

School Story - Alderbrook School

Alderbrook School

We are an 11 – 16 mixed academy serving the suburb of South Solihull. There are 1300 pupils and 250 are admitted each year. The school has had 3 very successful Ofsted inspections and our examination results are excellent. At Alderbrook, the Governors and staff share a passionate commitment to meet the varied, individual needs of all the students in the school and to enable their educational experience here to be an inspiring and successful time. The school prides itself on its strong pastoral care system and we recognise that a partnership between home and school is also vital if children are to be happy and successful. There is a programme of Personal and Social Development that examines and explores the following areas: Careers, Citizenship, Drug Education, Financial Capability, Personal Wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education.

Identifying need

We looked at the results of the HRBQ survey 2010 in order to identify areas of concern. It was clear that the focus needed to be on the girls at Alderbrook. Two particular vulnerable groups emerged: Year 9 and Year 10 girls. In both cases the issues linked to body image and self-esteem. In year 10 we were concerned by the percentage of girls reporting on 'worrying about the way they look' and felt there may be a connection to the amount of girls in Year 9 reporting that they 'wanted to lose weight'. Another statistic which gave us cause for concern was the low number of Year 8 girls who had reported enjoying physical activity a lot. Could this further compound the issue of weight by suggesting that girls were relying on less healthy ways of controlling weight and as a result their body image?

Outcomes	Achievement
Decrease the percentage of year 9 pupils reporting that they would like to lose weight from 54% to 23%	A pupil questionnaire indicates that 49.5% of Year 9 pupils report wanting to lose weight. However, when questioned further, 64% of these pupils stated that the reason for weight loss was to have a healthier Body Mass index. This suggests that 36% of the pupils want to lose weight for less healthy reasons.
Increase the number of year 8 girls who report enjoying physical activity a lot from 30% to 50%	A pupil questionnaire indicates that 60% of year 8 girls report enjoying physical activity a lot.
Decrease the number of year 10 girls worrying about the way they look from 54% to 34%	The number of Year 10 girls who report worrying a lot about the way they look has risen to 72% . However, we now have a much greater understanding of the reasons why and will be able to address these in a variety of ways in the next academic year. This was also reported as being an upward trend in the 2012 HRBQ.

Year 9: What outcomes did we focus on and why?

We decided that we needed to raise awareness of the pressure that girls are under to look a certain way. We felt that the girls needed to understand just how unrealistic their goals may be. We also wanted to consider what a balanced and healthy diet should consist of.

What activities/interventions did we put in place in order to achieve our outcomes?

Firstly we designed an assembly specifically for the Year 9 girls to launch the objectives. This was based largely on the Dove Real Beauty campaign and a key tag line of 'BeYOUtiful' was used in conjunction with this. A Health and Wellbeing group of 5 pupils from year 10 and 8 was set up. The group helped to choose images to create displays around the school which promoted the concept of 'BeYOUtiful' and build on the messages from the launch assembly.

We approached the following Faculties to consider how they could explore these issues within their curriculum area.

- Food Technology – schemes of work across KS3 which encourage a balanced diet and touch upon issues such as eating disorders
- Dance – Year 8 scheme of work which concentrated on use of the body in dance and sought to promote greater body confidence

In collaboration with the Head of drama and the PE Department one of the Year 9 Immersion Days was dedicated to body image and self-esteem. This involved a carousel of three activities:

- Body Image Workshop
- Motivational Speaker
- A choice of physical activities

At all Parents Evening an information sheet which gives guidance from the Solihull School Improvement is made available. Parent/Carer involvement is a definite area for further development and in the next academic year an Information Evening will be arranged based on the Dove Real Beauty Campaign.

The School Website is regularly updated to keep parents/carers informed of key initiatives and the 3 targets and key action points are highlighted. One parent has already emailed the school to praise us on the work we are doing.

In addition to the original milestones we have devoted much time to promoting **National Healthy Eating Week**. We strongly believe that a balanced diet and a healthy approach to food are key in tackling the issue of unhealthy attitudes towards weight control and body image. Furthermore, in the new body image unit of work in year 10 it was noted by several members of staff that a significant number of pupils were skipping breakfast. This linked in beautifully with the 'not skipping breakfast' strand of National Healthy Eating week. In collaboration with the Head of Food Technology and the School canteen we have run two competitions to get both staff and pupils involved in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have designed posters which take one of the 8 healthy eating tips and provide focussed advice. The winning 4 entries plus 5 other designs have been made into A2 posters and are on display in the school canteen. Assemblies have been created to promote Healthy Eating week and staff and pupils have been asked to make a pledge to work on at least one of the tips. Parents have been kept informed via the School Newsletter.

What did we achieve and how did know?

Various 'Pupil Voice' evaluations were conducted. We wanted to see what impact on both attitude and behaviour the various initiatives have had. In particular, we wanted to monitor any changes in behaviour as a result of the work we were doing. It was evident in the Year 9 responses to the assembly that a significant number of pupils had not realised how manipulated images in the media are. It was refreshing to see how many pupils reported that they would 'worry less' about how they looked. We asked a sample of the Year 9 girls about the impact of the assembly and whether or not it had changed their views and if it might change any of their behaviours. Many of the responses indicated that the girls would worry less as a result of the assembly. In almost a third of the responses the girls reported that they had not realised how manipulated images can be. We strongly believe that the assembly highlights how unrealistic their expectations may be.

When asking the year 9 pupils the question of whether they wanted to lose weight in 2013 we have compared the responses based on gender. As predicted the results vary enormously. Furthermore, we have tried to unpick the reasons why pupils want to lose weight.

Boys	Girls
A pupil questionnaire indicates that 79% of boys do want to lose weight. Therefore, 21% of Year 9 boys report wanting to lose weight. When questioned further, only one boy reported that this was because he felt 'pressure to be slim'. The rest of the boys reported that they wanted to lose weight 'to have a healthier Body Mass Index'.	A pupil questionnaire indicates that 78% of Year 9 girls report wanting to lose weight. However, when questioned further, 40% of these girls stated that the reason for weight loss was to have a 'healthier Body Mass index'. This suggests that 38% of girls want to lose weight for less healthy reasons.

As you can see from the Outcomes and Achievements table a large majority of year 9 girls want to lose weight. However, when you unpick the result it is clear that the majority of girls want to be a healthier weight and a much smaller number want to lose weight because they feel pressured.

In relation to the National Healthy Eating Week, I am very pleased to report that within a week of the Impact cards being handed out 28 of the 60 Forms have responded. Here are the main findings:

The main positives.....

- It is clear from the feedback that many pupils tried the Healthy options and enjoyed them.
- The pupils really liked the fact that they had been consulted and they could see how their suggestions had been acted upon.
- A particular favourite was the Quorn recipe sampling.
- The pupils would like more 'Tasting Events'.
- Some pupils saw the posters as an effective way of giving advice and thought they were 'very eye catching'.
- Pupils would like the process to be repeated annually

Possible areas for improvement/development.....

- It has been noted that the pupil options ran out quite quickly
- Many pupils were disappointed as they had not had the chance to try them.

- The poster competition received mixed reviews and the pupils wanted to see more posters around the school
- Some pupils felt that some of the posters included too much information and as a result lost impact
- Some pupils did not feel that the healthy options were signposted clearly enough
- Some pupils do not use the canteen and therefore were unaware of the poster campaign and on occasion they have responded with great indifference to National Healthy Eating week

Year 10: What outcomes did we focus on and why?

We decided that we needed to raise awareness of the pressure that girls are under to look a certain way. We felt that the girls needed to understand just how unrealistic their goals may be and help them to feel more comfortable with the body they have.

What activities/interventions did we put in place in order to achieve our outcomes?

We used some of the same interventions as in the Year 9 target. Firstly, produced an assembly for the Year 10 girls to launch the objectives. This was based largely on the Dove Real Beauty campaign and a key tag line of 'BeYOUtiful' was used in conjunction with this. A Health and Wellbeing group of 5 pupils from year 10 and 8 was set up. The pupils were involved in reviewing a unit of learning based around Body Image. The group also helped to choose images to create displays around the school which promoted the concept of 'BeYOUtiful' and build on the messages from the launch assembly.

In collaboration with the Head of KS4 in English a GCSE assessment was devoted to the portrayal of body image in the media, in particular magazines targeted at teenage girls. One of the Year 10 Immersion Days involved a motivational speaker to encourage high self-esteem. The PE department provided a range of physical activities including yoga. The yoga option was a popular choice among the girls and aimed to disprove the myth that you need to look a certain way to be physically fit, flexible and supple.

What did we achieve and how did know?

Various 'Pupil Voice' evaluations were conducted. We wanted to see what impact on both attitude and behaviour the various initiatives have had. In particular, we wanted to monitor any changes in behaviour as a result of the work we were doing. Staff were asked to provide feedback on the new Body Image unit of learning. Several teachers reported that it was the 'most successful' topic covered in the year and had engaged the pupils and promoted much discussion about realistic and unrealistic expectations. Some pupils reported in the evaluation that they now worry less about their looks. However, it is clear from recent pupil questionnaire that we need to continue to focus on tackling this issue.

When asking the year 10 pupils the question of whether they 'worried a lot about the way they look' in 2013 we have also tried to unpick the reasons why if the pupils answered yes. As you can see from the Outcomes and Achievements table a large majority of year 10 girls worry a lot about their looks. Whilst the quantitative target has not been met I believe that due to the level of feedback we have received to explain why girls worry so much about their appearance the school is in a much better position to address this issue. We have been able to identify 5 key reasons:

- Other pupils making negative comments about a person's appearance
- Pressure to be slim like their peers
- Wanting to change the way they look to fit images in the media/celebrity photographs
- Negative comments from boys at school

- Lack of confidence/low self-esteem/poor body image

As the targeted work we have done already with the Year 10 girls is opened up to include all year groups, both male and female we hope to see greater impact. The first step is to present the results to all pupils and staff through College Assemblies. Secondly, the Body Image unit of learning in Year 10 will be altered to enable pupils to explore the findings presented in the assembly. We also want to ask the pupils, through Form time, for their suggestions on how we could try to tackle this issue.

Year 8: What outcomes did we focus on and why?

We decided we needed to investigate the potential reasons behind the reported low number of Year 8 girls who do not enjoy P.E. This would primarily be addressed through the opinion of pupils via the P.E. Pupil Council, in combination with staff discussing issues with regards to lesson planning and the curriculum. From this initial investigatory work the aim would be to highlight and implement a set of specific initiatives focused on the Year 8 girl's focus group.

What activities/ interventions did we put in place in order to achieve our outcomes?

One of the issues that became a common theme when collating the thoughts of pupils was that the two major barriers to learning for girls in P.E. is the kit, and having to be taught outside when it is not hot and the sun is not shining. As a result, samples of new kit were presented to the P.E. council and they helped to radically alter the P.E. kit for girls. Specifically this has meant the introduction of a school P.E. hoodie, a 'female cut' black and purple sports shirt and a skirt as part of the compulsory uniform. The aim is that this will reduce the issue of disliking P.E. kit as well as making girls feel more comfortable outside.

Within the area of teaching and learning, staff have adapted some methods from KS4 to motivate girls. This includes assigning different roles within classes (e.g. literacy manager and progress manager), using activity specific level descriptors for AFL, and using video clips for motivational starters

Update fitness schemes of work to include more 'current craze' activities like Zumba to motivate pupils. Staff have also received training inset on Yoga in preparation for September 2013.

The issue of rewards is also under discussion with pupils, through the P.E. Pupil Council, with plans in place to bring back 'braids' for pupils who participate regularly in curricular and extracurricular activities in different sports.

New extracurricular activities have continued to be offered to girls at the school. This term a girls' cricket practice has started on Friday after school, as well as a team participating in a Tag Rugby Festival.

What did we achieve and how do we know?

Recent pupil questionnaires indicate that 60% of Year 8 girls are reporting that they enjoy PE a lot. This is a massive improvement and has exceeded the target of 50%. This not only proves how effective the changes and strategies employed have been but how tirelessly the PE department have worked on raising participation and levels of enjoyment.

What will we do next?

- Further Assemblies to open up the process to all pupils and present the key findings from the pupil questionnaires - to include a range of quotes from pupils to help explain why and how we need to move forward with these issues
- Parent information Evening – based on the Dove Real Beauty Campaign combined with the findings from the Year 9 and 10 pupil questionnaire
- Adapt Year 10 Body Image scheme of work in light of feedback from Year 10 girls to explain why they worry so much. Develop AFL in Year 10 scheme of work – pupils to create own 'BeYOUtiful' Campaign – use example of Laura Jarvis' Year 10 PSD group from the current academic year.
- Expand on English pilot
- Look at additional learning opportunities across the Curriculum – already working on a GCSE assessment in Year 10 Drama.
- Killer Quotations in form time which promote discussion around body image and self esteem

Senior Leader quote:

"I am delighted that the Enhanced Healthy School process has put Alderbrook in a much better position to be able to address specific issues regarding the personal wellbeing of our pupils."

Bill Sedgwick, Head Teacher

Photographs:

Healthy Schools Co-ordinator with lead pupil from the Health and Wellbeing group



Healthy Schools Co-ordinator with Unit Catering Manager, Head of Food Technology, Head of Technology Faculty