

Is your school a healthy school?

There are 3 burning questions surrounding health and wellbeing in schools...

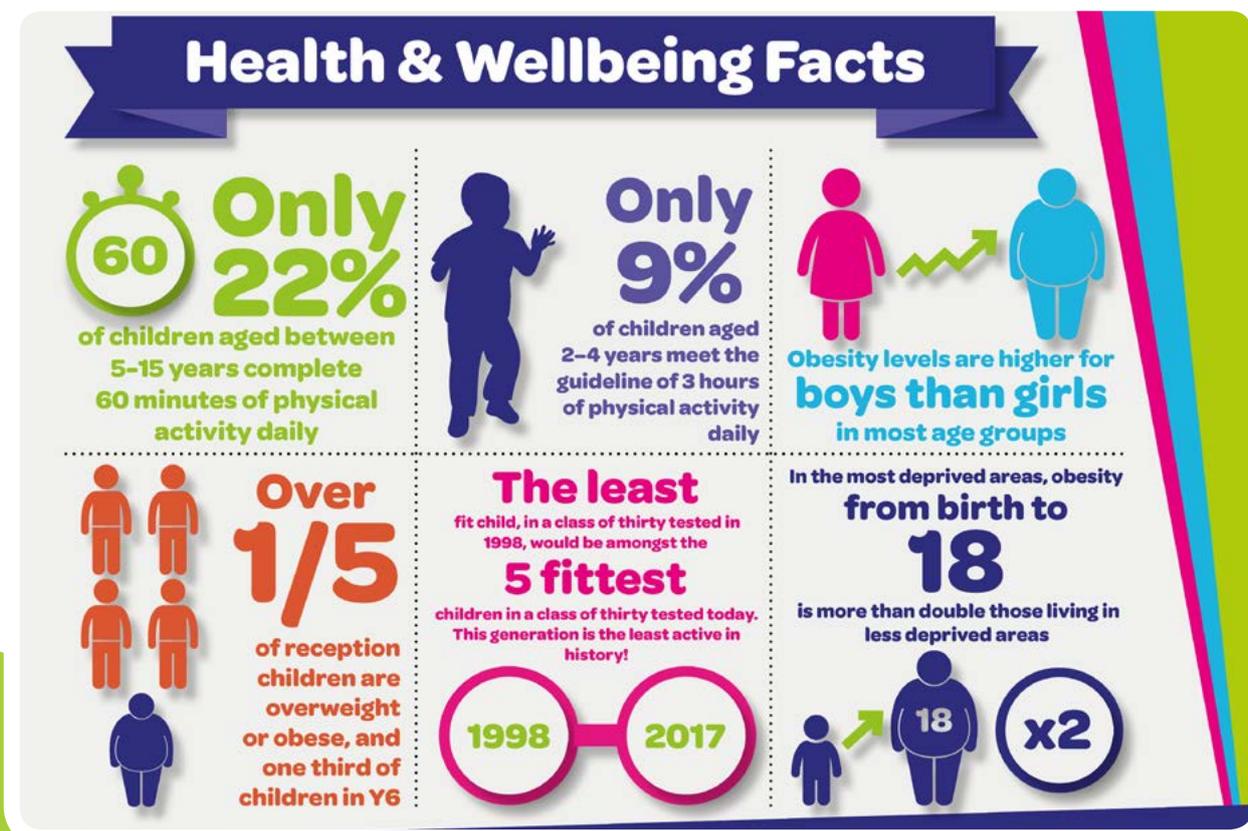
1. **Why** is health and wellbeing important?
2. **How** are you supporting the health and wellbeing of children in your care as part of your vision, ethos and strategic direction of your school?
3. **What** could you be doing to improve?

Yvonne Gandy visits schools and academies across the country, leaders of these schools always discuss what they are doing, but find it difficult to explain, particularly where additional funding has been provided, why they are doing what they are doing. In this article Yvonne will enlighten us on health and wellbeing in schools;

What do we believe is the importance of health and wellbeing, and what is our role to embrace this within the culture and ethos of our schools. **How** you do this, is harder to focus and direct but is critical to ensuring what you do is special and different, whilst still engaging in the right strategy to achieve why you are doing it. Then there is the **why** – this should not be about the money, national curriculum or because Ofsted says so! It is about knowing the purpose, the belief that underpins commitment to, and reason for doing.

Would governing board members, staff or senior leaders in your school know;

- Why pupil health and wellbeing is important for pupils?
- Can they articulate clearly the purpose and need to be active, knowing the reason and importance for all people within the school to have health and wellbeing at the heart of the schools culture?
- What sort of child we would see if schools believed, had health and wellbeing key within its vision and if everyone was committed to it?



When we watch the Olympics or elite sports people, do you take notice of – the winning, the race, the competition or the;

People who had - pride, confidence, determination, empathy, choices & skill

People who were - resilient, able to deal with success and failure, able to make decisions and communicate feelings, able to work in teams, happy to get involved, showing joy and passion in their achievement

It is important to encourage the identification of these qualities of sports people. As our body is for LIFE, its wellbeing and health is critical if we are to transform the lives of every child, their body, mind and soul. This would be transformational, particularly as learning through the body impacts on behaviours needed to be successful and achieve. To do this we need to create the right education platform in schools, whilst creating the range and choice of opportunities for all children in our care.

‘Transforming lives and extending opportunities for every child, wherever they live, whatever their background’



To achieve change, we must support pupils, staff and families to create a health and wellbeing culture in school. Highlighting the key areas of eat, drink, sleep and move well to support how we engage in creating the right choices and activity for our body in life. In the current climate where mental wellbeing of children is a concern, it is even more critical to get the balance of these elements right.

Why is health and wellbeing important? The following are great examples of health and wellbeing visions;

- 'Everyone, regardless of their age background or level of ability feels able to engage in sport and physical activity' (SE)
- 'Reduce significantly childhood obesity in the next 10 years – helping all children engage in an hour of physical activity every day and develop a healthy lifestyle' (PHE)

Creating your schools vision is only the beginning. Gathering your own intelligence base for your schools, including information about levels of physical activity, eating and sleeping habits in order to provide a picture of pupil wellbeing and health will be beneficial. Against this you can develop and direct strategy to close any gaps between reality and your vision.

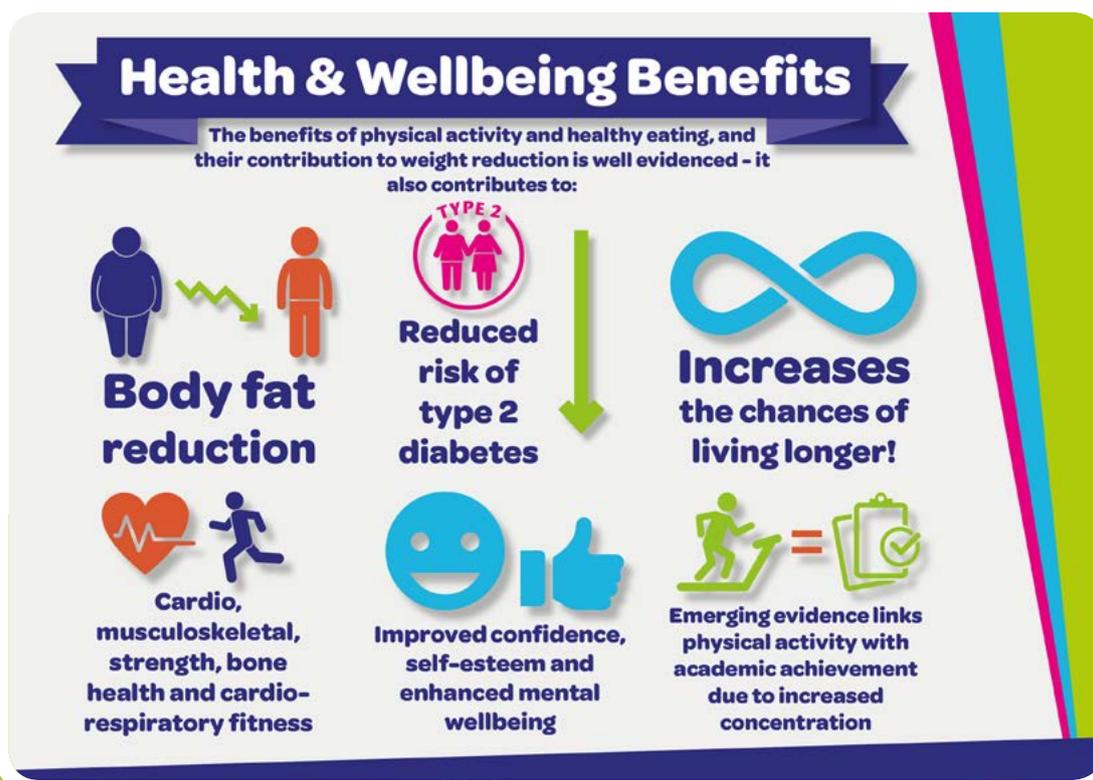


Justine Greening launched the new health fund at the end of February saying – ‘Schools can really help our children get a healthy start in life from exercise and sport, and also from knowing what a healthy diet means. It’s not only good for them while they’re in education, but the health and wellbeing benefits can last a lifetime. That’s why we’re investing £415 million in facilities to support sports, after-school activities and promoting healthy eating, so we can **secure the future health of our young people**’.

The Primary PE and Sport Premium will be doubled from 2017/18 (investment from sugar tax funds), and £285million a year will also be given to 25% of secondary schools to extend their school day to offer a wider range of activities such as sport and wellbeing activities. On top of this, new funding for school improvement of £140 million will be available directly to schools/academies from September 2017 – all of which are great opportunities to develop the infrastructure for, and offering of, health and wellbeing options to pupils.

However, money won’t secure the future health of young people, – your own vision for your pupils and creating the right energy and direction will – it may help pay for ‘what’ you want to do but if you are not clear why you are doing it, then it will likely be a waste of time.

From September 2017, the Government will introduce a **voluntary healthy rating scheme** for primary schools - this scheme will measure the schools contribution they make to support children to eat better and move more. It is a great scheme and one that all schools should adopt, with more than one in three children leaving primary school obese or overweight.



Health & Wellbeing Benefits

The benefits of physical activity and healthy eating, and their contribution to weight reduction is well evidenced - it also contributes to:

- Body fat reduction** (Icon: Two figures, one larger than the other, with a downward arrow between them)
- Reduced risk of type 2 diabetes** (Icon: Two figures with 'TYPE 2' above them, and a downward arrow)
- Increases the chances of living longer!** (Icon: An infinity symbol)
- Cardio, musculoskeletal, strength, bone health and cardio-respiratory fitness** (Icon: A heart with a pulse line and a running figure)
- Improved confidence, self-esteem and enhanced mental wellbeing** (Icon: A smiling face and a thumbs up)
- Emerging evidence links physical activity with academic achievement due to increased concentration** (Icon: A running figure, an equals sign, and a clipboard with a checkmark)

The benefits of physical education are well documented – these are not just about our pupils now but about future proofing them.

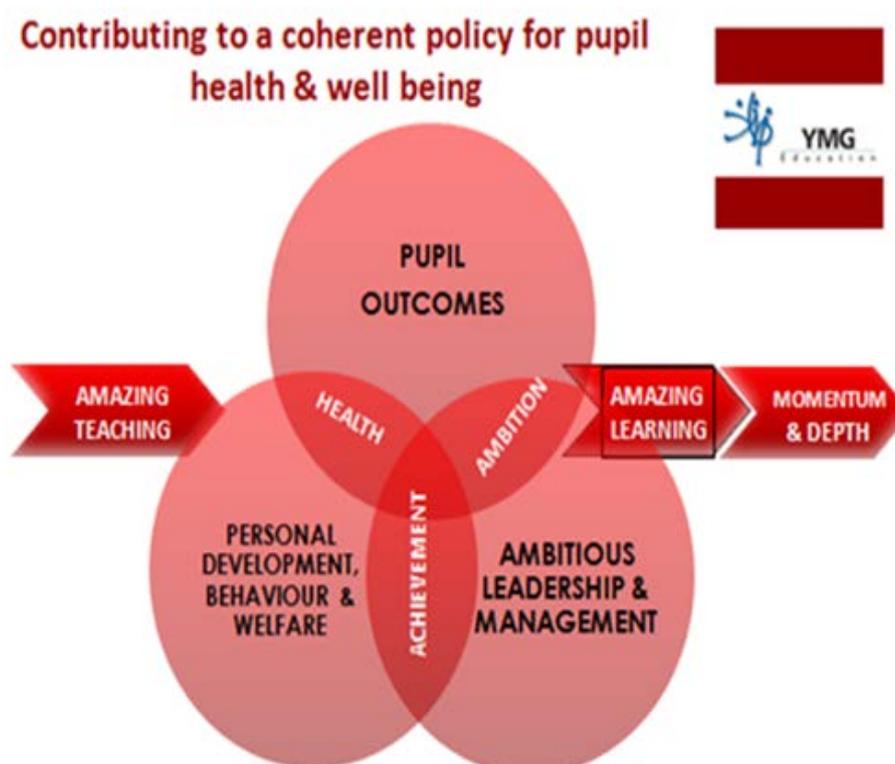
“If it were a pill, physical activity would be a wonder drug” – CMO Feb 2017

So why are the facts so alarming, even when there has been a significant amount of funding spent on core national strategies over the last 20 years in support of physical education, school sport and health?

If school leaders and governors do not put physical health and wellbeing as a constant and explicit element within their school improvement agenda, the evidence suggests we will never gain the momentum needed to make a difference to the reality for all children across the country, and their journey to adulthood will not be future proofed. Tackling childhood health & wellbeing does require us to take action and school leaders do have a part to play. By analyzing pupils’ health choices and habits and their living environment they can best set priority areas to bring about improvement and deploy staff and funding if relevant.

The Government has formally tasked Ofsted to assess the impact of Primary PE and Sport Premier in schools and on the health of its pupils. This includes the requirement to measure the effectiveness and impact of a schools provision and the extent to which the education provided meets the needs of pupils – it will be important for you to identify what a ‘meaningful’ impact on pupils health will look like. It is now more vital than ever to do all you can to improve your pupils health and wellbeing.

How can you achieve this...



How, includes the way in which teachers, staff and governors walk the talk – it is a process based on explicit policy; we need commitment to health, to be at the heart of pupil achievement and leaders need to be clear about the direction of travel in order to make a difference to pupils. Below are 7 principles which will support assuring momentum and depth;

7 Principles to Support Improvement

- 1** Create an **ambitious vision** for the role of physical activity and healthy lifestyle behaviours, and gain **commitment** of school staff, children and their families
- 2** Create an active **culture** with **accessible** curriculum experiences which children **enjoy** - inspiring them to lead a healthy and active lifestyle in and outside of school
- 3** Engage a **confident, competent** workforce who can engage with all - creating the opportunity to increase levels of activity during and after school
- 4** **Talk** to children and support them to take **ownership** and responsibility for being active and making healthier choices
- 5** Identify active and accessible **safe space** to play, create and be active in school and within the wider community
- 6** Give **choice** and provide a range of activities for children to participate in
- 7** **Promote** the **positive** of being active, and evaluate provision so you know what **quality** and impact is

On top of the 7 principles, leaders and governors need to ensure there is no 'sitting down culture' where your curriculum only relies on PESS. If your members of staff do not have the expertise needed to meet the health and wellbeing needs of their pupils, then external providers must be brought on board and evaluated against the schools vision and policy. Children should also be actively encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and take this into their homes too, as well as pupils and parents being kept up to date with the activities available to them in and out of school. Engagement must be monitored so you don't only cater for just those who do engage, this will all help improve your pupils' health and wellbeing!

Know your why...

It would be considered as unacceptable by parents and teachers if a child was allowed to leave school without having a basic understanding of their capability in Maths and English. Yet we appear willing to accept the concept of children leaving school without a formal understanding of the importance of physical exercise and mental wellbeing, and the impact this could have in later life.

Can you now answer the following...

Do you know **'WHY'** health and wellbeing is critical to our pupils?

Will you do something about this – **'HOW'** will you go about this?

'WHAT' is one thing you will do next to shift and impact on the reality of health and wellbeing currently in your school?

Do you want to create a **'WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH'** to health and wellbeing? We have a programme that can support you to do just that.

[GET THE BALL ROLLING](#)