

## **Appendix 5: Relational Practice in Portsmouth - testimonials from Wave One schools**

### **Admiral Lord Nelson School**

At the ALNS OFSTED inspection last week, the work we have done this year on Relational Practice in terms of community building and the enhancements it has made to our vertical tutoring system resulted in extremely positive feedback about our approach to safeguarding in all aspects of our work at school; to the inclusive nature of all elements of the academic and personal development curriculum; and the fact that staff and students all articulated clearly that they felt like 'had a voice' and were listened to. Bullying was cited as being rare and students felt safe to report incidents of unkindness when they occurred secure in the knowledge it would be appropriately dealt with. Inspectors saw evidence of high support for students underpinned by strong relationships which led to a sense of calm around the school.

*Nys Hardingham, Executive Headteacher, Admiral Lord Nelson School*

### **Priory School**

Priory School is one of ten secondary schools in Portsmouth and one of eight Secondary Schools in the Bohunt Education Trust. I do not speak to any Headteacher who is not experiencing an alarming increase in behavioural challenges driven by COVID.

Every school I work with has been underpowered because of staff absence and struggling to meet the behavioural demands of its student population. An increase in students that have experienced so much disruption and isolation in the last three years, combined with an impaired capacity for schools to intervene meaningfully has left school exhausted.

The danger in such circumstances is that, as we have been simply trying to stay open and function for our communities; to survive if you will. The consequence of this is that we become immersed in reacting to circumstances rather than actively building our cultures.

Relational practice provides a structure and language that helps us to see a more proactive response to some of these huge challenges. It is not new and it will resonate with those who work in education as being common sense but common sense is not always common place. Priory is currently engaging in Trafalgar's training programme and it has provided us with reassurance, expertise and a form and structure to help us reflect and plan. It is good work.

Ultimately, we are aiming to shift our culture when maladaptive coping strategies amongst our students have become alarmingly familiar. This cannot be short term work but it will be absolutely crucial to addressing the needs of our staff and student population and , as a consequence, will be a key factor in supporting Mental Health, safety staff retention and staff recruitment in our city.

I would consider support for this work to be critical.

*Stewart Vaughan, Head teacher, Priory School*

## **Milton Park Primary School**

At Milton Park we effectively build and develop supportive and meaningful relationships with our children and families by exploring their individual needs.

To achieve this, we spend quality time listening and getting to know our children both on a one-to-one basis and in a group or classroom setting.

We value and share important information with parents and relevant staff as and when necessary.

The direct impact of this practice builds resilience in all aspects of our children's and families wellbeing.

This is clearly demonstrated by the number of children and families that actively seek out support for many diverse and unique situations.

This has resulted in a decrease in instances of unsafe behaviour in our school. There is a clear structure and whole school policy which is set in place for all staff to follow and promote.

Our children are aware of the support available, procedures to follow and strategies to use in times of crisis or need.

As a result of this practice and children effectively applying the use of taught coping strategies, we have observed a substantial increase in the capabilities of our children being able to self soothe and regulate their own emotions.

*Layla Glover, HLTA, Milton Park Primary School*

I feel like communication has massively improved during my time at Milton Park and, again, being on the same page really helps us all to know where we stand and what the expectations are.

All these little things build up confidence and self-assurance within the workplace. This then allows you to be the best version of yourself at work.

*Kayleigh Garnett, Year 1 Teacher, Milton Park Primary School*

The relationships I build in my class through relational practice ensure that children learn in a safe and trusting environment. Our children feel comfortable to talk to a range of adults and can name these and understand that their opinions are valued in activities such as pupil leadership meetings. We look at the whole child, rather than just their attainment and progress and aim to support the whole child, including their families and situations, in order to ensure that they are ready and able to access learning. I would describe this school as a family and the positive and thorough relationships we build make the difference to our behaviour and learning.

*Elizabeth Noice, Year 6 Teacher and Year 5/6 phase leader Milton Park Primary School*