

Stanion C of E Primary School Well-being project

At Stanion C of E Primary School we have recognised the importance of well-being for our whole school and wider community. The Ethos Committee and the Church Council have worked together to plan a well-being project that has culminated in the publication of 'Stanion's Book of Well-being.'

We asked the Church Council why it was important to focus on well-being, and we had a range of thoughtful responses such as:

"It is important to be happy and to enjoy each moment."

"Sometimes you need to find time for yourself, to find quiet moments so you can feel calm."

"You can live your life to the fullest if you are happy."

We agreed that a focus on well-being would be such an important and valuable Ethos project, for adults as well as for children.

As a school, well-being is always at the heart of each day, and we recognise that there are so many ways in which we can support the well-being of ourselves and others. As an Ethos Committee we felt that it would be so valuable to share the many ways in which we can encourage positive mental health. Our vicar, reverend Heather, worked with us to plan a range of activities with well-being at the heart. She planned activities to support physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, as well as encouraging children to focus on the beauty of each moment.

The children engaged with such activities as cloud-watching, making tree faces, searching for creatures and finding a range of tiny objects to fit into a small container.

Using a very small container or tiny box, see how many different things you can fit inside- each one must be different.

Who can find the most different things?

What was the most common thing?

What do you think is the most interesting thing?

What was your favourite, and why?

This was the contents of the container of Sonnv and Dhrishav. What will YOU find?



TREE FACES



This is a lovely activity, and involves making a face to fit into the surroundings. You start with a lump of air drying clay, and press it onto the chosen surface. You can pull out a nose, and use natural objects to create features. We made tree faces on the trunk of the oak tree in the school grounds. They looked amazing! As we worked, we talked to each other and connected with each other as well as with nature.

Heather also reminded us about the importance of noticing EVERYTHING when we are outside, such as the wind blowing on our faces, the shadows on the ground, the reflections in puddles... and to notice the smells and sounds of nature as well as the sights. All these things help us to be 'in the moment'.

LOOK FOR PICTURES IN THE CLOUDS:

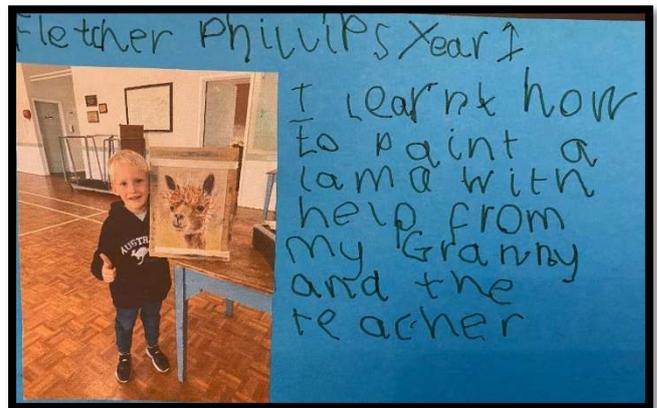
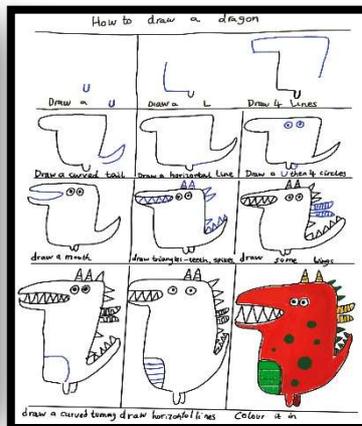
Look up and watch the clouds, think about your breathing, enjoy each moment and notice the sounds and movements in Nature.

Look more closely... can you see pictures in the clouds? The things YOU see might be different to others.



All of the activities were accessible for everyone, and many of the children have since enjoyed doing them again in other settings. Heather led all of the activities in the school's outdoor spaces, and encouraged us all to use these spaces in different ways.

We also took the time to write to all of our families, asking for details of the ways in which families support their own well-being. Staff and governors also contributed their own ideas, and we had a truly wonderful and eclectic mix of activities to share.



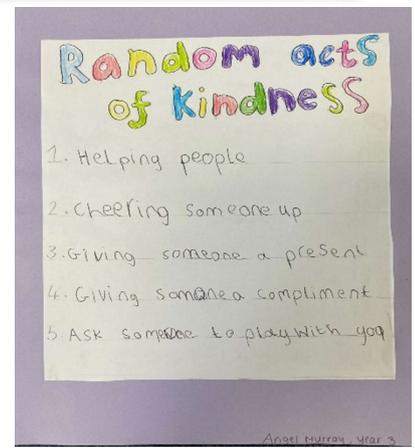
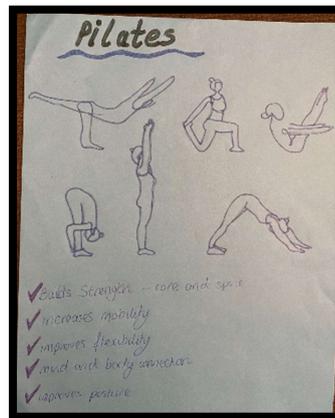
Wellbeing Walking with Amanda de Choisy

My children and I have always enjoyed walking. From an early age we would go on an adventure around our lovely village, starting with picnics at the bridge over Harpur's Brook (off Wilton Lane) and sometimes a paddle if it was a warm day or when they were older a 'go' on the rope swing. Then on to the Frodo Park to spot any birds, insects and wildlife in the pond we could find. Followed by a play in the park at the Village Hall or a lockdown with my notepad-obsessed son, we would then pop into the Post Office for a treat.

When the children got older we progressed to traversing the fields to Broughton, taking in some cricket before enjoying some liquid refreshments in the local pub. Bake and Brew is now a lovely cafe to enjoy in some company or great delicious. Alternatively, we would head towards Gillingham and reward ourselves with a trip to The Star Inn or Oak Cafe.

The circular route of friends to a beautiful walk in the Slaggett or on an Autumn Day, with the magnificent array of colours as the trees shed their leaves.

We are blessed to live in such a beautiful part of the country and there are so many walks on our doorstep at Hattley Woods, Branshale Woods, Hattley Woods. I love being outdoors and find walking in forests to be particularly therapeutic, breathing in the clean, pure air and listening to the noises of nature. You could even try Hattley's best!



Mrs Ettridge then collated all of these responses into a 64 page book- with some expert help from her son! The result is a professional publication that has made all of us feel so proud. It is a wonderful book to read- and it is full of useful, creative, thought-provoking ideas which many of us are using. Our Church Council were proud to launch the book at the end of November, and the book has gone on sale within the school community. Any profits that we make will be donated to a well-being charity, so our book truly supports well-being at every level.

Mrs de Choisy, Chair of Governors, sums up the importance of our special book and the well-being project as a whole:

“Our well-being is as personal as our faith and only we know what brings us inner peace, but to be able to share our ideas and experiences is the greatest gift we can embrace to connect with each other. Our school vision states that ‘Everyone is valued and loved for their individual worth’ and this book epitomizes our core value ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’; In sharing our random acts of kindness, the importance of keeping active, connecting with nature, learning new things and our ‘Ow’, ‘Wow’ and ‘Now’ moments, we have brought our vision alive. I think everyone will take something different away from this book but the well-being of all will be enriched by that one article, activity, word which resonates personally.”

The children feel very proud that they have their ideas in print:

“I felt so proud when I saw the book. I hadn’t realised it would be a REAL book!”

“Our book is amazing and I think that the ideas inside it will help everyone.”

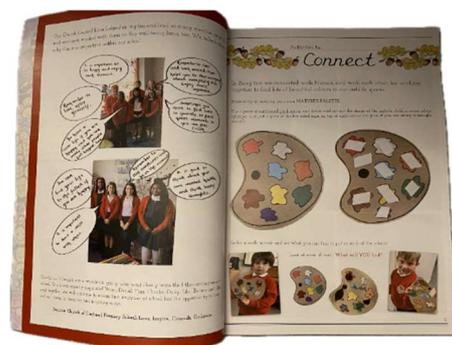
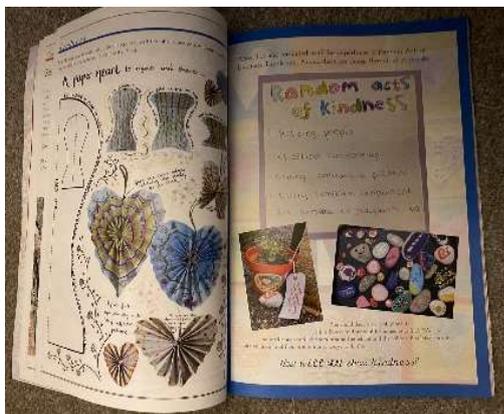
“I feel so honoured to be on the Church Council and to have been a part of making and launching the book.”

“The well-being book helps my mind to flow free. There are so many lovely things to share and I especially love the abstract art ideas. I think we have shared the message that there are so many things you can do for your well-being, you don’t ever need to just sit and worry. You can find whatever helps you to relax.”

The head teacher, Mr Jones, has valued this project so highly, and has supported the work at every level.

“Our well-being project has been a tremendous success and we hope that all our children and families have enjoyed and benefitted from the activities within our own special well-being book. We all value our links with reverend Heather and St Peter’s Church and the children always enjoy all the projects that Heather and our Ethos Committee plan and deliver.”

The well-being book has been produced with care and love and we are so proud of the finished book. Mrs Ettridge and her son have worked tirelessly on the publication and we offer our sincere thanks and gratitude to them both. I have received some wonderful feedback from our children and families about how the book offers a wealth of activities to support our mental health. Well-being is at the heart of our school and we all understand the importance of looking after our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.”



Sandy Ettridge
December 2023