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Well School Trusts Conditions for Success



POWERED BY YST AND BUPA FOUNDATION

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Introduction



As our sector increasingly focuses on what it means to be a strong trust - high quality education, strategic governance, efficient and effective operations, workforce resilience and wellbeing, public benefit, and civic duty - it is clear that the Well School Trust principles have the potential to underpin so much of what can make a good trust great.

This guide on how to navigate the journey to being a Well School Trust brings welcome focus to the topic of how school trusts can promote and improve the culture of their schools.

Its practical examples of how trusts can listen, reflect, and improve things for central teams as well as supporting their schools to develop a Well Culture for pupils and staff are inspiring, and will hopefully spark others to explore how they can do the same in their own contexts.

That is part of the power of the school trust - the ability to share and develop together, and to provide a common and resilient focus on making things better for pupils, parents and staff.

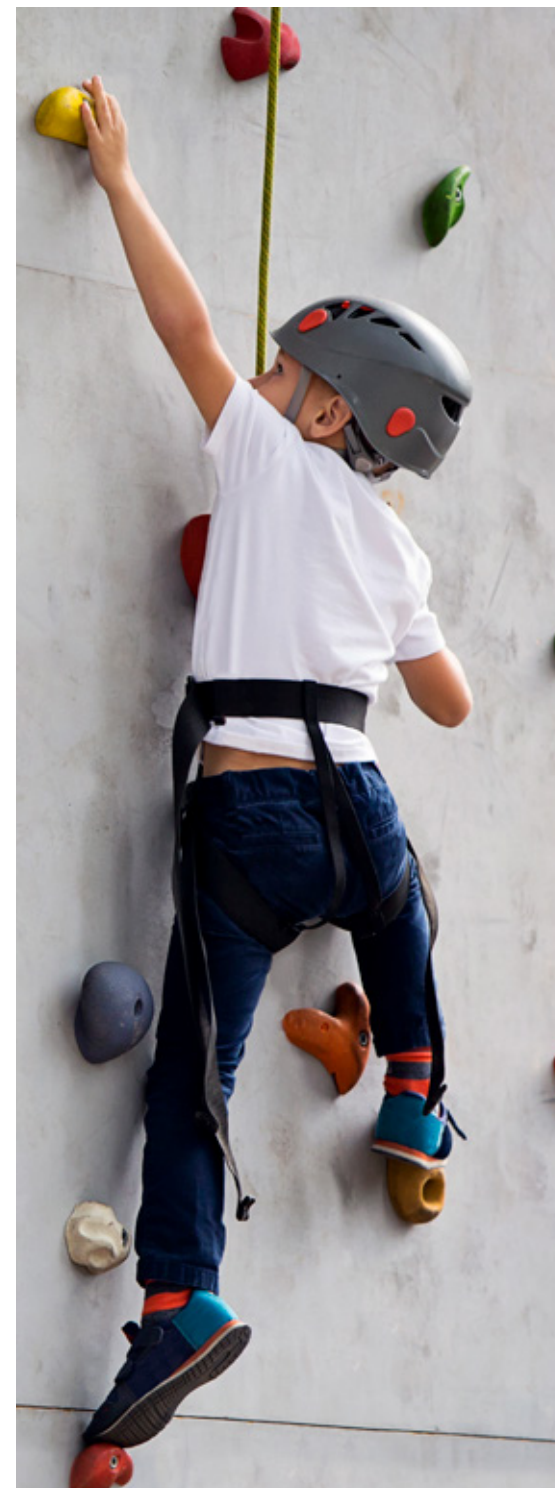
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Why a Well School Trust?

A Well School Trust is a multi-academy trust (MAT) that puts the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils at the heart of its improvement plan to be a strong Trust. It understands that in order to deliver on the principles of a strong Trust there is a need to support and retain a resilient workforce that is healthy and well, and that in order to deliver high quality education, including for disadvantaged children and children with SEND, that they need to address the physical and mental health needs of pupils.

A strong Trust is a Well School Trust. It takes action on working quickly to improve standards within all their schools, particularly transforming schools by supporting senior leaders, trustees and parents to understand the connection between happy, healthy children and successful learning. It sets out a plan for how this will be achieved through effective central leadership teams, strong school leadership and teaching, evidence-based curriculum design and their civic role within their communities.



What is a Well School Trust?

The evidence shows that there is a clear link between higher levels of wellbeing, academic attainment, and other educational outcomes. There is also clear evidence on the contribution of physical education, sport and play to improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities, and increase achievement and attainment.

Academy Trusts are responsible for setting the culture and climate across multiple schools based on clear vision and value set. Well School Trusts build on this concept, by prioritising the contribution of improved health and wellbeing to their improvement plans, and putting PE, sport and play at the heart of their positive action across the schools they serve.

Evidence¹²³ shows that happier teachers and happier children make for better learning environments.

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-link-between-pupil-health-and-wellbeing-and-attainment>

2 <https://oxfordimpact.oup.com/home/wellbeing-impact-study/>

3 <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/4971bc14-d459-4e68-b6c3-e9d9f7a014e5/downloads/Executive%20Summary%20Why%20we%20need%20to%20measure%20stude.pdf?ver=1567521571970>



Creating the happiest and healthiest learners in the world."

WELL TRUST VISION AND VALUES

WELL SCHOOLS (WELL LED/PREPARED/EQUIPPED)



STRONG TRUST OUTCOMES

IMPROVED
HEALTH &
HAPPINESS

IMPROVED
WELLBEING
& LEARNING

IMPROVED
PROGRESS &
ACHIEVEMENT

IMPROVED
TEACHER
RETENTION
AND QUALITY



CONTRIBUTION OF PE, SPORT & PLAY

PHYSICAL
& MENTAL HEALTH

PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT &
SOCIAL MOBILITY

IMPROVED BRAIN
FUNCTION AND
COGNITION

Getting started

Every Trust's journey to becoming a Well School Trust will be different and there isn't a single approach to follow. You will find some 'top tips' in this guide, but it is important to note that a whole-trust approach to health and wellbeing takes time to embed.

Trust Leaders who have already started to develop their Well School Trust journey have shared how they have approached the task, which will support you in getting started.

Self-Reflect

A key place to start is by reflecting on where your Trust is right now. This will help you understand what your schools are doing well and what areas you need to develop.

Prioritise

Depending on where you are on your journey, the steps ahead may feel daunting. Therefore, it is important to prioritise your areas of development and to take small steps at first.

Once you have identified the areas that need your attention, it can help to prioritise three to five key areas that you would like to work on improving first. Ask yourselves to:

- prioritise what feels most important
- what is easily achieved
- have the resources and capacity in place to deliver on priorities
- make initial positive impact to help gain momentum.

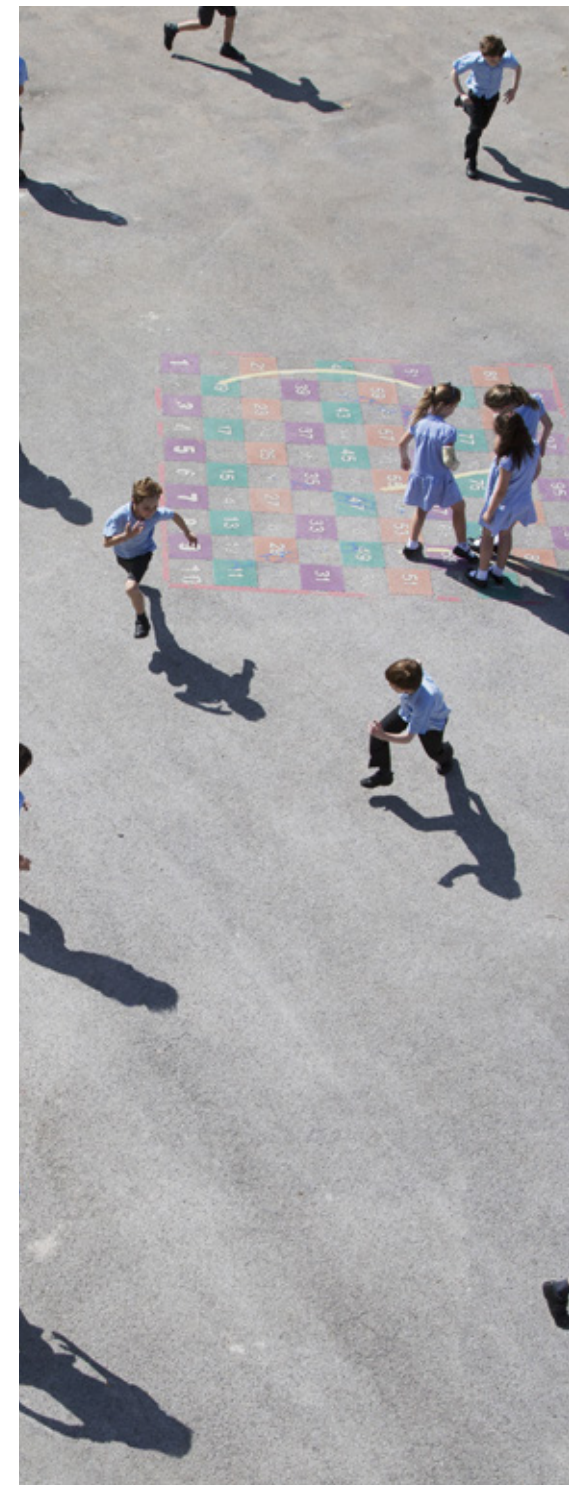
Teamwork

Putting health and wellbeing at the heart of your Trust's vision and values is not a single person's job and it cannot be left solely to the CEO, a headteacher or strategic lead for health and wellbeing.

Health & wellbeing is everybody's responsibility.

Senior leadership and management

Senior leaders in schools must be authentic in modelling what good health and wellbeing looks like as well as leading their schools by example. Well Schools are run by emotionally intelligent senior leaders who develop positive relationships with staff, children, and their communities.



Top Ten Tips

1. Embed in your vision and values

Reflect:

- How does this align with your vision and values and the role of a School Trust?
- Is this work already identified in your Trust strategy and priorities for the coming years?
- How do your vision and values align with the health and wellbeing challenges of your schools?

Consider:

Consider a long-term vision and what the steps are to getting there. Consider how much your Trustees understand the meaning and importance of health and wellbeing and clearly articulate its place in your vision statement and curriculum. This is most likely to be part of your People Strategy, as well, which all Trusts will have.

Examples:

At CABOT Learning Federation, their vision includes reference to their 3-19 curriculum (Including wellbeing) and their main strategy has reference to building 'CLF people' with wellbeing and resilience.

At ASPIRE Academy Trust they have an Aspire 2025 Vision with health and wellbeing at the centre of their strategy, and an emphasis on how PE, sport and play is a central driver for physical and mental health. They are supporting all schools in their Trust with visioning around PE and sport and implementing their school action plans.



Top Ten Tips

2. Identify a strategic lead for the Trust

Reflect:

- How are you building capacity, expertise, and credibility into your Trust leadership team for health and wellbeing and the contribution of PE, sport and play?
- How does this role contribute to your trust-wide improvement plans and your school improvement plans?
- How are you supporting the resourcing of this role and the actions they want to take?

Consider:

This is key to making change happen, bearing in mind it isn't just down to one person.

This role is vital in driving the vision and must be a senior leader at the Trust to ensure buy-in. It is key that it is not seen as an add-on to 'the day job' and an overarching umbrella that supports whole Trust and school development.

There must be buy-in from principals and senior leaders - start with them. If this is part of the Trust strategy anyway, then this will be easy. If it is not and / or your principals are not on board, it will fail. Once they have expressed support, identify who in each school and across the Trust will lead this work - together they can form a strategic group for change.

Examples:

At INSIGNIS Academy Trust, they have a Trust Wellbeing Lead, who works across each school and The Central Team, chairing school-based wellbeing groups, working with Headteachers and managing their wellbeing and ED&I surveys programme.

At ASPIRE Academy Trust they have a lead who drives the vision through the CEO, directors, and Heads of School. This is supported by a core group driving it in individual schools.



3. Measure Wellbeing and understand needs

Reflect:

- How are you capturing the physical and mental health needs of staff and pupils?
- What are your measures of success for physical, social, and mental health of pupils?
- How are you including the voices of staff, pupils, and trustees?

Consider:

Start with the end in mind! This will help with knowing how to assess your starting point and where you may want to get to. This may be both qualitative as well as quantitative. Trustees are likely to want to see quantitative data so don't forget this. Wellbeing can be challenging to genuinely measure.

It is important to have a clear reporting tool that is the same across the Trust and that it is repeated for at least 3 years to provide longitudinal information. You need some reflections on baselining and understanding where your schools are at. Link this back to your vision and values, what you want to achieve and what you need to measure.

Examples:

At CABOT Learning Federation, they use a variety of sources that come together to form a Wellbeing dashboard, such as HR data about long term absence, the voices and opinions of colleagues, engagement data with wellbeing initiatives like an employee assistance programme, and counselling referrals. This is set alongside the Well Schools audit feedback from school leaders.



Top Ten Tips

4. Launching to the whole Trust

4

Reflect:

- How are you using this as a moment to communicate with all staff, pupils, and parents/carers?
- How could you use this to build a pledge across schools and families?
- How are you incorporating the Well Schools Steps to Success and building commitment?

Consider:

This will help others to visualise what it will look like; it will help you to articulate it, generate lots of ideas and give it importance. Ensure it is led by the CEO or a Trust Leader at the start so that their support is visible and then using others for additional input at all levels.

Share the vision, share resources, and illustrate support. Demonstrate the CEO buy in and keep coming back to the 'why'. Communicating this will take time and show it's everyone's role. Follow this up with smaller events and CPD as a thread through the academic year.

Examples:

At INSIGNIS Academy Trust, they held an inaugural Trust Conference that was used to launch Well Schools across the Trust. This involved 260 form tutors across all year groups across three Secondary schools. It had a profound impact on staff recognising that the Trust Leadership is committed to the wellbeing of staff.

At ASPIRE Academy Trust they have taken the whole Trust on a journey from launch, to looking at culture and leadership to holding termly networks with physical education, mental health, and pastoral leads across the Trust.

5. Put it in your Improvement strategy

5

Reflect:

- How is this work reflected in the Trust's overall development and improvement plan?
- How does it complement your action plans for people, inclusion, and community?
- How is it reflected in individual school improvement plans and how they use PE, sport and play to drive health, wellbeing and education outcomes?

Consider:

Making sure it is 'grounded in something' in critical to success and adoption by head teachers, senior leaders, and trustees. Make sure you use the Well Schools Steps to Success to identify areas for development and these are discussed with leaders at regular intervals.

These actions should be written in the plan clearly with milestones and with alignment with individual school improvement plans and performance reviews, so everyone can see how it is embedded and that they are contributing to the whole.

Examples:

At Haberdashers' Academies Trust South, it is identified in their development plans and on their website - it links to their work on people, inclusion, community, and school improvement. Their new wellbeing strategy is being developed alongside these with PE, sport and physical activity as a key driver for change.

At INSIGNIS Academy Trust this is a key part of their Trust Development Plan, and includes wellbeing as part of their Trust Risk Assessment and a core part of School Development Planning, PPE, school sport and physical activity plans and their People plan.

6. Monitor and evaluate

Reflect:

- What are your measures of success and how are you demonstrating impact?
- What are your processes for capturing the impact of the actions you take within your Trust-wide strategy?
- How are you tracking improvements in staff and pupil health and wellbeing?

Consider:

It is important to have the voices of staff and pupils heard and to have mechanisms for capturing data and insight across the Trust. However, what is critical to success is using that data and insight to inform priorities and resources as a meaningful exercise in improving what the Trust and its leaders do.

If the actions from the Well Schools Steps to Success audit are to be effective, embedded, and meaningful then they need to be tracked and reported on with clear links to the Trust strategy.

Examples:

At CABOT Learning Federation, they are using the Well Schools audit, and able to see and measure progress through the aims of the approach as each area has three areas of grading - emerging, established and embedded. They report on colleague absence, days lost to mental health and wellbeing issues, colleague voice and progress through the audit to their board. They also track mental health referrals for pupils, participation in PE and extracurricular activities and build life skills assessment into their curriculum.

At INSIGNIS Academy Trust they have a weekly CEO and Headteacher 1:1 and Wellbeing is a standing item. This is combined with the review of the annual surveys with wellbeing expectations written into a new Code of Conduct.





Top Ten Tips

7. Communicate your commitment

Reflect:

- What are the methods of communication internally, externally and what's the message?
- How are you using newsletters, your website, and social media?

Consider:

Consider all sorts of communications from lots of different people - mainly staff. Emphasise the 'why.' If it is truly part of the Trust vision, it should be visible in all communications and briefings.

Examples:

At ASPIRE Academy Trust, they have a CEO fortnightly briefing to all staff always including a Wellbeing themed informative or practical communication along with Trust newsletters.

At CABOT Learning Federation they have a wellbeing blog, internal heartbeat trust newsletter and their mental health and wellbeing leads have a 'Team' setup for chat communications.

INSIGNIS Academy Trust share wellbeing survey details in full with all staff and governors as they want everyone to know they are listening and taking action.



8. Consider your community role

8

Reflect:

- How are parents, governors/trustees' and community partners involved in the forming of the Trust priorities?
- How do you know what support is out there and integrating that into your plans?
- How is the Trust contributing to the community through its civic role?

Consider:

This needs to be considered at both trustee and school level with regular communication on this commitment to parents. Parental and community engagement is key to school development plans with trustees and local governors being part of the journey.

There is a need to think about how you are communicating the needs of your staff and pupils to those agencies that can help support your priorities through the sharing of data and insight from wellbeing surveys.

Examples:

At WINDSOR Academy Trust they are working collaboratively with a local NHS Trust and the Youth Sport Trust and have developed an NHS funded programme called 'Active in Mind' to support child and Adolescent physical and mental health. They host two School Games Organisers Partnerships, involving over 100 schools, delivering school Sport competitions and events. Sport and physical activity play a crucial role in supporting physical and mental health and developing character.



9. Self-assess against the Well School Pillars

9

Reflect:

- How have you supported the school leaders and staff body to reflect on the Well Schools Steps to Success?
- How have you used the support offered through Well School partners?
- What are the 'passion projects' you have created across the Trust to drive engagement and action?

Consider:

This is a good benchmarking tool and a starting point for the strategy!

Use the Well Schools framework and create your own Trust version to illustrate at the launch event so staff can see the 'what' and 'how' clearly individualised for your Trust. This is a fantastic opportunity for staff to take ownership of the challenges in their school, and to consider the positive action they can take through the formal and informal curriculum. It helps colleagues reflect on what is going well and where they need to focus resources and energy.

Examples:

At CABOT Learning Federation, each of their schools (21 academies – Secondary, Primary and AP) have completed the Well Schools audit. They have supported this by creating a community where these results and findings can be shared and developed – they talk about 'what next' together and problem solve/generate ideas.

At INSIGNIS Academy Trust they are using the Well Schools House and have migrated their survey outcomes to it. They also had all form tutors from all year groups reflect on the one priority from each Well School pillar they needed to address going forwards, and these 'passion projects' now form a Trust-wide action plan. It has given them the opportunity to socialise the role of PESSPA across their Trust vision and values and within each school.

Top Ten Tips

10. Take action in each school

10

Reflect:

- How is the plan of action being personalised for each school?
- How are you empowering the individual school leaders to take positive action ~~ownership~~?
- What two (or three) key actions will be taken first to have the biggest impact?

Consider:

A broad strategy can give the direction of travel and intent with the key areas of focus. Schools can then operationalise this with their own action plans – identifying first steps which can be taken quickly to signal intent.

Less is more. Often these are little things and quick wins that get the ball rolling. The broad vision comes from the strategic plan and driven through the lead role who can support and empower individual schools with a personalised focus.

Examples:

At CABOT Learning Federation, the audits and action plans are reviewed centrally, but held by schools. It is important that each school adopts an approach that meets the needs of the pupil and staff community. The Trust's role is to facilitate the accurate completion of action plans, help with ideas, and signpost support. They also step in and provide support where an academy is doing some specific work on wellbeing initiatives.



Taking your next steps

Your journey to becoming a Well School Trust has begun. By now you will have identified the areas in which your Trust is strong, the areas that are developing and some areas that will be a brand-new venture.

Remember that all Well Schools Trusts are a continuous work-in-progress - responding to the ever-changing educational landscape and ever evolving community that your Trust is serving. The most important aspect of becoming a Well School Trust is taking those continuous steps towards improvement

The Well School Movement

Your Trust is part of a large, growing, and supportive movement of schools and Trusts. The Well School movement exists to provide examples, resources and peer-to-peer support to one another.

Be sure to utilise the website and be inspired and learn from other schools and trusts and, in turn, share your best-practice too.

You can follow us here - **@well_schools**

You can join the movement here - **www. well-school.org**

With thanks to:

Kate Richardson - Executive Principal
CABOT Learning Federation

Sian Hall - Head of School
Aspire Academy Trust

Garret Fay - CEO
Insignis Academy Trust

Jan Shadick - CEO
Haberdashers' Academies Trust
South

Matt Meckin - Director of Primary
Windsor Academy Trust





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