Let’s do this!
Belmay Primary School had a taste of KidsMatter Primary before Pippa Gillett became Principal in 2010. Chris Leed, the previous Principal, took two teachers to Victoria to learn about implementing KidsMatter.

The school started by looking at what was already happening in terms of individual students, classes and whole-school, and found the KidsMatter process reflected the school planning that was already taking place.

Pippa and the staff saw KidsMatter as a process rather than a program that could develop a positive school community. Pippa reported that there was a strong feeling among staff about taking the steps to implement KidsMatter: ‘Let’s do this!’

Starting at the beginning

The school was already focused on building community, and it methodically embedded thinking and talking about how to engage with parents, carers and grandparents and highlight wellbeing. Staff began reflecting on their practices at the beginning of Component 1.

Pilot school for KidsMatter
Early Childhood – transition to school life
Belmay Primary school was one of 100 Australian pre-primary schools that participated in the pilot of KidsMatter Early Childhood to strengthen children’s mental health and wellbeing, and assist parents making the transition.

We also became aware that our own mental health and wellbeing was important as we talked about how to implement KidsMatter and worked through Component 2. We saw that there were opportunities for supporting students, and working in classrooms to focus on positive practices, and we investigated new strategies.

Pippa Gillett, Principal

In 2011, 16 families were involved. In the second year, the parents and grandparents made up a smaller participant group. Staff have worked on processes of engaging with families.

They see the benefits of encouraging and building connections when students and their families make their first contact with the school.

The KidsMatter Transitions Program has provided great support for staff.

KidsMatter Family Fun Afternoons
In 2011 a new initiative was developed to take the place of an after-school sports program which had become difficult to organise because of the shortage of volunteers.

Staff members wanted to invite parents and carers with their children to participate in activities that could promote the value of learning together in a supportive environment.
Teachers who had skills in sport, drama and visual arts planned an event for each term which comprised two hours with an activity focus and a shared meal.

**Spreading the message**

Signs around the campus are reminders of the values that are emphasised in the school community.

There are huge values flags in the internal courtyard that communicate ‘belonging’, ‘teamwork’ and ‘respect’.

Last term we had an Arts Tabloid which involved adults and children moving through four 15-minute activity stations: visual arts, impromptu drama, dance, and music. Over 70 people participated in the event and dinner. I always give a KidsMatter message and we hand out promotional material about mental health and wellbeing. Next term, professional artists and musicians will lead parts of the event, and parents and children will learn new skills together.

**Pippa Gillett, Principal**

The flags are in vibrant colours and promote strong messages that reinforce social and emotional wellbeing.

We believe in children helping children rather than relying on adults for everything. In first semester 2012 the focus of the leadership training was optimism, and the following semester it will be resilience. The senior students are growing in their leadership skills, and there is a more settled culture in the school. The leadership and peer support program provide another layer of building a constructive environment for the school community. It’s seriously positive!

**Pippa Gillett, Principal**

**Leadership and peer support** – it’s seriously positive

At Belmay, peer support is very significant. Around 80% of the Year 6 and 7 students are involved in being peer leaders or co-leaders.

Students participate in training for the senior leadership program and prepare lessons and create teaching aids during the ten-week program that operates every Friday over a semester.

**School Profile**

**Belmay Primary School:**

Western Australia

- Is in inner metropolitan Perth
- Has an enrolment of 299 students
- Runs the Kids Hope Mentoring Program
- Shares its site with the South East Metropolitan Language Development Centre and hosts a satellite class
- Focuses teaching and learning through the motto, *Choose respect*

**www.belmayps.wa.edu.au**