Hannans Primary School: Building emotional wellbeing

How do students see their school?
When students were asked to answer the question, 'How does Hannans Primary School feel, sound and look?' students replied, 'It's calm, warm, welcoming and comfortable. It's very friendly, like laughter or cheering.

There are lots of open grassy spaces and colourful murals.' These are statements on the school website.

Starting out with KidsMatter Primary
Hannans became involved with KidsMatter Primary in 2009. Staff had heard about the pilot schools, and it was a case of being the right time for introducing a coordinated approach to social and emotional learning (SEL). They knew that KidsMatter came with resources and a sound professional learning program which would fit with making improvements across the school.

Through the KidsMatter implementation process staff also identified the need to develop their confidence to teach social and emotional skills and knowledge to students.

Completion of components
The school has implemented all four components since 2009. Components 1 and 2 were a natural way to develop the coordinated approach to social and emotional learning (SEL). The school selected Bounce Back as the social and emotional learning program that provided a skeleton for teachers’ professional learning.

"With KidsMatter, there are now three priorities for motivating and engaging learners at Hannans: literacy, numeracy and social and emotional learning. We have annual operational plans for SEL, and we’re building a pathway and a common vision about student wellbeing. It’s in print! We’ve got targets for SEL learning.

Mel Taylor, Deputy Principal"

The Deputy Principal, Mel Taylor, thought it was helpful to have whole school conversations about ways to build on the SEL work already begun in the school. It was important to enhance the relationships with parents so that they also felt comfortable to communicate effectively with the school.
By this time, teachers had grown in confidence to teach skills that helped students manage their emotions and students were developing a core language for communicating thoughts and feelings.

**It's in print!**
Along with literacy and numeracy, social and emotional learning (SEL) is another whole-school mechanism that builds the vision for motivating and engaging students.

**Inviting parents into the school**
The parent room operates in an unused classroom and is open all day. It has various uses: a location for groups such as the support group for mothers whose children have some learning challenges; the uniform shop; the venue for Parenting WA and for agency information about families and parenting.

A private interview room is provided for one-on-one counselling sessions. Parents feel welcome to engage in school activities, and know that their interests are important.

**Engaging with agencies**
When the staff worked with Components 3 and 4 they investigated the range of services agencies that were available to the school community.

Staff from Parenting WA provides a one-day per week free service on campus for parents and carers who can self-refer to a counsellor. They also run forums and offer advice on developing specific parenting skills.

"We wanted to engage more with agencies in Kalgoorlie. We knew that we could not provide everything at the school and our referral processes were not widely understood. We were exploring ways to support parents and caregivers and thought that there were agencies that could help us. So we linked with agencies and we invited some of them into the school to provide outreach services in the school.

Mel Taylor, Deputy Principal"

**We’ve seen success!**
Since introducing KidsMatter Primary, the school has experienced benefits. Teachers are more confident about teaching SEL skills and knowledge across the curriculum, and students understand these. The Action Team meets twice a term and includes a parent representative, chaplain and members of learning teams across the school. Involving all groups in the school community has made a difference to strengthening the positive learning environment.

"We’re all in … it’s a whole-school coordinated approach. We see the connections between mental health and wellbeing and academic success. We’ve seen success with safe and happy students who are achieving more in different ways. The success drives staff to do more in KidsMatter."

Mel Taylor, Deputy Principal