

Nurturing Thriving Staff and Flourishing Students: A School Journey of Discovering Positive Education

WESTWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL, SINGAPORE

THE WHAT & WHY OF POSITIVE EDUCATION

Positive Education, simply put, is the incorporation of the science of positive psychology into the life and work of schools (Seligman, Ernst, Gilham, Reivich & Linkins, 2009). It is aimed first at benefitting teachers personally, and then benefits them again by making it easier to get students to engage with and persist in the work they need to master learning. Positive Education inevitably works to create a school culture that supports the caring, trusting relationships that distinguish excellent schools from their mediocre peers.

OUR DISCOVERY JOURNEY: AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Who am I as a teacher? What kind of a teacher do I want to be?

Using an Appreciative Inquiry approach (Cooperrider & Avital, 2003), we engaged a schoolwide strategic conversation and envisioning journey following the iterative stages of 'Discovery', 'Dream', 'Design' and 'Destiny', viz:

1. Preliminary sessions were held with selected parents and pioneering staff in the previous year to solicit their aspirations for the new school;
2. A staff conversation around Positive Education was held on 18 Mar 2013; a planning meeting between Strategic Planning Teams and our Superintendent was held on 24 Apr 2013;
3. A whole-school engagement session involving staff and stakeholders, including after school care staff, was held on 6 Jun 2013 to define our Teacher Beliefs, School Culture and discussed our Student Outcomes and Teaching-Learning framework for Westwood Primary;
4. Selected staff attended 'Positive Schools Conference' in Perth in May and 'Discovering Positive Education' programme by Geelong Grammar School in Jun. A consultation session was also held in Jul to share these envisioning documents with our School Advisory Committee for further input.



WHO WE ARE: OUR CHARACTER STRENGTHS

In order for 'self' to be an agent of change, we focus on harnessing character strengths, as ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that enable high functioning and performance (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These are the fundamental values-based instincts we want all members of the Westwood community to internalise and demonstrate in all we do on a daily basis. This is our cultural DNA which defines us as a Westwood family, with:

A Heart of Gratitude

A Resilient Mindset

A Passion for Community

A Future-Ready Confidence

