

Beaumaris North Primary School

- Celebrating achievement: six years of KidsMatter Primary

When Beaumaris North Primary School began its involvement with KidsMatter Primary in 2009, it began a journey into wellbeing with profound effects on interactions and activities in the school community.

In early February this year, the school was recognised nationally as a KidsMatter Primary school in a ceremony on its KidsMatter Day. This was a particular opportunity to highlight the theme of 'achievement' for the school, students and staff.

Jess Patane, one of two KidsMatter leaders in the school, explained:

“... We were all proud of what we had achieved in implementing KidsMatter Primary. We were really pleased to be officially recognised. And we wanted our students to celebrate an achievement. So we asked them all to bring an item, something that they had made or a skill they had learned, and share it with their class. The events during the day helped our school community to reflect on 'achievement'.

Students wore yellow or pink clothes and class teachers selected a wellbeing book to discuss throughout the day.

At the end of the afternoon in the assembly, the school community acknowledged the success of KidsMatter Primary. Two representatives from each class described their book, and all students reflected on their individual achievement. A parent commented on the success of KidsMatter Day:

“... Our KidsMatter Days provide a wonderful opportunity for our children to focus on what makes them proud (and to dress up!) [KidsMatter Primary] provides another valuable opportunity to build and strengthen home-school links in our efforts to raise happy, balanced children.

The beginnings

A part-time art teacher who was very passionate about Restorative Justice and wellbeing took the first steps with KidsMatter. With an allocation of an hour a week, two classroom teachers undertook the Component overview and training.



The school was already working on social and emotional learning programs. Shennae Searle, one of the early leaders explained: *We wanted to formalise our existing processes, provide staff and community support, and offer staff new skills.*

A change in role two years ago, means the school psychologist now works with staff on their own wellbeing and supports year level teams at planning meetings discussing specific needs of students.

A wellbeing triage system which supports students and their families has been implemented.

Teachers value the work of the psychologist because they feel supported to support students.

Structures for wellbeing

At Beaumaris North Primary School responsibilities for wellbeing are shared across the school. Two teachers are nominated as the leaders of KidsMatter Primary and meet at least once a fortnight to review and plan.

Jess, who has been in the role for several years, is working with her colleague to hand over her role this year and others are taking up responsibilities.

The wider wellbeing group of eight members meets once or twice a term. All teachers allocate time to age-appropriate wellbeing programs in the classroom.

Recently the Primary Year Programme (PYP) has been linked to wellbeing and this enables students and staff to focus on one of the 12 PYP attitudes each month.

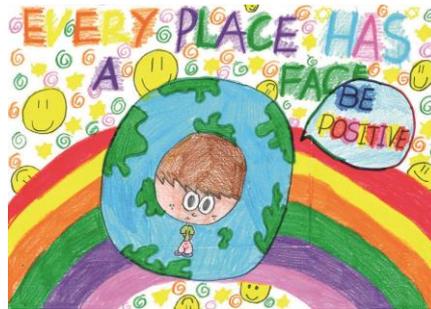
Shennae states that the link *has reinforced the way we consistently work with values for wellbeing.*

Using evidence from surveys

The parent survey in May 2014 identified the need for more communication about the curriculum. Following this, the school developed a number of strategies.

The presentation of the newsletter was reviewed, and two publications over a fortnight inform parents about school activities and events.

Another new initiative is the organisation of Meet and Greet gatherings. In these sessions parents inform teachers about matters of importance about their child. The high attendance demonstrates positive relationships with parents.



Perhaps the most effective way of communicating with parents has been an App (Konnective) used in a trial in 2014.

The feedback was very positive and it has become a significant way to inform all parents about events such as assemblies, remind them about meetings or advise that sport teams are organised. The extension of the App will focus on communicating year level-specific events.

Use of the KidsMatter Primary Portal

The Portal was used in the recent staff induction session. It was a solution to introduce new teachers and support officers to KidsMatter and the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the school.

One of the KidsMatter leaders helped new staff to log into the

Portal and guided them through aspects of Component 1. *The Portal is a perfect balance between instruction, interaction through activities, videos and discussion of wellbeing, says Jess.*

Significant changes over six years

Reflecting on the significant changes at Beaumaris North Primary School since the implementation of KidsMatter Primary, Jess says that staff deeply understand the meaning of wellbeing. They are more confident to deliver explicit wellbeing lessons and support students.

She affirms greater community and parent understanding of wellbeing because of the improved communication. *Students have greater emotional literacy and improved ability to understand their emotions. They are more able to express themselves and articulate their needs.*

School Profile

Beaumaris North Primary School Victoria

- Is located 15 kilometres south east of the Melbourne City Centre
- Has around 670 students
- Was nationally recognised as a KidsMatter Primary school in February 2015
- Entered students in the KidsMatter positive postcards competition in 2013 - a Year 3 student was a winner

www.beaumarisnorthps.vic.edu.au