and nurturing staff well-being.

The second influential factor interwoven with staff well-being and mental health is closely linked with the dimension of time. Two staff members discussed the implementation of initiatives preceding the last two years. As previously highlighted, Wales has navigated through a transformation phase with one of its most significant changes in education, resulting in a substantial shift in school curriculum pedagogy. The two members explained their challenges while grappling with the weight of these recent changes. This was evidently highlighted by one member of staff who explained,

“We haven’t got time to implement or review the impact, and actually, I find that sometimes what is implemented and discussed isn’t necessarily from a class teacher’s point of view; it’s made by somebody that isn’t always in class.”

Here, this staff member is clearly trying to highlight the disparity between the decision-making process and on-the-ground reality in the classroom.

Although three participants articulated that the changes introduced were necessary in line with the school’s vision, there was a unified belief among the participants that there needs to be a settlement period to allow all new policies, procedures and changes to be embedded. Allowing this dedicated period may empower staff members to adjust and refine their professional approaches and practice.

Another significant discussion was when a staff member delved into the sensitive topic of providing robust support for colleagues who may be struggling with mental health challenges. The staff member recognised the school’s commendable practice of assisting and supporting staff when awareness of someone being unwell came to light. However, the participant suggested that

“this only happens once a distressing situation is explicitly recognised and when the staff member has asked for support.”

Although it was acknowledged that recognising when someone is struggling with their well-being or mental health can be difficult, the staff member advocated for a more proactive stance, suggesting the significance of early intervention and consistent support to mitigate potential challenges. A further discussion among the participants indicated that the school

may benefit from having several staff members who are Mental Health First Aiders. Allowing this would provide a culture of awareness and readiness to those facing mental health challenges. This discussion highlights the critical issues raised in the 'School and College Staff Wellbeing Document' (DfE, 2019) of creating an atmosphere of ongoing support where staff members are attuned to each other's well-being, are equipped to provide the required emotional and social well-being of their colleagues but also for themselves.

The fourth and final theme linked to pupil behaviour affecting well-being in the school environment. Interestingly, the literature review provided limited specific evidence directly relating to the impact of pupil behaviour on staff well-being. Nonetheless, the research does offer insight into a correlation that behaviour in the classroom tends to deteriorate when a teacher's own well-being is compromised (Jonathan Glazzard and Dr Anthea Rose, 2019).

Participants notably shared observations regarding pupil behaviour within the researcher's school through the discussion. The overall agreement was that the behaviour climate in the school was positive. However, a recognition emerged that the presence of certain high-tariff pupils can be very challenging. One staff member expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the school's behaviour policy, particularly in addressing the needs of the staff encountering challenging pupils.

Specifically, the staff member's viewpoint stemmed from an apprehension that the school's support mechanism (the Senior Leadership Team might not be sufficiently comprehensive). The staff member felt that the disciplinary measures employed by the school were inadequately stringent and that the duration of time the child was removed from the class was insignificant.

One of the questionnaire items prompted the staff to consider the potential impact of staff well-being on pupil outcomes, inviting them to provide relevant examples or anecdotes. This aspect proved to be particularly intriguing due to the limited extent of discussion it generated.

There was a general consensus from the participants that children may be influenced by a teacher's mood when the teacher's well-being is not satisfactory. Earlier in the discussion, it had been acknowledged that introducing new initiatives within the school could potentially affect the well-being of pupils and staff. However, the discussion did not delve into specific aspects related to pupil progress.

Significantly, the lead for well-being did not delve further into this question. Consequently, as a researcher, it becomes challenging to ascertain whether the participants truly grasped the potential linkage between staff well-being and pupil outcomes (Jonathan Glazzard and Dr Anthea Rose, 2019). This presents an area that warrants a more comprehensive exploration and discussion in order to clarify the intricacies of this relationship.

A wealth of invaluable insights unfolded throughout the fifteen questions, offering the researcher a profound perspective on the participants' well-being and the broader school environment. It was apparent that participants regarded positive elements regarding staff well-being within the school's context. They expressed a tangible sense of support deriving from the modifications made by the new leadership team.

Participants also described an environment where staff could speak up and raise concerns. A specific reference was made to a noticeable incident during the Spring Term when several requests related to pupil progress had left a significant portion of staff feeling overwhelmed. This issue was diligently brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership team, resulting in their acknowledgement of the excessive demands placed on staff. In response, they pledged to refine the 'Monitoring, Evaluation and Review' cycle to prevent this from recurring.

Furthermore, the discussion revealed a sense of positivity underpinning the school's ethos. Staff members reported a profound sense of belonging, perceiving themselves as part of a very close team. It was evident that robust interpersonal connections and a culture of mutual support permeated the school. Participants also alluded to noteworthy initiatives such as whole school training days, which included provisions such as staff lunches, secret buddy schemes and changes to the lunch hour to ensure staff receive their allocated times, which are all symbolic of the school's commitment to nurturing staff well-being. These findings agree with the favourable outcomes derived from the well-being questionnaire.

Findings from the Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a select cohort of participants consisting of four senior leaders and the Chair of Governors representing two schools within the researchers' cluster of schools. These schools were intentionally selected due to their engagement with the Perform and Grow training program and their active involvement in developing the Well-Being Framework as mandated by the Welsh Government (Welsh Government 2021). The questions were derived from the outcomes emerging from the previously conducted focus group discussion, ensuring a coalition between what was

discovered through the focus group and questionnaires. A copy of these interview questions can be found in Appendix B for reference.

The interpretation of Well-being and its significance within the school context was evident among the participants, reflecting a unity with both perspectives expressed by the focus group participants and the established definition of well-being outlined by 'The Department of Health'. One participant noted that

“happiness and being well are the most important things in life!”

The interviews revealed that both schools were on different stages in their journeys towards improving well-being within their respective school environment and are in the very early stages of developing the framework. In one of the schools, a comprehensive staff-wide survey was conducted to determine the overall well-being of the school community. The findings mirrored some of the recurring themes identified in the researcher's prior focus group.

Within this school, staff members expressed concerns regarding the heightened workload generated by implementing the new curriculum. Specific emphasis was placed on the challenges associated with adapting to these changes, encompassing the complexities of curriculum planning and the formation of assessment policies. These changes correlate to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Welsh Education system produced by the Welsh Government (2022).

Additionally, the interviews referenced the concerns related to pupil behaviour and the perceived absence of adequate measures to address the lack of supportive measures for disruptive behaviour within the classroom.

The second school explained an alternative approach to acquiring well-being within their environment. During a dedicated staff training day, staff members engaged in collaborative team-based discussion to create strategies for enhancing well-being within their context. They used a training day to discuss in teams how they could improve well-being in their school. Here, the findings differed significantly from the discoveries from the researchers' research and the other participating schools.

In this school, staff members expressed preferences and priorities for improving their well-being. This encompassed a desire for comforts such as coffee machines and comfortable seating arrangements in their staff room, the provision of dedicated time off

school to write end-of-year reports and a focus team building skills during training days. These preferences contrast the well-being strategies identified in the previous research and demonstrate the distinctive approaches that school settings may adopt in addressing staff well-being.

The consensus among participants consolidated that effectively managing the well-being of the entire staff within a primary school presents a formidable challenge. The demands of the current changes to the education system in Wales exacerbate this challenge. Participants' uniformity expressed a general sentiment that there is a lack of support or recognition for well-being, particularly concerning headteachers' well-being during the COVID period.

This sentiment corroborates research conducted by Swansea University that identifies the necessity of embracing a more strategic approach to bolstering the well-being of educational leaders in Wales, as articulated in The Covid-19 Senior Leadership Study Report (2022).

The schools have yet to implement any well-being assessment toolkits, such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), to monitor or evaluate staff well-being systematically. However, one participating school expressed a tentative inclination towards introducing the WEMWBS in the next academic year. There was a prevailing sentiment that such a toolkit could be an administrative exercise that could lack substantial impact on staff well-being.

The researcher inquired with the participants about their perceptions of the effects of staff well-being on pupil outcomes and if they had gathered any evidence related to this. It emerged from the discussions that the participants had yet to undertake specific research in this area.

However, all participants provided examples within their respective schools where pupils' learning progress appeared to be compromised, and disruptive behaviour amongst pupils was evident if staff struggled with their own well-being and mental health.

Significantly, there was a clear theme across the schools: staff members grappling with mental health were predominately affected by the transformation in the educational landscape. These individuals found themselves significantly challenged in terms of shifting their perspectives and adapting new pedagogical approaches aligned with these changes.

The researcher was particularly interested in how the Governing Body could actively promote well-being within the Primary school. In light of the substantial reductions in school

budgets, participants articulated a responding consensus that staff well-being deserves a heightened concerted effort from both governors and school leaders. Predominantly, the discussion focused on strategies to help develop and implement the school well-being framework. This entailed proactively allocating financial resources earmarked for staff access to well-being initiatives.

Professional development emerged as a vital issue of these discussions, focusing on providing staff opportunities to undertake stress management training and mental health awareness. A further recurrent thread was recognising the importance of Governors contributing to the school ethos that is supportive and positive, wherein staff members feel valued and respected. It was also emphasised that the Governing body should institute a mechanism to regularly review and evaluate the well-being initiatives implemented within the school.

Conclusion

This research was initiated to examine strategies to support staff well-being and the mental health of staff members in the context of primary education. As the investigation progressed, its focus evolved to investigate the barriers that affect staff members' mental health and well-being. This transformation in the research affords the researcher a comprehensive outline of the challenges and pressures that have afflicted staff members working in primary schools in Wales over recent years and in the present day. The findings have laid the groundwork for further research to be undertaken by the researcher at a late date.

Despite its limited scope, the project is a valuable opportunity for the researcher to develop their analytical capabilities in data collection, encompassing qualitative and quantitative data utilising a mixed methodology approach.

The key themes that were evident from the research are as follows:

Leadership and Governance: The leadership team and the Governing Body must foster a positive school ethos and culture where all staff feel valued, respected and empowered to contribute to formulating policy and procedures.

Effective Communication and Support Networks: Establishing open communication channels and a robust network for staff creates a transparent working environment that encourages staff members to seek assistance if needed.

Professional Development: Providing appropriate professional development opportunities is

vital to equip staff with the suitable skill set and knowledge to implement new educational changes effectively.

Protected time: Schools need to allocate time for collaborative discussions and planning. When teachers and LSOs work collaboratively, they can identify and address the specific needs of individual pupils.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are:

Expand Sample and Cluster School Analysis: To enhance the depth of understanding and improve well-being in education, increasing the sample size and including participants is recommended.

Formation of a Staff Well-being Group: Establishing a dedicated staff well-being group equipped with change management skills that can facilitate developing and implementing a purposeful and impactful framework to promote well-being across the school. This will include a focus on continued professional development, time management and embedding school policies.

Mental Health First Aid Training: Provide training for several staff members as Mental First Aiders can foster awareness and early intervention for those encountering mental health challenges.

Cluster School Approach: Develop a holistic approach involving all cluster schools to explore the correlation between mental health and well-being and pupil progress.

The insights obtained from this small-scale study represent the starting point of a substantial collaborative project among cluster schools to ensure the Well-being Framework has a powerful impact on staff wellbeing.

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APPENDIX A

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Ceri Littlewood			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Wales Academy for Professional Practice and Applied Research Institute of Management and Health			
4	Campus:	Carmarthen			
5	E-mail address:	c.littlewood@oldcastleprimary.co.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07973856605			
For students:					
7	Student Number:	1712942			
8	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice			
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Sarah Loxdale and Lowri Harris			

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	X	NO	☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): <i>Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval</i>	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
Institute Research Committee		☐			
Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative		X			

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	X
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	X
3	Costley, Elliott & Gibbs. (2010) Doing Work Based Research: Approaches to Enquiry for Insider-Researchers. Sage Publications	X

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution	N/A				
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	X	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	X	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	X
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	X

8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	X
9	Has permission to undertake the research been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	X	NO	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	X
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	How can we support staff well-being and mental health in primary education?		
2	Proposed start date:	January 2023	Proposed end date:	June 2022
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per question within this section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how Existing Research has informed the proposed activity and explain • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	Purposes of Research Activity <u>Background</u> In March 2020, COVID-19 changed the face of education; pupils, staff and families found themselves in an unprecedented situation. Home learning became the norm, pupils lost all contact with their teachers and friends, routines were changed, and new rules were introduced. Although schools are now showing signs of returning to some regular practices, the impact of the pandemic continues to be a fundamental issue for our school community. Alongside this, we are faced with the cost of living crisis. Many families struggle to heat their homes, feed their children or meet their basic needs.			

During the last two years, I recognise that we have focused heavily on the well-being of our pupils. Many changes were introduced, along with appointing two well-being champions to provide specialised interventions, a Family Engagement Office to support the reintegration of many pupils and our timetable was restructured to accommodate all our pupils.

Although ensuring all stakeholders' well-being is paramount, I recognise that some stakeholders have not had the same commitment to well-being as provided to our pupils. I am keen to introduce a whole school approach in line with the Wales Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) in Health and Wellbeing curriculum to ensure we identify the challenges we face today as a community. This ensures that pupils' well-being is recognised and staff, parents, governors and the wider community are also incorporated. For the purpose of this research, I will focus on staff well-being only.

Previous Research and Policy:

In 2021 Welsh Government (2021) provided a guidance document to develop a Framework for embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being, which is now statutory for all schools. The framework's purpose is to allow schools to address the well-being of the whole community. To recognise its strengths and weaknesses and build resilience and support.

Developing a whole school framework focusing on staff well-being will allow the researcher to focus on physical, cognitive, emotional and social well-being. Exploring how working conditions within a school setting in Wales, as set out in the Welsh Government Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework (2012) and other countries around the world, at both system and school levels, can impact and shape staff's well-being, both positively and negatively. Using International Research from the Educational and Solidary Network, which highlights the working conditions, health, and well-being of 8,000 staff in 6 countries, will help the researcher compare and contrast similarities and differences. (International Barometer on Education Personnel's Health and Well-being Summary Report 2021)

The researcher will also focus on the work carried out by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (Teachers' Well-being: A Framework for Data Collection And Analysis (2020). Using their comprehensive conceptual framework to analyse teachers' and support staff's occupational well-being and its linkages with quality teaching, healthier environments and how to have a more resilient workforce also focuses on three key areas in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Welsh Government (2015).

References

	Welsh Government (2021) <i>Framework for embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being.</i> Welsh Government (2012) <i>Emotional health and wellbeing Framework</i> Educational and Solidary Network (2021) International Barometer on Education Personnel's Health and Well-being Summary Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020) <i>Teachers' well-being: A Framework for Data Collection And Analysis</i> Welsh Government (2015). <i>Well-being of Future Generations Act</i>, (this box should expand as you type)
4	Research Question How can we support staff well-being and mental health in primary education? (this box should expand as you type)
5	Aims of Research Activity The aim is to focus on staff wellbeing to feed into a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity • To research, analyse and evaluate current practices. • To collect feedback through qualitative and quantitative data through surveys and focus groups. This will provide recommendations for implementing a future plan to promote well-being within the school environment. • To develop a staff well-being group that can use change management to implement a purposeful and meaningful plan. • To work with the Senior Leadership team of two cluster schools currently developing the same framework. This will allow me to identify similarities and differences between the schools and discuss which strategies they have implemented. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	<u>Methodology</u> The methodology is proposed to be mixed because this research is mainly concerned with people's opinions; it is primarily subjectivist in ontology and interpretivist in epistemology. There is a need to collect quantitative data (use of questionnaires using the Likert Scale) and use qualitative data (use of focus groups). <u>Participants from my own school</u>

	Participants will consist of fifteen teaching staff and ten support staff members, including two admin staff working within my school. All these staff will be provided with a questionnaire via Google Forms. <u>Methods</u> Survey: The purpose of the survey, using a questionnaire, is to identify the staff's current mindset and opinions of well-being in the school. The survey will use a Likert Scale with six options to ensure that participants do not always opt for the neutral or undefined option. The survey will take place before the focus group. Participants will be sent a Google Form asking them to fill in based on their current position. The research objective will be explained, and anonymity will be assured. All data from the survey can be analysed using a spreadsheet format with extended answers explored using a constructed matrix. Focus Groups: The purpose of the focus group is to ascertain the staff's understanding of emotional and mental health and well-being. The focus group will give staff a voice when considering the right path when devising a framework for the whole school. The staff will be met in groups of 5 from various areas across the school. The focus group will take place within the school environment. <u>Participants from Cluster Schools.</u> 3 Senior leaders and 1 Chair of Governors- from Penybont and Brackla Primary Schools. These participants will be asked several interview questions to ascertain similarities and differences between schools and the strategies implemented. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.		
8	Oldcastle Primary School. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g., from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also, specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research, then please state this.		
9	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	X

		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-the-essentials.pdf (gov.wales)	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	X	☐
13	A resilient Wales	X	☐
14	A healthier Wales	X	☐
15	A more equal Wales	☐	X ☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	X
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	X
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	X
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	A Prosperous Wales - Increased staff wellbeing and environment that will allow staff to feel valued will have a positive outcome. This will also, in turn, create a well-educated environment for the pupils. A Healthier Wales - Ensuring staff have the correct procedures, resources and support when unwell is vital to addressing short-term needs and preventing long-term sickness. A Resilient Wales - Allowing staff to work collaboratively to develop a framework for their own mental health and well-being allows them to feel valued. Staff involvement develops resilience and gives them the capacity to accept change. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	X	☐

2	Use of interviews?	X	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	X	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	X
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	X
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	X	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	X
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	X
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	X
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	X
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	X
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	X
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	X
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	X
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	X
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	X
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☐
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	X
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	X	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	X
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	X

5	Prisoners?	☐	X
6	Young offenders?	☐	X
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	X	☐
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	X
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☐
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	15 Class teachers, two who are Senior Leaders 10 Support Staff including 2 admin staff 3 Senior Leaders 1 Chair Of Governors (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be?	Teaching staff Senior Leaders (From the researcher's own school and two from cluster schools) Learning Support Staff Health and Safety Manager Admin Manager Chair of Governors (from a Cluster school) (this box should expand as you type)
12	How will you identify the participants?	All current staff members who work at the school will be asked to participate. (this box should expand as you type)

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	X	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	X	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	X	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	X	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	X	☐	☐

18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	X	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	X	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	X	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	X	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	X	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☐	X
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	X	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	X	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.	
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended? Yes ☐ No X	
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information	
	Risk to participants: No such issues are anticipated, and any arising will be dealt with using school policies and codes of practice <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: • All information will be stored on a secure file. • Questionnaires will be anonymous • To ensure staff feel comfortable in being open and honest, two well-being champions will undertake the focus group and feedback. • Individual information will not be shared with anyone in the organisation. • Due to the nature of the subject there may be some emotional distress. It will be made clear to staff that they do not have to take part in the research and can withdraw at any time. Staff have access to the private counselling provided by the

		school, and they will be reminded of this when they take part. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g., sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: No such issues are anticipated, and any arising will be dealt with using school policies and codes of practice <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> As the researcher is the line manager, there may be some emotional risk, the accusation of harm and conflict of interest. Throughout the process, the researcher will update the Chair of Governors and Health and Safety Manager on the findings, ensuring confidentiality at all times. The researcher also has access to the school's counselling service. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> The researcher will follow the ethical process of the university and ensure discussions with the school's chair of governors. Keep good contact with University Tutors. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	No such issues are anticipated, and any arising will be dealt with using school policies and codes of practice <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
Disclosure and Barring Service		

	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	X	☐	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available, please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.	1790978777		

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	It will be explained to participants within the introductory email that feedback on the outcomes of the research will be made available to them upon request. The framework will also provide further information. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	The purpose of the research will be explained to participants in the introductory email, and it will also be indicated clearly that participation is voluntary, with participation implying consent. Participation in the focus group and questionnaire will require participants to volunteer, and informed consent will be obtained via email from participants before taking place. It will be made clear that participants can withdraw from the process at any time during the research. Due to the nature of the topic, participants will also be reminded of the counselling service offered by the school. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how the anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	The use of online survey tools such as Google Forms ensures the anonymity of responses <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	<i>"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical,</i>	☐	X

	<i>physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.</i>		
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☐	X
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e., in paper form)?	☐	X
6	University computers?	☐	X
7	Private company computers?	X	☐
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	X
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	X	☐
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	X	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☐
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, and data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Google forms will be used to gain data, these will be stored on the researcher's Password Protected Drive and has two-factor authentication. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	X	☐

14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	X
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	X
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	X
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	X
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	X
19	Use of data management system?	☐	X
20	Data archiving?	☐	X
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	All data will be stored on Google Drive which is password protected and has two-factor authentication. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher only <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher only <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	Data generated by this research will be stored in the Google Cloud, which is password-protected and has two-factor authentication. All data will be erased/ destroyed once the analysis is complete, feedback has been given, and the project has been marked. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtss.ac.uk/). If so, please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	No <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtss.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	X

27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	X
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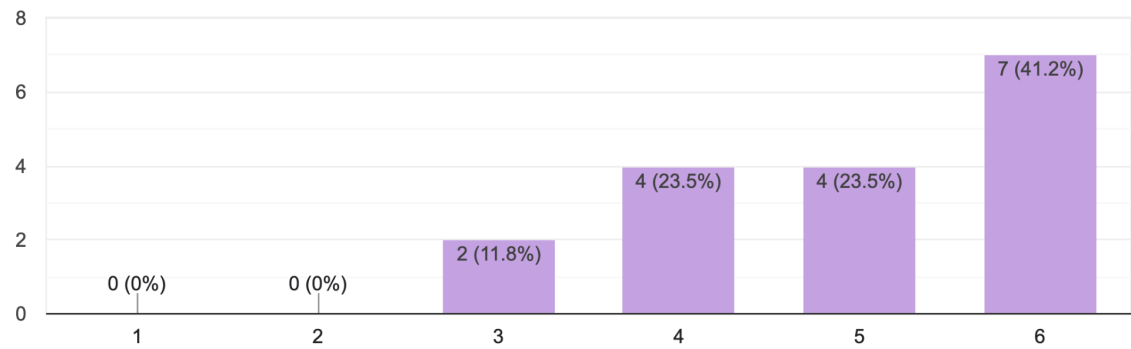
APPENDIX B

Focus Group Questions

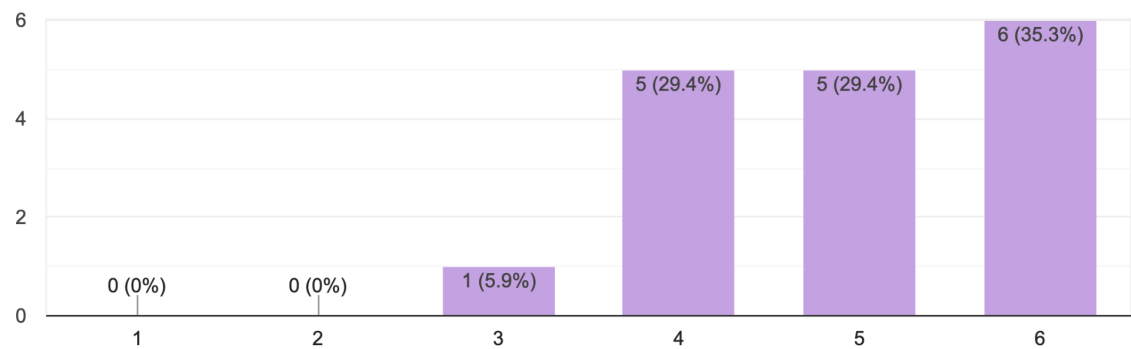
1. How would you define staff well-being, and why is it essential in the school environment?
2. What are the current challenges or stressors that impact your well-being as school staff members?
3. In your opinion, what are the key factors that contribute to a positive and supportive work environment for school staff?
4. How effectively do you believe the school administration addresses staff well-being? Are there any specific initiatives or programs in place?
5. What additional resources or support would you like to see implemented to improve staff well-being in the school?
6. How do you personally cope with stress and maintain your well-being within the school setting?
7. Are there any specific policies or practices within the school that you believe significantly impact staff well-being? If yes, please elaborate.
8. Have you witnessed any positive changes or improvements in staff well-being over time? If yes, what do you think contributed to those changes?
9. How well do you feel the school community supports one another's well-being? Are there any areas that need improvement?
10. Are there any particular professional development opportunities or training programs that you believe would benefit staff well-being?
11. In your experience, how do you think staff well-being affects pupil outcomes? Can you provide any examples or anecdotes?
12. Are there any external factors outside the school environment that impact staff well-being, and how can those be addressed or mitigated?
13. What role does school leadership play in promoting and fostering staff well-being?
14. Are there any specific strategies or initiatives from other schools or organisations that you think could be applied to improve staff well-being?
15. Looking ahead, what actions or changes do you believe would have the most significant positive impact on staff well-being in the school?

Quantative Data from the Staff Questionnaire

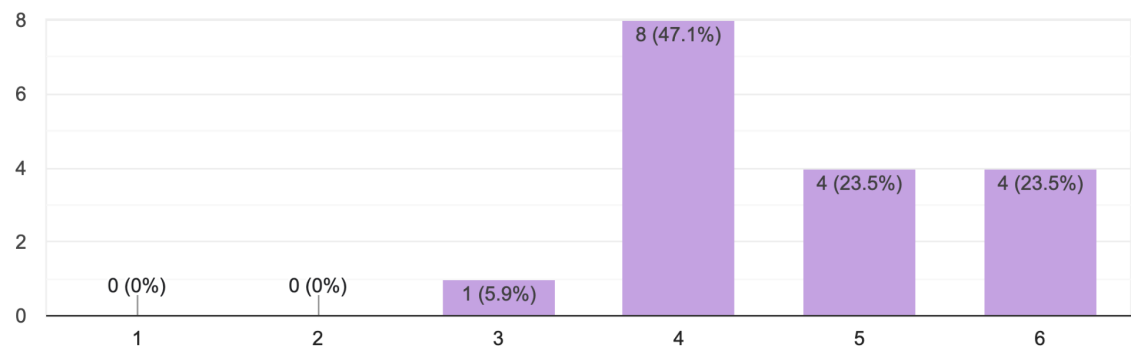
I feel that I can contribute to whole school decisions that impacts on school life.
17 responses



I feel that the school communicates effectively so that I am kept up to date with what is happening.
17 responses

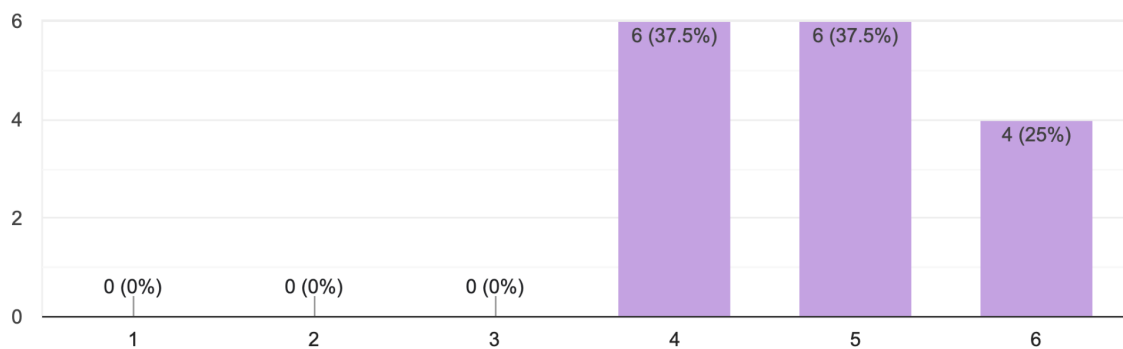


I feel my workload is appropriate.
17 responses



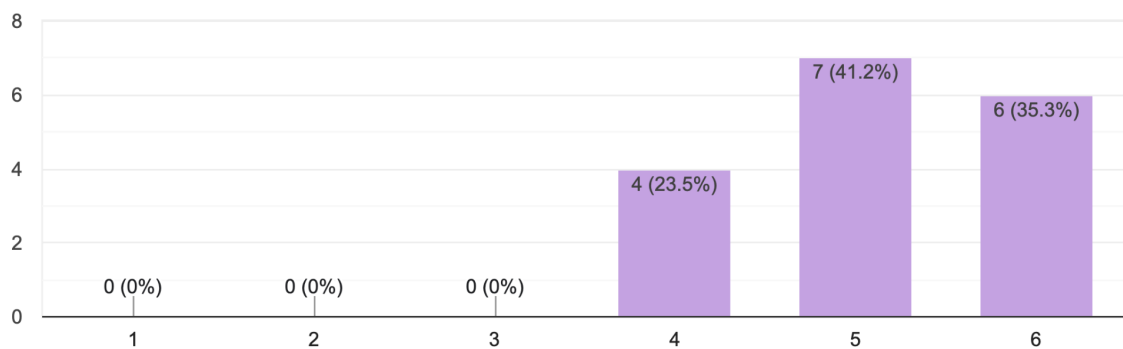
I feel that I have adequate time to complete tasks set by the school.

16 responses



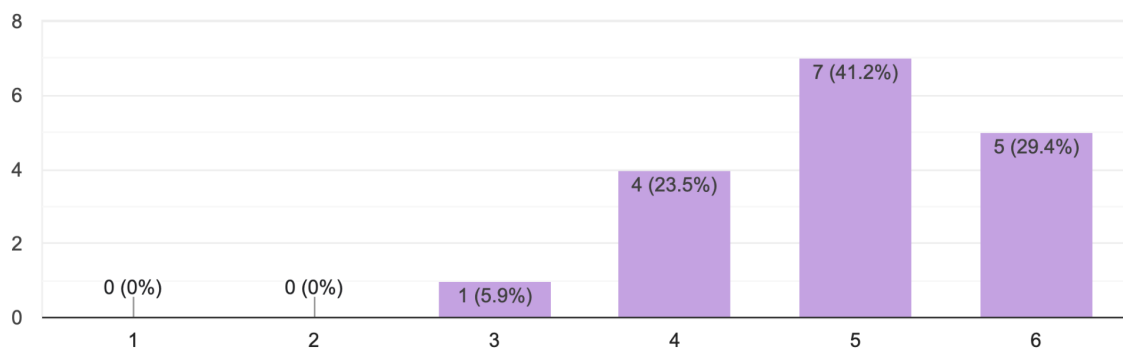
I feel that I have the correct skills to undertake my role.

17 responses



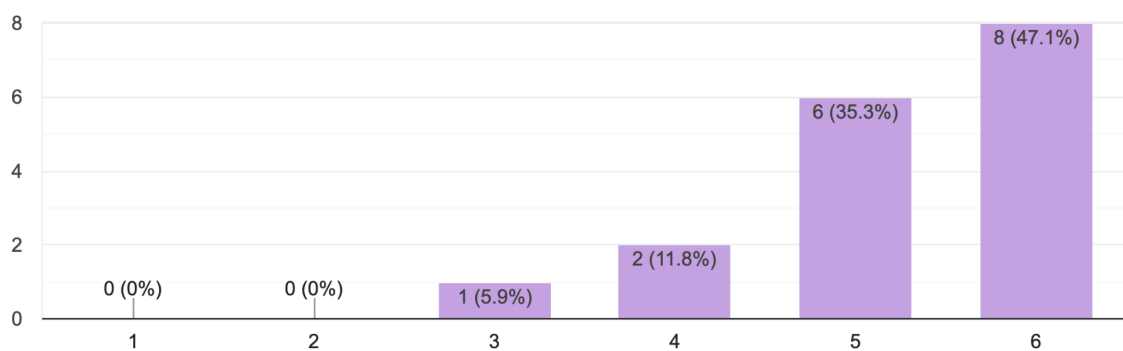
I feel that the correct professional development is provided by the school to allow me to do my job.

17 responses



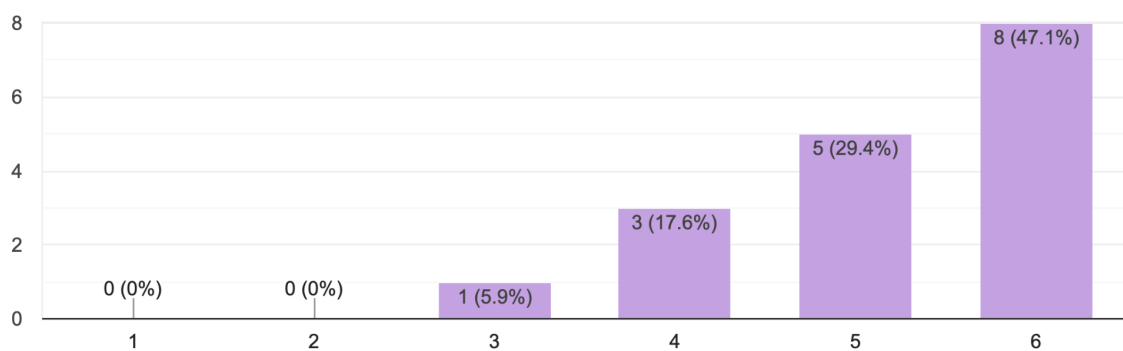
I feel that the school recognises my skills and uses them effectively.

17 responses



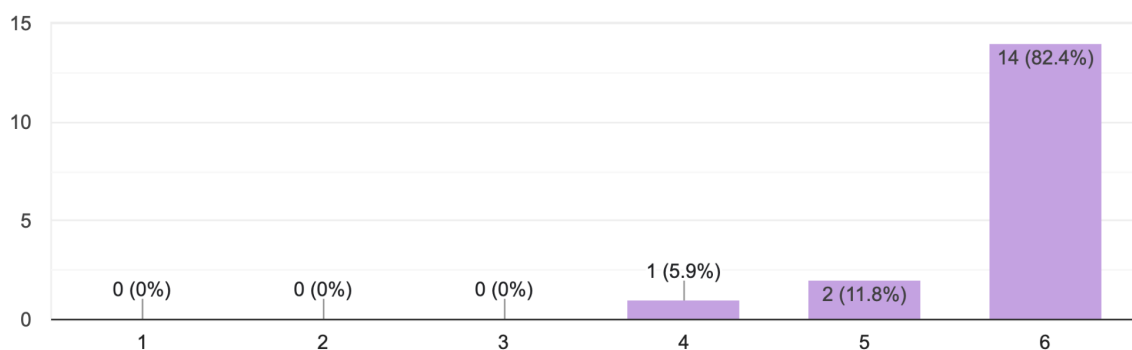
I believe I have the support from the school to ensure I have a work life balance.

17 responses



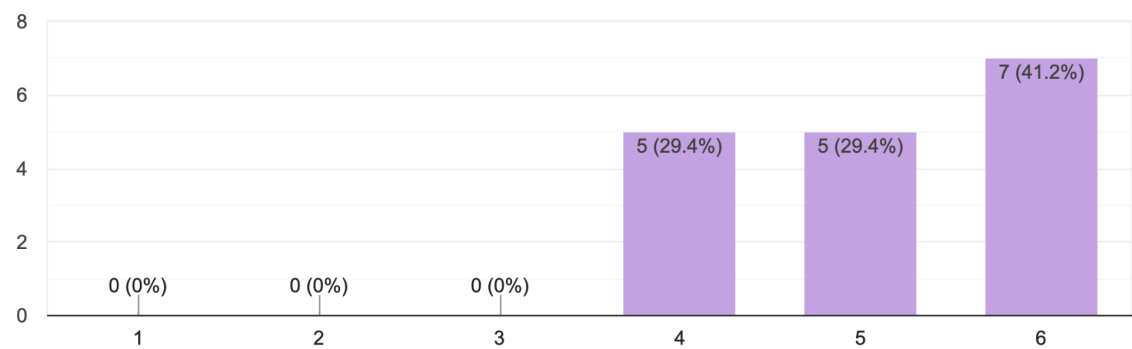
I feel safe at school and within my learning environment.

17 responses



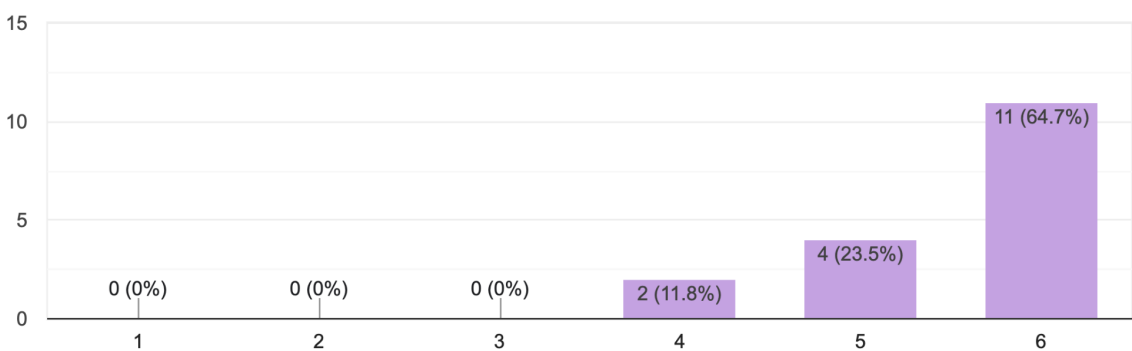
I feel that the school encourages positive relationships, and the social relationships in the school are good.

17 responses



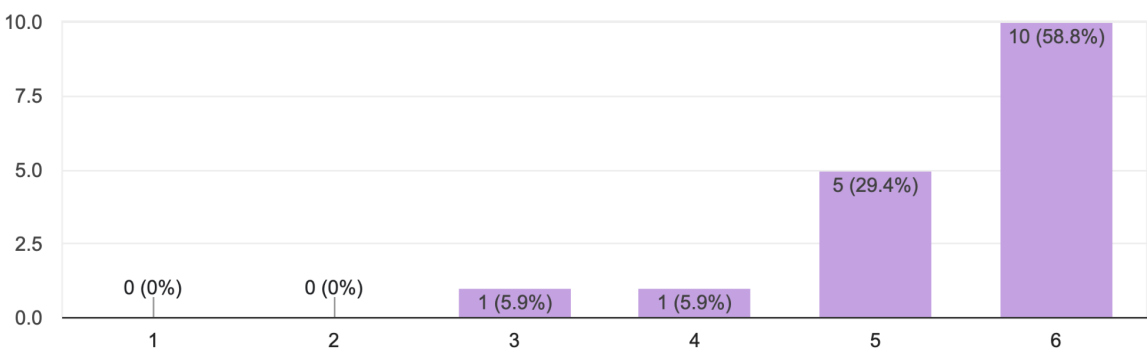
If I approached a member of SLT with concerns, I am confident that I would be well supported.

17 responses



I know where I can gain support if my health impacts me doing my job.

17 responses



Structured Interview Questions

1. How would you define staff well-being, and why is it essential in the school environment?
2. Are there any unique challenges or issues related to well-being that your school faces, and how do you address them?
3. What role does leadership play in fostering a culture of well-being within your school, and how do you ensure it's effectively communicated to staff and students?
4. Could you share some successful examples of well-being initiatives or programs that have positively impacted your school community?
5. How do you assess the effectiveness of your well-being initiatives? What metrics or indicators do you use to measure progress?
6. Are there any partnerships or collaborations with external organisations or experts?
7. How do you involve students, parents, and other stakeholders in shaping the well-being culture of your school?
8. In your experience, how do you think staff well-being affects pupil outcomes? Can you provide any examples or anecdotes?
9. Looking forward, what future plans or areas of improvement do you envision for the ongoing development of well-being within your school?
10. How does the governing body support the leadership team to develop well-being within the school?

APPENDIX C



4th September 2023

Re: Research Approval

Please accept this letter as approval for the Work-Based Learning Project undertaken by Ceri Littlewood for the final part of her Master's qualification in Professional Practice.

Oldcastle Primary School has approved her research focus, "How can we support staff wellbeing and mental health in primary education?" and is confident that all relevant ethical considerations have been accounted for.

Yours sincerely,

Damian Faulkner

*Chair of Governors
Oldcastle Primary School*

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