The Cambridge Wellbeing Check
A clear picture of wellbeing: from individual students to a whole-school overview

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Our Presenter

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Based in the UK, Mark has worked in education since 1997 and leads the development of assessment and reporting products for Early Years and Primary children.

Mark is a former primary school headteacher. He taught in three schools in north-east England for 18 years.

Mark joined CEM in 2015.
What will we discuss today?

1) What is wellbeing?
2) Why is it important?
3) Why assess wellbeing?
4) The Cambridge Wellbeing Check and reports
5) How can we improve wellbeing in schools?
1. What does *wellbeing* mean?

Especially in the context of school or college...
‘In many ways, life is getting better…’

‘The good news is that well-being has, in some respects, improved relative to 2010 – a year when the impacts of the financial crisis continued to be deeply felt in many OECD countries. We are living longer, safer lives. Across OECD countries, life expectancy has increased by more than one year, with the average baby born today living to over 80 years of age…’

‘…Looking forward, there is no room for complacency. As storm clouds gather on the horizon, mainly from environmental and social challenges, all OECD countries need to take action if they are to maintain today’s well-being for future generations.’

(OECD, March 2020)

Then things started to change...

https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9870c393-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9870c393-en
Personal wellbeing seems to be more prominent than ever before:

Hopefully, the events of the past two years have re-focused our priorities?
• Our work is based on research by colleagues in the Faculty of Education, Cambridge University (McLellan & Steward, 2015).

• Their research highlights the need to distinguish between measures of wellbeing for adults and children.

• A wellbeing framework is proposed which concentrates on the experiences of children and young people in school or college.

The four areas of wellbeing

**Feelings**
- **Life satisfaction**: how much students experience contentment and overall life satisfaction.
- **Negative emotions**: how much students experience anxiety, stress and/or sadness.

**Functioning**
- **Interpersonal wellbeing**: how much students experience feeling connected to others in school, that those people care about them, and that they are valued.
- **Competence wellbeing**: how much students experience competence, self-confidence, fulfilment, and purpose.
What does wellbeing mean in the context of school life?

• Wellbeing is a subjective, psychological state.

• It changes over time.

• It changes according to context.

• Children in the same physical circumstances can experience very different levels of wellbeing.

• We must ask children about their wellbeing.
2. Why is wellbeing in schools important?

*It is essential to academic success...*
Wellbeing is linked with academic success

• Better wellbeing is linked with some forms of motivation (students wanting to learn and make progress).

• Wellbeing is linked to engagement. Students with lower levels of wellbeing are more likely to truant (skip school).
Further evidence that wellbeing is linked to academic performance:

• ‘…researchers in the UK (Gutman & Vorhaus, 2012) and the USA (Suldo, Thalji, & Ferron, 2011) identified correlations between wellbeing and educational performance…’

• ‘An international literature review (Lindorff, 2020) concluded there is evidence of links between wellbeing and attainment and between whole-school approaches to wellbeing and attainment, but that this is heavily dependent upon implementation.’

(Suto & Benton, 2022)
3. Why should we assess wellbeing in schools?
Why should we assess wellbeing in schools?

Why should we assess anything?

If you can measure (or assess) something, you obtain better information about it and increase your understanding of it…

…this is true of wellbeing.
Our wellbeing check is a **formative** assessment
Uses of the Cambridge Wellbeing Check

- Teach and explore wellbeing with students
- Evaluate the wellbeing of groups of students
- Understand individual students' wellbeing levels
- Evaluate the impact of interventions to improve wellbeing
4. The Cambridge Wellbeing Check
The Wellbeing Check

• Digital: runs on any PC, tablet or laptop
• No paperwork or marking
• Quick and easy to set up and use
• Just 20 mins to complete
• Flexible: fits around lesson plans and school day
• Assess students several times over year – as you need
The assessment – example questions

When I am at school I feel happy

never  not often  sometimes  often  always

When I am at school I feel sad

never  not often  sometimes  often  always
The reports – how are students’ responses reported?

low wellbeing:
- 5: never
- 4: not often
- 3: sometimes
- 2: often
- 1: always

high wellbeing:
- 5: never
- 4: not often
- 3: sometimes
- 2: often
- 1: always

positive feelings:
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

negative feelings:
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
The reports

- **Individual student response report** details responses to each question in the check.
- Responses of most concern are highlighted. The most common responses to each question from the group are shown for comparison.
The reports

- **Individual student summary report** showing an individual student's mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing.
The reports

- **Confidential group overview for teachers** showing for the class/year group the mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing, for each student in the group.
The reports

- **Class Gender Split Report for Teachers** showing the mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing, for male and female students in the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Y6</th>
<th>Class One</th>
<th>Date of Wellbeing Check: 09/09/2022</th>
<th>Number of students: 5 male, 5 female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Competence Wellbeing**
  - Male: 3.6
  - Female: 2.5
The reports

- **Detailed overview of responses** showing how the group responded to each question. It shows the percentage of students who chose each response option.
The reports

- **Group report for students** showing the groups mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing.

Remember that no matter how you are feeling at the moment about any aspect of your personal wellbeing, things can change. You can grow in confidence, build stronger relationships with friends and teachers, enjoy school more or less at different times of the year, and our emotions change day-to-day.

If you feel worried or upset about any area of your wellbeing, it is important that you talk to an adult you trust (like a teacher, parent or carer) about how you are feeling.
The reports

- **Individual overview for students** showing the short statements summarising the student’s responses.
An overview of the reports

- This table shows the content of each report and how to use within your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidential Group Overview for Teachers</td>
<td>Table of mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing for each student in your group.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed Overview of Responses for Teachers</td>
<td>Stacked bar chart showing how your group responded to each question. It shows the percentage of students who chose each response option.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Student Summary for Teachers</td>
<td>Bar chart showing an individual student’s mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Student Response Report for Teachers</td>
<td>Table showing how an individual student responded to each question in the Check. Responses of most concern are highlighted.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Report for Students</td>
<td>Bar chart showing your group’s mean (average) scores in each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️  ✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Overview for Student</td>
<td>Descriptive statements based on the responses the student gave to each of the four areas of wellbeing. To be shared with the student to help them reflect on their feelings, without attaching a score to their responses.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Gender Split Report for Teachers</td>
<td>Bar chart that displays class or group’s average (mean) wellbeing scores split by gender, for each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Group Gender Split Report for Teachers</td>
<td>Bar chart that displays year groups average (mean) wellbeing scores split by gender, for each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison report (classes or groups)</td>
<td>Bar chart that displays average (mean) scores of your selected classes or groups, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison report (year groups)</td>
<td>Bar chart that displays average (mean) scores of your selected year groups, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Student Tracking Report for Teachers</td>
<td>Bar chart that displays a student’s wellbeing across different time periods, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Group Tracking Report</td>
<td>Bar chart that displays year groups average (mean) scores over different time periods, in each of the four areas of wellbeing.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson plans

Pre- and post-check lesson plans for each of:

- Lower Primary (ages 7 – 9) - lower Key Stage 2
- Upper Primary (ages 9 – 11) - upper Key Stage 2
- Lower Secondary (ages 11 – 14) - Key Stage 3
- Upper Secondary (ages 14 – 16) - Key Stage 4
Guidance and support

Full guidance to set up and use the assessments

Access to the CEM customer support team by phone and email

Online support hub
5. How can we improve wellbeing in schools?
Improving wellbeing

Adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 2005
Getting started

What are the priority areas to focus upon?

- Relationships among students?
- Teacher-student relationships?
- High stress levels?
- Little sense of making progress?
- New students don't 'belong' yet?
- Or...?

To find out:

- assess wellbeing,
- set up a working group, supported by senior leaders,
- have an open discussion involving all stakeholders.
Wellbeing in school

UK Government guidance:

- Schools have a central role to play in enabling their pupils to be resilient and to support good mental health and wellbeing.
- Clear systems and processes should be in place to help staff who identify possible mental health problems, providing routes to escalate issues with clear referral and accountability systems.
- The culture, ethos and environment of the school can have a profound influence on both pupil and staff mental wellbeing.

Mental health and behaviour in schools

November 2018
Wellbeing in school

UK Government guidance:

- School staff cannot act as mental health experts and should not try to diagnose conditions. However, they should ensure they have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

- There are things that schools can do for all pupils, as well as those at risk of developing mental health problems, to intervene early to create a safe and calm educational environment and strengthen resilience before serious mental health problems occur.
Wellbeing in school

Further sources of advice:

[Image of Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families website]
Wellbeing in school

Other sources of advice:

Guidance and resources from Cambridge Assessment International Education, including recordings of previous wellbeing webinars, are available here:

The Cambridge Assessment International Education brief on learner wellbeing is available here:
Just one more thing teachers can do…

…make sure that every student has formed at least one strong and supportive, professional relationship with an adult in school.
Questions?

Find out more: www.cem.org/wellbeing

Subscribe: www.cem.org/buywellbeingcheck
References


Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring