The Impact of Adopting Positive Education and Wellbeing Culture on Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in a Private and Mainstream School in Dubai: An Exploratory Case Study during Uncertain Times, a Perspective from Dubai, UAE

نتائج تبني مفهوم التعليم الإيجابي وثقافة جودة الحياة على أداء الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة وأصحاب الهمم (SEND) في مدرسة خاصة و دامجة في دبي: دراسة حالة استكشافية خلال الأزمات، وجهة نظر من دبي ـ الإمارات العربية المتحدة

by

YASMINA ANWAR KEIS

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ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

The impact of positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Dubai-based inclusive schools has been an active area of education research. While it has been demonstrated that the role of positive education and wellbeing culture is vital to the optimal development of students within school settings, scrutiny and reluctance to employ novel techniques present a significant challenge and a never-ending list of "to-dos" that hinder the opportunity to ensure an ideal school environment. Inclusion is similar to a puzzle that should not be completed unless its entire fragments are recognised and positioned accordingly (Gaad 2004). Inclusion lies at the heart of positive education and wellbeing culture. Positive education and wellbeing principles empower inclusive education and alleviate stigma. In fact, inclusion conceptualised and paralleled with positive education and wellbeing culture is a catalyst requiring schools to positively approach all students including students with SEND, who might present additional vulnerabilities and lower levels of wellbeing because of their feelings of inadequacy, when compared to typically developed peers.

In this case-study, the researcher explores the impact of positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with SEND, through a mixed-method approach of interviews and surveys, to gain a thorough understanding on ways to allow them to flourish and recognise their character strengths in a sustaining environment where happiness is paramount. Several factors affecting student wellbeing are discussed: teachers' approaches and wellbeing, peer attitudes and relationships, parental engagement, school climate and potential recommendations and provisions to ensure social and academic development. Preliminary findings suggest a positive impact of positive education and wellbeing culture on the psychological/social and academic wellbeing of learners with SEND whereby their character strengths are highlighted and

mistakes are perceived as opportunities for learning. The study reveals that positive teacher approaches, happy teachers, friendly peer attitudes and relationships, consistent parental involvement and positive school climate aid in enhancing and maintaining students' wellbeing. Therefore, the data suggests, through a set of recommendations, that schools should adopt positive education and instill a wellbeing culture to ensure a positive, safe and well climate for all learners including students with SEND, to promote and enhance their wellbeing and sense of belonging in a flourishing environment.

It is worth mentioning that during Covid-19, schools across the globe and in UAE were closed as an effective control and safety measure to reduce the spread of the disease (Viner et al. 2020) and distance learning (DL) was introduced in March 2020. Remote learning thus became the new norm for learning during Covid-19. Thus, due to school closure, the researcher carried out the data collection in a virtual manner.

ABSTRACT IN ARABIC

أدت النتائج المبهرة للطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة وأصحاب الهمم(SEND) ، بفضل اعتماد مفهوم التعليم الإيجابي وثقافة جودة الحياة في المدارس الدامجة بدبي، إلى تزايد البحوث التربوية المتخصصة في هذا المجال. وفي الوقت الذي أثبتت فيه الوقائع أهمية الدور الحيوي للتعليم الإيجابي وثقافة جودة الحياة في تطوير كفاءة الطلاب والارتقاء بقدراتهم على النحو الأمثل في البيئات المدرسية، يشكل التردد في استخدام التقنيات الجديدة تحدياً حقيقياً مع قائمة طويلة من "المهام" التي تؤدي إلى حرمان النظام التعليمي من الفرص المناسبة التي تساهم في توفير البيئة المدرسية المثالية لجميع الطلاب.

وتتشابه عملية الإدماج مع الألغاز في تعقيداتها، حيث لا يمكن فهمها على النحو المطلوب إلا مع توفر جميع العناصر اللازمة لإكمال المشهد، وتنظيمها وفقاً لذلك (Gaad 2004). ويندرج الإدماج في صميم مبدأ التعليم الإيجابي وثقافة جودة الحياة، ما يعزز مبدأ التعليم الجامع ويساهم في التخفيف من الوصمة الناجمة عن القصور في هذا المجال. في الواقع، يعد الإدماج المفاهيمي والمتوازي مع التعليم الإيجابي وثقافة جودة الحياة عاملاً تحفيزياً، ما يضع على عاتق المدارس مسؤولية التواصل على نحو إيجابي مع جميع الطلاب على قدم المساواة، بما فيهم الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة أو أصحاب الهممSEND، والذين قد يعانون من مشاكل نفسية أو مستويات منخفضة من جودة الحياة بسبب شعورهم بالنقص، عند مقارنة مستواهم الدراسي وقدراتهم التعلمية مع مستويات وقدرات زملائهم الذين لا يعانون من صعوبات مماثلة.

يتوجه الباحث في إطار هذه الدراسة، للتعرف على الأثر الذي يولده مفهوم التعليم الإيجابي وثقافة جودة الحياة لدى الطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة أو أصحاب الهممSEND، حيث يتم اعتماد نهج الأسلوب المختلط للمقابلات والاستطلاعات، للتعرف على نحو شامل على جميع الطرق التي تمكنهم من النمو والتطور، إضافة إلى اكتشاف نقاط قوتهم الشخصية والاطلاع على قدراتهم في بيئة مستدامة تعتبر السعادة العنصر الأهم فيها. ويتم في إطار البحث مناقشة العديد من العوامل التي تؤثر على جودة الحياة الطلاب مثل: مقاربات ومواقف المدرسين وجودة حياتهم والعلاقة مع الزملاء ومشاركة الوالدين والبيئة المدرسية، إضافة إلى التوصيات والأحكام المحتملة لضمان التطور الاجتماعي والأكاديمي لهؤلاء الطلاب. وتشير النتائج الأولية إلى أن مفهوم التعليم الإيجابي وثقافة جودة الحياة يلعبان دوراً محورياً في تحقيق جودة الحياة النفسية/الاجتماعية والأكاديمية للطلاب من ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة أو أصحاب الهمم SEND. ويتم في هذا الإطار، تسليط الضوء على نقاط القوة في شخصياتهم، واعتبار الأخطاء بمثابة فرص للتعلم. ويعتبر نهج المدرسين الإيجابي، ومستوى سعادتهم، والمواقف الودية للزملاء، ومشاركة الوالدين المتسقة والبيئة المدرسية الإيجابية، عوامل تساهم في تعزيز

جودة حياة الطلاب وضمان استمراريتها. لذلك، تشير البيانات عبر مجموعة من التوصيات، إلى ضرورة تبني المدارس لمناهج تعليمية إيجابية وغرس ثقافة جودة الحياة، لضمان توفير بيئة تعليم إيجابية وآمنة وسليمة ومناسبة لجميع الطلاب، بما فيهم ذوي الاحتياجات التعليمية الخاصة أو أصحاب الهممSEND، لتعزيز جودة حياتهم وتحسين شعورهم بالانتماء إلى مؤسستهم التعليمية في بيئة مزدهرة ومتطورة.

والجدير بالذكر أن جائحة كوفيد-19، أدت إلى إغلاق المدارس في جميع أنحاء العالم كإجراء احترازي للحد من انتشار الوباء (Viner et al. 2020)، ولضمان سلامة الطلاب والطاقم التدريسي، تم اعتماد سياسة التعليم عن بعد (DL) مارس 2020، والتي باتت المعيار الجديد للتعلم خلال أزمة كوفيد-19. وقد أدت جائحة كوفيد-19 وإغلاق المدارس، إلى دفع الباحث لجمع البيانات عن بعد.

DEDICATION

Writing this thesis has been an amazingly enjoyable experience. It is true that I have developed feelings of anxiety especially that the submission occurred during challenging times of Covid-19, yet I have also experienced indescribable emotions of joy, self-fulfillment and ownership. I mostly felt proud of my progressive accomplishments. Covid-19 was a double-edged sword that emotionally challenged me as it constituted a barrier to physically collect data yet was an eye-opening lesson that determination and perseverance are key aspects during these uncertain times.

I owe and dedicate this thesis to my family and husband. I will forever be grateful to be a daughter to the most beautiful mother, Dima, inside-out, my confidant and my better-half, my best-friend and the person who taught me to keep my head held high no matter the circumstances, a daughter to the most devoted and young-spirited father, Dr. Anwar, my first and forever love, my hero and the person who lights-up the room when around, a sister to the smartest, most caring, compassionate, encouraging and wholehearted brother, Dr. Ibrahim, no matter how far away in distance, I will forever be by his side to kneel on my shoulder, a wife to the most supportive, understanding and loving person I am proud, blessed and grateful to call my husband, Makram, and with whom I cannot wait to start raising a family with, and lastly a granddaughter to the most kindhearted, affectionate and tender grandparents, Samia and Khaled, who never stopped showering my brother and I with their love.

Last but not least, I would like to thank God for His grace in me.

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I would like to express and extend my sincere gratitude to Professor Eman Gaad, the advocate of inclusion and a pioneer in her field. She has not only empowered me to pursue my passion, but has also comforted me with her patience, guidance, expertise and understanding throughout this memorable journey. Dr. Eman is a true role model who helped me overcome the challenges throughout this process and generously responded to my concerns during uncertain times of Covid-19. Dr. Eman allowed me the opportunity to take ownership of my work and my own thoughts, yet, continuously steered me in the right path. I only hope that one day, I will be able to support and empower my students the same way she has. She is a strong woman, a woman that I admire and will forever look up to.

I would like to thank the British University in Dubai, BUiD, for providing me with an unforgettable opportunity, I will forever feel proud to have graduated from this reputable university.

The completion of this dissertation could not have been possible without the contribution and input of several participants whose identities shall not be revealed for matters of confidentiality. Their participation is highly appreciated and heartfully acknowledged.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

UAE: United Arab Emirates

MOE: Ministry of Education

KHDA: Knowledge Human and Development Authority

GGS: Geelong Grammar School

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

IEP: Individualized Education Plans

SENDCO: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator

SEL: Social and Emotional Learning

LSA: Learning Support Assistant

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

ADHD: Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder

SEBD: Social, Emotional and Behavioural disorders

DS: Down Syndrome

SD: Standard Deviation

Psych/Soc1: Psychological and Social Wellbeing Item1

Acad1: Academic Wellbeing Item1

Factr_impct1: Factors Impacting the Wellbeing of Learners with SEND Item 1

Process1: Process of Successfully Adopting Positive Education and Wellbeing Practices

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Topic

Under the governancce of His Highness (HH) Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashed Al Maktoum and the vision of his HH Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, and in agreement with "My Community, a City for Everyone" (Knowledge & Human Development Authority 2017), Dubai is keen on becoming an entirely inclusive city by 2020, catering for scholars regardless of their disabilities. Dubai is dedicated to shift from the medical model to a rights-based model of disability whereby success of inclusive schooling is significantly dependent upon the school community fostering positive views on the potential of all learners, irrespective of background, ability or culture (Knowledge & Human Development Authority 2019).

In agreement with the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework, inclusion means providing all students with equal opportunities to access high quality instruction despite their disabilities and protecting students at risk of developing SEND from being excluded from accessing education (Knowledge & Human Development Authority 2017). Over the last decade, the inclusive education movement has become a priority to all schools in UAE. Policies and federal laws were legislated by the government's proposals and recommendations by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to monitor learning in schools and ensure learners with SEND are being positively catered for. Inspections by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) explore the extent to which equitable provisions and high-quality teaching and learning are prominent across Dubai and ensure a non-conditional acceptance of learners with SEND to access top-notch education.

Positive education and wellbeing culture represent a new philosophy beginning to emerge worldwide and noticeably across UAE. In March 2016, HH Sheikh Mohammad bin Mohammad Al Maktoum approved National Program for Happiness to build a happy work environment and develop benchmarks to measure happiness (U.ae 2020). Her Excellency Ohood Al Roumi, Minister of State for Happiness and Positivity launched educational programs to harmonise government plans and ensure a cohesive and happier society.

In February 2018, the National Program for Happiness and Positivity and the MoE celebrated the creativity of UAE schoolchildren who took part in the "100 Days of Giving Initiative" to promote positive values (MOE 2019). Her Excellency Jameela Al Muhairi stated that this initiative imbedded in schoolchildren the value of giving and enhanced social development and humanitarian values.

A month later, in March 2018, The National Program for Happiness & Wellbeing, in cooperation with the MoE, launched the network of 'Positive Schools', a network providing membership to schools consolidating positive education and wellbeing thus resulting in less absenteeism and enhanced school-family relationships, academic achievements and standards of health for scholars.

A year later, in March 2019, more than 250 UAE public and private schools joined the Well Schools Network launched by the National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing in collaboration with the MoE (National Program for Happiness & Wellbeing 2020). It is a national network, implementing National Wellbeing Agenda and delivering optional membership for UAE schools aiming to promote positive education and wellbeing culture for learners and educators aligned with four pillars: students and families, teachers, school environment, and society. Distinguished schools are granted the "Well Schools Mark" (Well Schools Network 2020).

In April 2019, the National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing launched the Community Design for Wellbeing initiative to boost citizen engagement. The UAE Government targets to make the country among the top-five happiest countries worldwide by 2021. HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum believes that happiness and positivity are a lifestyle, a government commitment and a spirit connecting the UAE community to enhance human capital (Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & The Future 2020).

In June 2019, the National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing launched a sequence of interactive camps targeted at enhancing digital wellbeing and safety for students across UAE (Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and The Future 2019).

In November 2019, The Dubai's School wellbeing surveys were launched by the KHDA for students and staff (Clarke 2019). The Dubai Student Wellbeing Census aims to develop action plans by authorities to enhance wellbeing, a human right, across schools in Dubai and understand how students are functioning emotionally, psychologically and socially.

In January 2020, HH Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum enquired about an inspirational loving teacher in UAE who was identified in a video on social media, positively greeting students in a heartwarming attitude and honored her, highlighting the initiative of the prosperous UAE in caring for the wellbeing of students and teachers (Khaleejtimes 2020).

Positive education is the implementation of positive psychology in educational contexts studying processes leading to flourishing individuals with high levels of wellbeing (Noble & McGrath 2015). Positive education takes on the role of ensuring growth mindset, positive feelings and emotions, resilience, social and optimal capital and function and strength-based attitudes (Roffey 2017). Positivity in a school climate leads to positive relationships among peers especially those with SEND, who might be prone to having emotional and social struggles within their surroundings, and fosters a great sense of belonging, engagement, pro-social behaviour, wellbeing and resilience. Taking into account the wellbeing dimension

develops students' growth. It is one thing to desire to build classes where learners feel well, happy, safe, enthusiastic to learn and connected, yet another thing to actually establish such environments (O'Rourke, Cooper & Gray 2012).

Wellbeing is to attend to people's needs by promoting their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. The element of happiness in wellbeing is a significant sense of self and a positive outlook on life, that is not only desired, yet essential and conductive to engagement and learning. Wellbeing is described as having the presence of positive affect, absence of negative affect and life satisfaction (Mehdinezhad 2012), it is subjective and based on the thinking and emotional state of a person. It enhances meaning in life, acts as an antidote to mental and physical health problems and enhances positive thinking (Seligman et al. 2009). Learners who experience positive wellbeing tend to be resilient, ready to surface life challenges and solve conflicts in a positive manner while overcoming life stressors (Majid et al. 2018) and positively adapt through a challenging or uncertain event. The more accepted students with SEND feel, the more positive their wellbeing and self-image will be. Educators, peers and parents are essential actors focusing on enhancing learners' social and academic engagement. Students' experiences in school could significantly impact their future life and potential social-emotional skills. A growing body of literature has arisen around the question of whether and how wellbeing, associated to the subject of happiness can be taught across schools (Gashi & Mojsoska-Blazevski 2016). Students' wellbeing is essential for learning motivation, quality of life, psychological mindset and health. In accordance with Porter (2008), Robinson (2017) highlights that adopting positive education and wellbeing principles requires perseverance; it is a process, not a one-time job.

The significance of the study will be explained in the next section.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The study aims to add to the topic at hand, since it is somewhat a novel discipline and provides insightful data to reshape and enhance current and future readers' attitudes towards SEND. Moreover, the study recognises the impact of adopting positive education and wellbeing concepts on learners with SEND to foster character strengths and ensure flourishing individuals. It identifies factors impacting the wellbeing of learners with SEND and addresses potential gaps from the literature and key findings through a set of recommendations. Thus, the researcher contributed to the novelty of the topic.

The explored school paved the way for the researcher to explore the research questions as it implements positive education and wellbeing principles. Moreover, the topic is in accordance with the UAE vision to become one of the top five happiest countries by 2021 (Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & The Future 2020). Thus, this study is regarded as highly significant.

1.3 Rationale

The rationale behind examining this topic is centered on its significance and educational influence, which has become a major policy priority in positively addressing students with SEND. However, the interrogation lies in whether educators are practically implementing positive practices, to ensure students' wellbeing (Humphrey et al. 2013b).

The researcher's subjective proficiency (Head of Inclusion at a private and inclusive setting school in Dubai), led to exploring the data further. The researcher has observed firsthand the challenges that some learners with SEND surface and thus felt driven to further investigate the topic.

Alborno and Gaad (2014) referred to the "Index for Inclusion" founded by Booth and Ainscow (2011) and deliberated upon barriers that schools in UAE come across. They highlighted that some remain "gate-keepers" for learners with SEND. The "School for All" (MOE 2010) initiative highlights services for students with SEND thus accepting them should not be a mathematical liability, but an opportunity to provide provisions. In fact, education shall not revolve around learners, nor shall it be implemented on them, rather they should be active participants whose "voices" are heard (Nislin & Pesonen 2018). Thus, the researcher felt driven to further explore the topic.

1.4 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This research intends to answer the following research questions in the purpose of investigating the topic at hand:

I.   What is the impact of adopting positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with SEND?

   1. Psychological/Social Wellbeing

      a) Sense of Belonging
      b) Resilience, Self-esteem and Confidence
      c) Prosocial Behaviour and Social Engagement
      d) Mental and Physical Health

   2. Academic Wellbeing

      a) School Attainment
      b) Academic Engagement and Class Participation

II.   What are the factors impacting the wellbeing of students with SEND?

      a) Teachers' Wellbeing and Attitudes
      b) Peer Relationship, Bullying and Stigma
      c) Parental Engagement
      d) School Environment and Climate

III.   What could be potentially recommended to successfully use positive education and wellbeing culture to support the development of students with SEND in Dubai inclusive mainstream schools to ensure functioning individuals in the community?

1.5 Structure of Dissertation Chapters

Chapter 2 presents the study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks with an analytical overview of the literature and gaps. Chapter 3 presents the adopted methodology and a well-rounded view of participants, setting and tools enabling data collection. Chapter 4 reports findings through a presentation of data analysis. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion by listing strengths, limitations and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The following sections will be discussing several concepts pertaining to the topic: positive education, wellbeing culture, learners with SEND along with inclusion in UAE and the child "voice".

2.1.1 Positive Education

Positive education, an emergent arm of positive psychology, has grabbed a great deal of interest over the last decade. It studies processes that lead to flourishing individuals and future generations characterised by high levels of wellbeing and good mental health; a mixture of feeling well and functioning efficiently (Noble & McGrath 2015). However, if pedagogy is not accounted for and adopted well, then positive education will be a failed change initiative. Positive education is a double helix with intertwined strands of similar importance: academics and wellbeing (White & Murray 2015).

Mental illness is the leading reason of disability for young students worldwide. Today's youth represents tomorrow's future generation, hence the necessity of ensuring their wellbeing. Humans have a vital need to relate to their entourage and develop a sense of belonging (Allen & Kern 2017). The foundation of happiness requires acknowledging how crucial social connection, relationships and prosocial behaviours are for wellbeing. The socialising role of schools has become significantly essential and aids students to foster positive relationships and scored better academically (Durlak et al. 2011) so they can develop into functional adults in the community. Schools are essential factors and have an essential role in learners' life satisfaction, wellbeing and future life experiences (Lambert et al. 2014). The child "voice" is

a crucial component in developing and securing a positive, well and inclusive school community (Hodkinson 2010).

Positive education is a requirement of a new approach to pedagogy (White et al. 2017). It recognises what enables students to flourish instead of associating them to their challenges, yet success is not instant (Seligman et al. 2009). For readers outside of UAE, a good reference for positive education would be the institute of positive education, an initiative by Geelong Grammar School (GGS), founded in 2014, in Australia, aiming to promote students' wellbeing and teach them valuable life skills and transformational educational programs to ensure their happiness in a positive and well school climate (Institute of Positive Education 2020). The Institute delivers training courses aimed to meaningfully impact the wellbeing of both teachers and learners, allowing them to flourish by recognising their character strengths in and outside of class (Figure 1). Flourishing is about feeling good (high levels of optimism and resilience) and doing good (caring for others and nurturing positive relationships to contribute to the community), thus capturing hedonistic elements of flourishing: enjoying positive experiences and feeling satisfied with life, in addition to the eudaimonic elements of flourishing: having a deeper purpose and serving something greater than oneself (Figure 2).
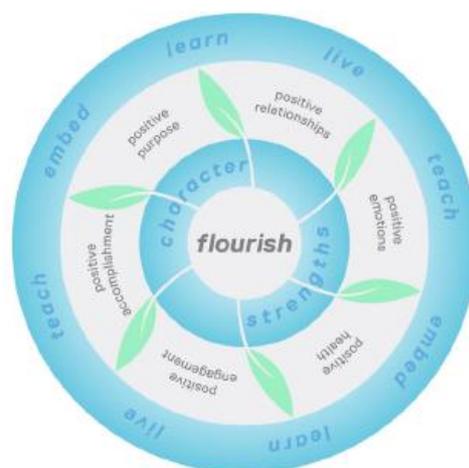
Figure 1: The Six Related Domains of Wellbeing

(Institute of Positive Education, Geelong Grammar School 2020)
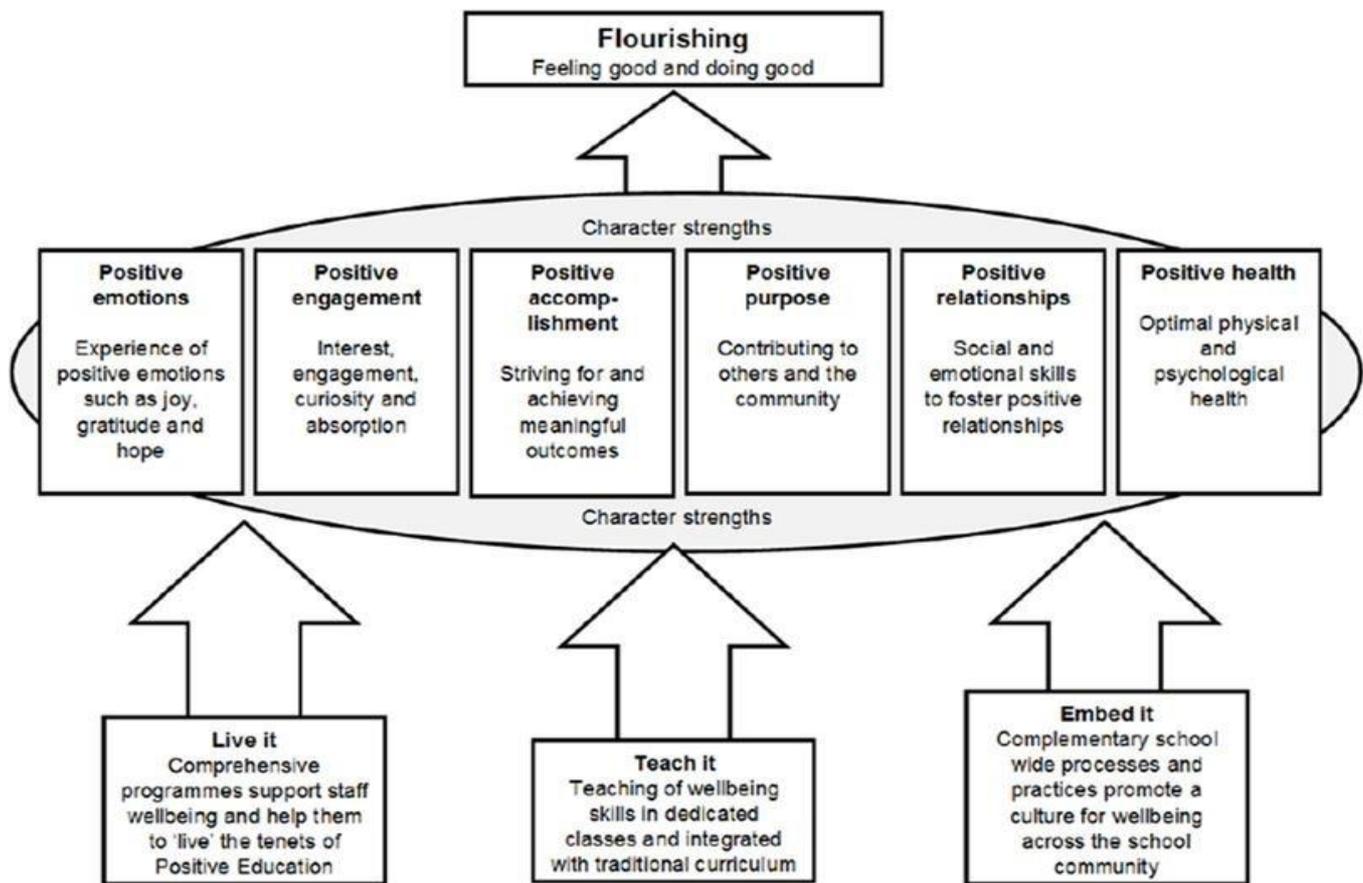
Figure 2: Summary of the GGS Applied Model for Positive Education Program

(Norrish et al. 2013, p. 151)

2.1.2 Wellbeing Culture

Psychological wellbeing is characterised by positive functioning and sense of satisfaction. It is not only portrayed through personal mental and physical health, but also as self-realisation and fulfilment of own potential. Students with SEND display a lower self-esteem and confidence skills which affect their wellbeing and thus lead to lower motivation and feelings of inadequacy to reach their goals (Serdiuk & Baranauskienė 2017). Raising students' wellbeing leads to a positive inclusive environment based on equity.

Students' wellbeing is affected by environment and socialisation variables measuring level of satisfaction among learners, thus, having well-established and inclusive policies underlining students' wellbeing is essential.

Psychological wellbeing is nevertheless compromised when negative feelings are extreme, long-lasting and interfere with students' abilities to function daily. Feeling good is a component of positive wellbeing, it does not only entail positive emotions and feeling happy, but includes a good self-esteem, confidence and positive relationships. Implementing volunteering programs enhances psychological wellbeing and gives more meaning to life (Greenfield & Marks 2004). Psychological wellbeing is actually linked with proactive and positive social behaviour, creative thinking, good physical health and is greatly affected by the school environment. Teachers' positive attitudes enhance students' wellbeing and sense of belonging, especially students with SEND who may require assistance (Huppert 2009). Wellbeing is a psychological construct rooted on rewards, positive relationships, feelings of competency, a mindset that life is meaningful (Diener et al. 2009) and life satisfaction is an important component to wellbeing.

2.1.3 Learners with SEND

Learners with SEND display lower levels of subjective wellbeing, positive affect, life satisfaction, optimism, health related quality of life, yet high negative affect when compared to typically developed students (Moreira et al. 2015). They experience feelings of rejection, behavioural/emotional struggles, a hindered academic performance (Gaspar et al. 2016) and are prone to be languishing than flourishing (Skrzypiec et al. 2015). Some learners with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) desire to join games with peers, however, are unable to communicate or interact and may require around the clock assistance. Students with Cerebral Palsy are unable to follow teachers' request to pick-up pens; their motor skills inhibit them.

Social (support by parents or friends) and personal (optimism, resilience, and self-esteem) factors serve as protective factors and allow students to develop high levels of hedonia (emotional wellbeing) and eudaimonia (social and psychological wellbeing) (Mueller & Prout 2009).

Learners with SEND often feel that failure is inevitable, and that attainment could only occur with the help of teachers, thus positive education and wellbeing principles through right interventions at the right time are crucial. They are subjects of capabilities and should be consulted and guided (Devecchi, Rose & Shevlin 2014). Once students start succeeding, they enter the success spiral, whereby "success breeds success" (O'Rourke, Cooper & Gray 2012). Downes (2018) described traditional education as eroded lines that need to incorporate wellbeing and positive education into the curriculum and education process.

Parents of learners with SEND tend to face a fear of social embarrassment upon the identification of their children as having SEND (Gaad 2011). Cultural and religious misinterpretations should be tackled to lower stigma towards disability (Alborno 2017) and reshape attitudes towards a more positive climate. UAE is positively advocating inclusion and the practitioners in education are ensuring its prosperous accomplishment. The literature review is spread out from early 2000 until 2020; however similar key points and gaps, which will further discussed in the literature, remain a challenge and have continued to overlap until the present.

2.1.4 Inclusion in UAE, Provisions and Child "Voice"

In the flourishing and well-developed UAE, inclusion is spreading, and the trend is to include students with SEND in mainstream classes (Gaad 2004). The UAE government was the first in the region to sign the UN Convention on the rights of PoD in March 2019 (Gaad

2015a). Intervention-based programs emphasising on the Emirati student "voice" aided peers and educators to gain a thorough understanding of SEND, positively altering their expectations and attitudes (Gaad 2015a). In fact, the first national support group for people with DS (2004) in UAE promoted awareness on social inclusion (Gaad 2006). The "Year of Tolerance" (2019) solidified values of tolerance within education. Special Olympics World Games, held in Abu Dhabim, in March 2019, embraced differences and cherished diversity. Moreover, a special department was founded in the MoE, to support the needs of children with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) by motivating them to successfully contribute to their community (Anati 2012). A special farm "Zayed Agricultural Centre for Rehabilitation Development" was led by individuals with Down Syndrome (DS) and ASD positively impacting their wellbeing (Sankar 2017).

Avoiding attributing disabilities to students ensures their wellbeing (Arif & Gaad 2008). Staff trainings are essential to identify students with SEND based on individual differences than homogenous groups (Alborno 2017).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will discuss the following theories pertaining to the topic at hand to guide the research.

2.2.1 Skinner's Behaviourism Theory (1913)

Skinner discusses operant conditioning; if students are positively reinforced to complete a specific task, they will be able to initiate similar assignments in the future (Floress et al. 2017); a lack of positive reinforcement leads to a decreased chance for student engagement (Urdan & Schoenfelder 2006). Behaviour is a set of learned habits based on environmental conditions; the better the conditions, the better behaviour results. Teachers' moves and praise are essential in enhancing learners' engagement and wellbeing (Lambert &

Sugita 2016) through non-judgmental feedback and facilitating knowledge rather than dispensing it; mistakes are opportunities for learning.

2.2.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943)

Positive motivation stimulates, leads and sustains behaviour. The best lesson plans will not foster students' enthusiasm if they are not positively motivated by teachers. Educators should delegate students a sense of control to foster independence by rewarding them through "token-economy" highlighting the value of good behaviour when earned appropriately to appreciate success. Feedback should be immediate, constructive and highlight strengths and support challenges. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Figure 3), produces the drive, motivation and desire to satisfy needs, develop one's potential and reach self-actualisation.

The following Death Valley analogy could be linked to the topic at hand. The Death Valley in California witnesses no rain, no growth of flowers. During winter 2004, it rained. In spring 2005, the ground was carpeted in flowers; Death Valley is not dead, it is dormant, waiting for right conditions to flourish and bloom (Mcnew 2020). Through right conditions, life is inevitable. Similarly, when provided with right-kind of interventions; students flourish. If this is applicable to typically developed students, then a greater impact shall arise for students with SEND presenting additional vulnerabilities.
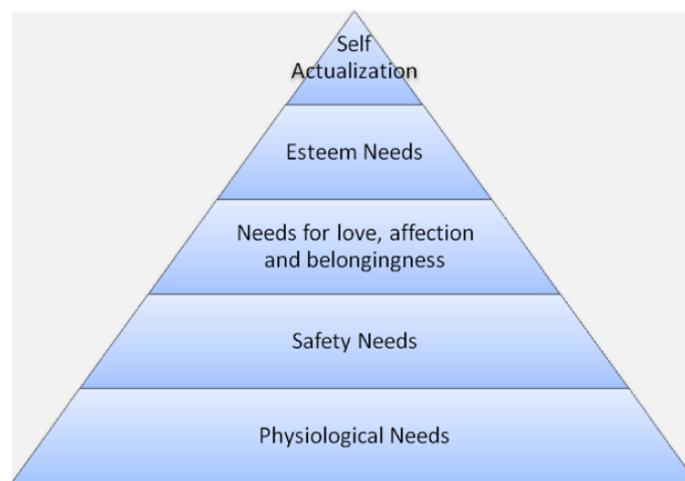
Figure 3: Maslow's Hierarchy of Need Theory

(Jerome 2013, p.4)

2.2.3 Vygotsky's Theory of Learning and Social Development (1962)

Vygotysky highlights the importance of social interaction and positive cooperative learning to enhance peer-evaluation and foster acceptance towards less able students (Slavin 2009). Positive peer-relationships and teacher-student connections promote self-worth and self-regulation, supporting resilience of students with SEND (Hall & Theron 2016). Having facilitative, supportive and constructive teachers ensures students are encouraged to be independent learners and enhances their wellbeing. Moving away from traditional classes requires time and effort, thus training educators to accept students while catering for their individual differences, through student-centered plans, reinforces engagement and should become a habit (Causton-Theoharis, Theoharis & Trezek 2008). Thinking classrooms require thinking teachers. Learners are perceived as active key-players requiring support to ensure they reach the zone of proximal development (level of development immediately above a person's present level; achievable through positive guidance).

2.2.4 Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, SDT (2000)

SDT is a theory of motivation focusing on human motivation and personality, emphasising on how social and cultural elements ease individuals' wellbeing and the quality of their performance to promote high-quality forms of student motivation and engagement (Ryan & Deci 2000). Further, consistent motivational support enhances students' wellbeing (Turner et al. 2002).

2.2.5 Ryff's Model of Psychological Wellbeing (1989)

Ryff's model highlights a powerful framework investigating ideas to enhance ways of living. Wellbeing is a philosophical issue related to the meaning of a positive life and entails six categories: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations, environmental mastery and autonomy leading to wellbeing (Bishton 2007).

2.2.6 Seligman's Positive Psychology Theory / PERMA Theory (2002-2011)

Seligman is the "father" of positive psychology: "Just as the good life is something beyond the pleasant life, the meaningful life is beyond the good life" (Seligman 2011). Schools are socialising settings (Kern et al. 2015), thus ideal to teach and nurture wellbeing principles. Positive psychology focuses on positive self-fulfillment highlighting positive perspectives of human development promoted at home and school. The movement of "happiness lessons" has entered the educational arena with a polyphony of voices. Seligman claims three pillars of happiness: positive emotions, positive traits and positive "enabling" institutions, good schools (Kristjánsson 2012).

a) Seligman's Authentic Happiness Theory (2002)

Seligman claimed that individuals can sense happiness from different forms of experiences leading to happiness: pleasant life (feeling positive emotions), engaged life (flow: loosing oneself in activities through character strengths leading to an intrinsic motivation) and meaningful life (despite how engaging flow activities are, they eventually become meaningless). Individuals should complete all paths as they experience their signature strengths (Seligman 2002).

b) Seligman's Well-being Theory and Accomplishment of PERMA (2011)

Wellbeing theory highlights the goal of achieving wellbeing rather than happiness. Seligman's PERMA model (Figure 4) highlighted five components of wellbeing derived from the essence of positive psychology to include into curriculums to foster learners' wellbeing and enable them to master social and academic skills: positive emotion (joy, hope) or pleasure, engagement (use skills to be absorbed in activities), relationships (positive relationships), meaning and purpose (sense of belonging), and accomplishment (pursuing success). In contrast to Seligman's previous theory whereby character strengths were related to engagement, they

became relevant to maximise wellbeing to achieve a state of flourishing, thriving, of being full of vitality (Seligman 2011).

Figure 4: PERMA Theory of Wellbeing

(Seligman 2011)

c) **Character Strengths and Virtues**

Character strengths and universal virtues (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence) are the foundations of happiness and well-being. Each virtue entails four-character strengths. A strength is defined as an area one is naturally good at and enjoys participating in. Unlike talents, strengths require effort and are enhanced through life. When individuals acknowledge their strengths and utilise them, they feel empowered. Wellbeing is multidimensional, thus the necessity of understanding one's strengths to develop a balanced life.

2.3 Literature Review- Empirical Studies

Fruitful positive education programs merge evidence-based learning from the science of positive psychology, best practices in teaching and learning and the school's climate to ensure a supportive entourage for members of school communities by ensuring a linear and innovative change rather than imposing ideas (White & Kern 2018). Positive education is the core to

founding a solid, positive, inclusive and welcoming school climate (Keeffe & De George-Walker 2010). In fact, positive education and wellbeing interventions positively impact disruptive behaviours (Simões, Matos & Social 2012).

Positive psychology lying at the heart of positive education, emphasises on what is functioning positively in human development. It is not a silver bullet that quickly fixes a situation, it is a process. It is not only portrayed through personal, mental and physical health, but also as self-realisation of own potential promoting students to become active agents of personal development (Serdiuk & Baranauskienė 2017). Students with SEND are more prone to develop significantly worse academic and psychosocial targets than typically developed peers, thus hindering future life opportunities; poor psychosocial domains could be due to negative social school experiences (Humphrey et al. 2013a).

A unified theoretical framework is required to effectively combine positive education with educational knowledge and pedagogical practice, to recognise challenges within educational environments (White et al. 2017).

2.3.1 Adopting Positive Education and Wellbeing Principles on Students with SEND

Positivity in a school climate reflected through friendly school environment, welcoming teachers and accepting peers with a high quality of teaching and learning, leads to positive teacher-peer relationships thus fostering students' sense of belonging, engagement, pro-social behaviour, resilience and enhanced academic engagement (Noble & McGrath 2015). Yet, bullying negatively impacts wellbeing, attendance, social and academic performance (Gashi & Mojsoska-Blazevski 2016).

1. Psychological/Social Wellbeing

a. Sense of Belonging

Students are happier and more efficacious when provided with opportunities to voice their feelings, desires and challenges (Hodkinson 2010).

Prosper framework, an organising tool studying the implementation of positive psychology in educational contexts discusses that facing positive feelings enhances students' thinking and potential. Sense of belonging is a crucial variable describing student psychological wellbeing; the more connected and accepted learners feel, the less prone they are to report feelings of anxiety. Low incidents of bullying and safe school climates articulating a vision for school-wide wellbeing rooted on prosocial values such as acceptance enhance sense of belonging. The need to belong is a basic human and pervasive drive (Noble & McGrath 2015).

Students with SEND experiencing positive education and wellbeing should communicate with those involved in building the process to emphasise on a necessary pre-requisite: child's voice (Hodkinson 2010).

b. Resilience, Self-esteem and Confidence

Psychological wellbeing is a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively, which is the opposite of ill-being (Huppert 2009). Learners with SEND tend to have lower wellbeing because of their feelings of incompetence and increased depressive symptoms (McMillan & Jarvis 2013).

Teachers' attitudes, peer-relationships and school climates enhance wellbeing, competence, resilience of students with SEND and teacher/peer relationships, thus fostering

engagement among peers. Teachers should encourage rational and optimistic thinking to develop students' self-esteem and confidence (Noble & McGrath 2010).

Strengths-oriented intervention programs empower students' strengths and lead to an increased sense of wellbeing, thus increasing their satisfaction and engagement level at school (Bressoud et al. 2017) and particularly the inclusion of students with SEND since they often take on the role as needing rather than providing help, which is in accordance with Seligman's theory of character strengths (section 2.2.6c).

Students with SEND experience disengagement and learned helplessness when facing difficult circumstances (McMillan & Jarvis 2013). Thus, strong school connections foster enhanced attendance, engagement and resilience (Olivier & Archambault 2017).

c. Prosocial Behaviour and Social Engagement

Psychological well-being is linked with proactive and positive social behaviour, creative thinking, good physical health and is greatly affected by school environments. Positive education and wellbeing culture allow students to portray attentive behaviour and display active involvement in the learning process by displaying feelings of curiosity, confidence and satisfaction with products of learning (Noble & McGrath 2015). Students should communicate by taking turns and listen actively to socially contribute to their entourage.

Implementing volunteering programs within schools aids in enhancing students' wellbeing and gives more meaning to life (Huppert 2009). Reading books to students stimulate social inclusion, communication, proactive approaches, sensory processing and attention (Robinson, Moore & Harris 2019).

d. Mental Health and Physical Health

Positive mental health refers to a state of wellbeing whereby individuals realise their capabilities, cope with life stressors, are able to work productively and contribute to their community. People with positive emotional wellbeing display increased levels of left prefrontal activation at rest, those with low levels of wellbeing display higher levels of right prefrontal activation (Huppert 2009). Positive emotions exert positive effects on health, thus enhancing overall wellbeing.

Increased emotional competence and awareness, recognising, expressing and regulating feelings increases levels of happiness and positivity and enhances social relationships (Gay et al. 2017). Sharing emotions during counselling maintains positive emotional competence, mental and physical health and lowers anxiety. Students might not be able to verbally express themselves, hence the necessity of providing them with alternatives (writing or drawing feelings).

2. Academic Wellbeing
a. School Attainment

Students with SEND may require more one-on-one attention and guided instructions with increased prompting to ensure their wellbeing (Floress et al. 2017). Johnson (2018) revealed that learners' grades and their perception of academic self-efficacy were positively correlated: when learners perceive an elevated self-efficacy, they are more prone to be confident and have a better chance at achieving positive learning targets. However, learners with SEND tend to display a low sense of self-efficacy despite efforts, leading to poor self-worth. Incidents of bullying lead to low levels of psychological wellbeing for victims mainly, bullies and bystanders and negatively affect academic performance; students who scored low

academically reported greater exposure to bullying (Hauser & Erzinger 2017). Students receiving positive interventions display higher academic achievements compared to those without (Pugh & Chitiyo 2011).

b. Academic Engagement and Participation

The way students perceive themselves impacts their wellbeing. Students with SEND reported lower academic self-concept; negative self-perception and an increased level of burnout, thus affecting attendance, self-esteem, social and academic engagement (Korhonen 2016). Positive education and wellbeing principles build a better perseverance towards attaining IEP goals and enhance students' school experience and sense of belonging (White & Kern 2018).

Learners with SEND may be embarrassed to seek accommodations and modifications (Ochiogu 2015), thus training teachers to deliver curriculum-adjustments is essential. The fundamentals of positive psychology and resilience are the strengths-based approach related to Seligman's strengths-based theory (section 2.2.6c) emphasising on positive results instead of individual deficits to protect students' wellbeing and enhance academic engagement.

2.3.2   Factors Impacting the Wellbeing of Students with SEND

a. Teachers' Attitudes and Wellbeing

A high sense of teacher efficacy is defined as a teacher's belief in their ability to effectively teach and promote student engagement and learning thus increasing student achievement, motivation and self-efficacy. Educators with previous experience with SEND displayed an increased self-efficacy (Johnson 2018).

The approach teachers use with socially vulnerable students or students with SEND at risk to developing social-emotional struggles, "sets the tone" to how classmates perceive them and impacts their social inclusion. Positive teacher approaches promote students' wellbeing, acceptance and school satisfaction (Nislin & Pesonen 2018).

Constructive teacher-student connections empower independence of students with SEND, develops life-skills, while exposing them to adjust well to adversity (Hall & Theron 2016). A clear relationship is drawn between teachers' wellbeing and their efficacy in teaching students. Happy teachers displayed a higher efficacy in class management, learner engagement and use of instructional techniques. During moments of conflicts, educators would prompt students and remind them of this perspective taking activity to reinforce conflict resolution (Bell et al. 2019). Educators are approachable life coaches enabling positive growth. Teachers should understand the forms and functions of students' behaviour, particularly students with SEBD (social, emotional and behavioural disorders) and employ effective communication techniques through Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequences data sheet, rather than excluding them (Floress et al. 2017) and allow pupils to become aware of diverse needs (Broomhead 2013). Teachers in flourishing schools educate students compassionately to enhance their teaching and learning (Cherkowski 2018). Teachers are the essential targets and parents and students are second targets (Rizzoti 2017). A comprehensive school governance should highlight steps to attain the wellbeing of students with SEND in relation to staff members (Wilson 2001).

Learners in lower grades displayed a higher level of positive inclusion than learners in higher grades. As grade level increases and students become more aware of their difficulties, the focus of teaching becomes directed towards covering the curriculum which makes it

challenging for teachers to be involved in students' personal problems (Schwab, Sharma & Loreman 2018).

b. Peer Relationships, Bullying and Stigma

When students feel safe, they automatically develop feelings of connection and belonging to their school and teachers (Noble & McGrath 2015), yet perform worse academically when exposed to bullying (Humphrey et al. 2013b). Peers who do not ridicule others reinforce positive psychological wellbeing and safety in class (Albisetti 2017). Poor peer-relationships and bullying often lead to maladjustment and mental-health problems. The school ethos, climate and peer-teacher relationships affect students' wellbeing (Coughlan & Carpenter 2013).

Bullying is a multifaceted matter negatively affecting students' socio-emotional and academic levels (Noble & McGrath 2015). Addressing bullying behaviours represents one side of the coin. However, implementing Prosper framework pathways (section 2.3.1-1a) contributes to ensuring wellbeing across students in a positive school climate, hence securing the other side of the coin. Unlike punitive methods failing to address the roots of the issue, anti-bullying efforts demand consistent strategies (Pugh & Chitiyo 2011). Students' behaviour, whether subjected or perpetrators of bullying, should be targeted and not the individual.

Some students with SEND do not only struggle making friends but maintaining them as well (Ochiogu 2015). Having one friend is sufficient to inhibit depressive symptoms (O'Rourke, Cooper & Gray 2012). The gift of friendship makes school experience more enjoyable and ensures healthy peer-relationships (Parker 2011). Circle-time allows students to bond together while exercising emotional intelligence and self-regulation strategies. Super circle-time is a new strategy rooted on positive psychology theory and positive education

whereby students with SEND are included to model to peers that all students can participate to avoid having them singled-out (Bell et al. 2019). Sign language can be taught to peers so they communicate with students having hearing impairment to instill compassion and healthy peer-friendships (Parker 2011).

The Achievement for All (AFA) Program, piloted in England was a mean to support schools to deliver enhanced opportunities for students with SEND to flourish. It entails less bullying, supportive relationships, positive behaviour, a comprehensive framework ensuring consistent dialogues with parents and provisions to support students by increasing social participation (Humphrey et al. 2013b).

c. Parental Engagement

Parents, educators, and seniors should deliver a consistent understanding of the child's needs (Dhaoui 2008) to ensure a consistent school-parent dialogue (Sperling & Mowder 2006) and promote equity regarding educational opportunities (McCoy et al. 2016). The disability 'label' has a variety of negative implications, with lower parental expectations for students with SEND. Parents should not create a ceiling for children's growth but encourage them to reach self-actualisation as per Maslow's theory (section 2.2.2). Strong parent-school relationships (Barlow & Humphrey 2012) enhances school attendance and communication.

Gaad and Thabet (2017) found that Ta'alouf training course empowered and benefited parents of learners with SEND and DS in managing their children's behaviour and quality of life by sharing recommendations. Thus, hope-instilling interventions aid parents to perceive their child's disability as less severe and ensure a balanced parent wellbeing.

d. School Environment and Climate

Positive education and wellbeing culture are a whole-school shared responsibility; every teacher is a teacher of SEND (Smith & Broomhead 2019). Schools represent a crucial socialisation space where learners study, form friendly relationships and develop socio-emotional and behavioural skills. Learners are protagonists and peers are expected to be acceptant for the future perspective of responsibility and civil coexistence without discrimination. When social and emotional elements are considered as crucial as academic learning, teachers will then succeed in empowering a resilient generation in society (Brusnahan & Gatti 2011). Higher levels of wellbeing lead to enhanced social and academic achievements (Bocci et al. 2017).

Employing a therapeutic recreation specialist joining the dots to ease home-school-community relations, assesses students' needs in a comprehensive manner and develops accurate IEP (individualised education plans) goals based on strengths and supportive of challenges (Heyne & Anderson 2011). The specialist would meet family members and responsible school personnel and may teach students accurate and relevant social skills strategies during recreation (initiating conversations or listening to others). Implementing early detection strategies ensures wellbeing and prevents mental health problems (McMillan & Jarvis 2013).

2.3.3 Recommendations to Successfully Adopt Positive Education and Wellbeing Principles Based on the Literature

a. Training

Some students with SEND tend to be followers than leaders and might feel intimated to maintain their "voice". The capability and strengths-based approach provides a different

perspective of actually recognising abilities rather than disabilities. Training teachers to become constructivist teachers, as per Vygotsky's theory (section 2.2.3), through professional development enhances their self-efficacy and ensures a positive whole-school and flourishing climate. Learning is thus a cyclical process with opportunities for improvement, requiring educators' efforts and dedication. Some educators perceive teaching students with SEND as teaching on a knife-edge (Coughlan & Carpenter 2013). Students' atypical behaviours may insinuate an underlying mental health difficulty requiring extensive support to minimise barriers to learning and negative school experiences. Teachers should be trained to observe the trend of behaviour to address it in a proactive than reactive manner.

Alghazo and Gaad (2004) revealed significant discrepancies in the inclusion of students with learning disabilities (LDs) with respect to years of teaching experience, underlining the importance of training (Chao et al. 2017). Inclusive education requires teachers to address students' deficiencies (Hornby 2015). Teacher assistants for students with SEND are not a luxury or a choice, but a necessity to ensure students' engagement and wellbeing (Gaad 2015b). LSAs are beneficial as they accommodate students within classrooms (fire lighting) instead of pull-outs (firefighting), thus enhancing principles of inclusion (Kite 2008). LSAs optimise inclusion (Gaad 2015b) and operationalise interaction between peers while addressing gaps (Dolva et al. 2010). Aversive language such as "suffering" or "retarded" negatively impact students' wellbeing and should be prohibited (Arif & Gaad 2008). Through right training, educators are able to address gaps (Capern & Hammond 2014).

Self-efficacy holds a vital role in academic success, thus the necessity of having educators who positively influence students' self-efficacy and socio-emotional adjustment. A high-sense of teacher efficacy promotes student engagement, learning, student achievement, motivation, self-efficacy (Johnson 2018) and sense of belonging (Nislin & Pesonen 2018).

b. Well Schools Network in UAE

The Well Schools Network (Well Schools Network 2020) in UAE (section 1.1) promotes positive education and wellbeing culture for learners and educators leading to positive advantages for school communities. It fosters parents' participation to develop learners' personal, positive and academic skills ensuring a positive climate.

The first pillar includes engaging students/families to foster positivity, mental and physical wellbeing. The second pillar promotes teachers' roles to positively impact students' wellbeing by boosting their sense of recognition and positive teacher-student relationships. The third pillar focuses on school environment promoting wellbeing, positivity, pupil engagement, personal strengths, social activities and battling bullying. The fourth pillar focuses on enhancing students' positive role in society while cultivating positive personality characteristics.

c. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Teaching and learning require solid social, emotional and academic elements (Durlak et al. 2011). Learners learn in collaboration with educators, while surrounded by peers and through the encouragement of parents.

SEL is the process through which students understand and regulate emotions, set and realise positive goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain positive relationships, and achieve responsible decisions. Regarding pedagogy, SEL activities emphasise on solutions instead of problems. SEL increases prosocial behaviours, diminishes conduct and enhances students' academic achievements (Durlak et al. 2011). It entails interpersonal and environmental supports enhancing school performance through positive peer-adult relationships, anti-bullying initiatives, character education and welcoming teacher-student

relationships. Identifying positive outcomes of positive education and wellbeing culture is the first step towards establishing successful environments.

SEL is an approach to education supporting mental health and includes Aspire principles: Agency, Safety, Positivity, Inclusion, Respect and Equity. SEL activities enable students to explore positive emotions and problem-solving to laugh together through playfulness, thus raising their oxytocin levels, understanding aspects of wellbeing, enhancing school connection, resilience and lowering competitive behaviours (Roffey 2017). Learners should be active participants than recipients engaged in inquiry-based classes.

Aspire approach, underpins SEL and incorporates self-determination theory by Ryan & Deci (2000) rooted on motivation and highlights students' ability to prosper (section 2.2.4). Respect guidelines are laid out during circle-time where every student has a turn and voice through activities that leverage positive communication. The strength-based approach is being powered with instead of power over; all students learn together regardless of difficulties. The aim is not to erase previous teaching techniques, but to build on them.

Zippy's Friends Program is a school based SEL program for preschoolers highlighting that if educators teach students at young ages to cope with challenges, they will manage to positively overcome future challenges. It enhances class climate, reduces bullying and promotes positive skills. It tackles feelings, communication, friendship and conflict. Students thus build their own positive solutions to problems through engaging in activities: listening to stories, discussions, role-play and drawing (Coughlan & Carpenter 2013).

d. Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)

PBS promotes students' social emotional wellbeing and fosters desirable behaviours. Attending to socio-emotional needs leads to enhanced life outcomes and future employment

results (Berndt & Kubinski 2011). Substantial enhancements in teachers' ratings of school climate were found in schools implementing school wide PBS interventions (positive teaching, praise teacher-student notes, proactive screening for learners at-risk) and significant reductions in students' misbehaviour (Caldarella et al. 2011).

PBS suggests gathering students together daily in the Cafeteria to review behavioural expectations through chanting "We believe in being safe, friends, and we will learn!". Students repeat the chant as they line up. Teachers then model how aspects of the chant translate into positive behaviour, actions and well choices by addressing the socio-emotional and behavioural aspect of learning (McCart & Wolf 2011).

The School leadership team shall review practices and policies highlighting student voice and clubs to support diversity and positive peer-relationships (Berndt & Kubinski 2011).

e. Pen Resiliency Program (PRP)

PRP teaches learners resilience skills including coping skills, cognitive reframing, problem-solving skills, social skills and positive education initiatives to decrease feelings of depression, hopelessness, anxiety and increase student wellbeing. Happiness is a fundamental element (Brunwasser, Gillham & Kim 2009). Positive psychologists suggested teaching methods entailing "skills for happiness" (Seligman et al. 2009) and claim that education psychologists should emphasise on learners' strengths than challenges and shall never lose sight of the happy life. When individuals are exposed to happy clips, they report high levels of well-being. "The hot seat PRP technique", teaches learners to evaluate upsetting experiences from negative perspectives, and to directly put thoughts into perspective and think of alternative positive interpretations to replace them (Peterson 2006).

Chapter 4 and 5 will be discussing potential recommendations to successfully adopt positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with SEND rooted on the key findings from the study and literature.

2.4 Summary

Novel studies started to explore the topic on learners with SEND in particular. There is a lot of excitement about allowing positive psychology take on schools and one would hope that enthusiasm would enter teachers' bloodstream and quicken their pulse to address current and potential gaps in the literature, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. Afterall, learners who learn together, tend to live together (Heijnen 2003). Recommendations may assist decision makers in future practice (Gaad 2015a). In fact, member schools in UAE are being provided with wellbeing surveys to empower students to become functional pioneers in society. The researcher is grateful for UAE achievements, especially after recognising significant enhancements at the workplace through consistent monitoring from the KHDA and MoE.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology designed for this exploratory study sustained relevant data collection and suggested accurate analysis addressing research questions (section 1.4). This methodology aimed at incorporating the triangulation of qualitative approach of semi-structured interviews, in/out of class observations and the quantitative method of surveys (Short 2014). However, due to Covid-19, the researcher faced accessibility issues, as schools were closed as an effective safety control measure to reduce the spread of the disease (Viner et al. 2020) and distance learning (DL) was introduced in March 2020, thus the methodology was altered.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

The mixed-method approach (Figure 5), quasi-experimental research design, blending qualitative and quantitative techniques (Povee & Roberts 2015) was adopted by the researcher (collator of data and interviewer). It gives relevant insight into the study (Brannen 2017) entailing contextual understanding and reflects strengths of research processes to collect the required data for interpretation of findings and recommendations. Data was collected virtually which inhibited the researcher from gathering information on school campus, yet, was able to follow-up and pursue Zoom meetings, emails and phone-calls to ensure accurate, valid and reliable findings, despite challenging times. The researcher conducted a total of eight interviews (two participants became unavailable), ten surveys and provided target participants in the same position similar questions to rule out potential biases. The researcher was not granted access to virtual observations due to matters of safeguarding, thus the complete triangulation of observations was not possible.

Semi-structured interviews with pre-determined but open-ended questions, were conducted with the same key participants within the field to add significant input into surveys, whereby respondents expressed themselves freely (Gaad & Khan 2007) and generated further inquiries (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Recorded interviews eased the interpretation and validation of results (Creswell 2009). Surveys yielded a robust scientific ring of confidence to research.
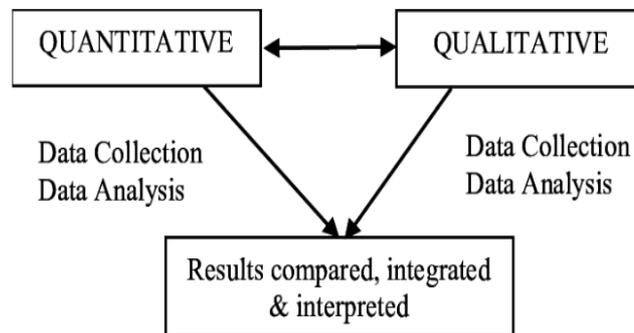
Figure 5: Mixed-Method Approach

(Atif, Richards & Bilgin 2013, p. 10).

3.3 Context and Site of the Study

The study was piloted in one private and inclusive setting school in Dubai-UAE, adopting the British curriculum, positive education and wellbeing principles, whereby core values, centered around wellbeing, portray growth, nurture and health to promote happy pupils and staff, empowerment and emotional intelligence, with a 2100 population including diverse needs, thus leading to an optimal area to explore as a case-study to gain a deep and narrow insight on the topic. Access was facilitated by the Head of Inclusion.

3.4 Target Population and Rationale Behind Selecting the Sample

The target population aids in the formulation of answers to the research questions (Rivas-Quarneti, Magalhaes & Gastaldo 2018), in this case teachers from both phases (primary, and secondary), including support teachers (ST) and learning support assistants (LSA) as well as management (inclusion coordinator and counselor). Purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al. 2015) was the most convenient method to choosing participants (Zoogah 2014) and answer all research questions; different informants related to the inclusion team yielded significant information.

3.5 Research Instrument and Procedure

Data was qualitatively collected through semi-structured interviews, and quantitatively through survey questionnaires designed by the researcher, from the Index of Inclusion by Booth and Ainscow (2002 & 2011) and Well Schools Network (Well Schools Network 2020), based on a likert scale measuring the extent to which participants agree with questions: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree (Appendix 1). Both were designed in a brief, straightforward and concise manner according to elements aligned with research questions. Key interview statements are attached in appendices (Appendix 2). In fact, Seligman (2002) discussed the happy life and building positive qualities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Ryff and Singer (2006) developed the idea of positive relations and Ryan and Deci (2000) discussed motivation (section 2.2). Virtanen et al. (2019) operationalised wellbeing with school enjoyment, educational aspirations, self-esteem and students' school functioning. Therefore, there is no commonly agreed definition for wellbeing and a lack of agreement on how to asses it, however theorists and researchers conceptualise wellbeing around feeling happy, having positive relations, flourishing and functioning effectively (McMillan & Jarvis 2013). Thus, the

researcher gathered significant information when designing questions. After compiling data, it was sorted and analysed by the researcher.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Validity and reliability of studies only adopting a qualitative approach can be slightly questionable (Armstrong et al. 1997), however respondents' answers provide reasons as to why things are as they are through semi-structured interviews and is an opportunity to collect in-depth descriptive data about participants, settings or phenomena while avoiding contamination (Creswell 2008), whereas the quantitative approach yields numeric data from surveys with better generalisability of findings in a quantifiable manner to analyse (Bryman 2017) and explain the significance of the impact, yet do not elicit choice of answer. Thus, mixed-method approach ensured validity and reliability.

Validity confirms that the obtained findings are true and represent the section explored and is judged against the extent to which the data addresses research questions (Robson 2005). The study's design, coherence, structure, language and clarity of questions avoided misleading information that could bias validity of results. Purposeful sample was representative of key informants in a specific inclusive-setting context and added to the research's validity. Survey questions were designed by the researcher and based on the Index of Inclusion by Booth and Ainscow (2002 & 2011) and Well Schools Network (Well Schools Network 2020); they were reviewed by the researcher's expert professor and were piloted on two participants that were included in the study. Reliability demands consistency and stability (Robson 2005). The researcher tested the reliability of the study by using Cronbach Alpha, the expected coefficient should be above 0.7 (Foster 2001), on each of the variables. The coefficient is 0.916 for all 37 items, thus highlighting a strong reliability. Simple likert-scale questionnaires led to high-

reliability. It was perceived as a manner of combating respondents' lack of time during Covid-19 and was considered highly relevant and a route gathering honest answers.

3.7 Data Collection

Interviews followed a consistent planned sequence of questions similar to survey questions. The respondents were provided with freedom to answer questions as the conversation required, it was crucial for the researcher to have a natural conversation that flowed in a manner encouraging transparency and openness. Since the data was carried out virtually during uncertain times of a pandemic, interviews were recorded on Zoom, free of cost and simple to utilise, and were essential during data collection. Recordings created a natural rapport with interviewees with brief notetaking of key points to ensure a natural flow of ideas at ease. Recordings also yielded a true and full reflection of answers and prevented researcher-bias of unconscious selective recalling of what was discussed. Participants were relaxed and seemed to forget that the session was recorded which confirmed a thorough reflection of the process. The researcher realised that notetaking hindered the interviewee from speaking freely and fluently possibly to provide the researcher with additional time for notetaking which interrupted the flow of the conversation. Notetaking could distract interviewees from disclosing information they otherwise would have given (Huseyn 2009). Thus, the researcher benefited from recordings which served as a less disruptive mode of recording respondents' perspectives and avoided bias results by ensuring an effective interviewer-respondent communication. The researcher allowed interviewees with additional time to voice out their answers to share valid responses while making virtual eye-contact to further prompt and reassure participants. The interviews occurred over four consecutive weeks with different participants and informants with different roles.

The quick evolution of the internet strengthened garnering data and claimed that information can be gleaned from the respective participants by sharing surveys by email where researchers can obtain information anytime anywhere (Kilinç & Firat 2017). Participants had knowledge of internet, thus did not slow down the process and were subjected to the same set of questions. The planned sequence of questioning both during interviews and surveys aimed to answer research questions and assure the examination of issues that arose throughout the literature.

The researcher was unable to observe students with SEND across different settings to assess their social and academic engagement, due to Covid-19 and was not granted access to virtual observations. However, the researcher gathered documents from the school, pertaining to the topic to gain a more holistic understanding (Appendix 3).

3.8 Data Analysis

The data was compiled together and examined. The researcher analysed the gathered data through SPSS statistical software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) which aided in analysing the significance of the study and was represented statistically through visual table presentations leading to a quantifiable analysis (Walliman 2017). Individuality was maintained during the study leading to authentic answers by participants. Qualitative data was analysed in-depth descriptively. The compiled data was organised, analysed and presented professionally to ensure the reliability, feasibility and validity of the research (Christensen et al. 2017).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher acknowledges the cruciality of exploring and complying to the necessary set of guidelines and ethical obligations prior to conducting the research, in the best professional manner. An official letter by the university highlighting the purpose of the study was shared via email (Appendix 4). As part of professional practice, the school name was not

revealed, and participants were also informed that data will be successfully stored on a specific folder to preserve confidentiality and its use will be only for academic purposes. Students' anonymity was assured as per Data Protection Act 2019; all informants were immediately informed that their identities will be anonymous as participants were referred to as such: "Teacher1" and reassured about matters of confidentiality (Creswell 2009) while given the option to opt out. Interview recordings were used for relevant quotations and to avoid unconscious recalling of information by the researcher. No questions caused discomfort. The next chapter will present the data analysis and findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the findings obtained from a mixed-method approach, qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys). The researcher conducted the quantitative data analysis using SPSS to draw findings. In pursuance of strengthening findings and achieving authentic conclusions, data gathered is perceived as holistic leading to inclusive interpretations of research questions (section 1.4). The quantitative data is illustrated using various statistical tests, descriptive statistics, reliability and correlation to explore general trends and patterns, which will be presented in conjunction with descriptors of qualitative data and segments from interviews (Appendix 2). The relevant qualitative data from interviews alongside the quantitative data aided the researcher to contextualise findings while representing the intricacies of the topic (Creswell 2008). Together, they will be presented in the structured format of research questions. Thus, key qualitative responses present excerpts from interviews that support or contradict the quantitative data presented alongside, to observe patterns and congruence between both data sets. The qualitative and quantitative interaction strengthened data analysis.

The section below represents an analysis of the qualitative data, gathered through 10 semi-structured interview questions with 8 participants.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis - Research Question 1

  I.   **What is the impact of adopting positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with SEND?**

  1. **Psychological/Social Wellbeing**

  a. **Sense of Belonging**

It has been established from interviews that the majority of participants recognised the importance of teachers' attitudes on students' wellbeing, level of satisfaction and sense of belonging. Particularly, Teacher1 & SENDCo1 both raised a crucial point related to embedding in teachers the capacity to be alert and recognise whether students with SEND may feel singled out across different settings and whether they are invited to play dates or birthday parties. Teacher1 stated that visual support aids, social stories, intervention groups and counselling sessions are crucial to ensure flourishing individuals.

SENDCo1 stated that making wellbeing part of the culture is crucial to ensure students' sense of belonging. LSA2 and SENDCo1 both mentioned that diversity is valued and seen as an opportunity to create a rich environment for all students to learn and succeed. All participants' answers geared towards agreeing that positive reinforcement and praise are essential to encourage motivation particularly when non-cooperative behaviour is displayed as mentioned by SENDCo2. Teacher2 revealed that the school continuously holds conversations around areas of improvement to ensure students develop a sense of belonging.

  b. **Resilience, Self-esteem and Confidence**

All participants expressed an understanding that resilience, competence, self-esteem and confidence were essential elements under the umbrella of wellbeing, and that the school is highly promoting students' character strengths to ensure flourishing and resilient individuals in the future. In fact, the counselor stated: *"In terms of the emotional side, we work quite closely as a team…to foster self-esteem and resilience"*.

SENDCo2 stated that applying positive approaches aids in identifying students by their skills and competencies to utilise their strengths to overcome challenges. Educators use strengths highlighted in IEPs to build confidence and motivate students.

c. Prosocial Behaviour and Social Engagement

Participants' responses elicited that social engagement was regarded as crucial as academic engagement by stating that the school does not only pursue a curriculum that highlights academics, but rather focuses on instilling aspects of social and emotional learning that account for learners' diverse needs and challenges (Appendix 3). In fact, LSA1 mentioned: *"we would often refer to characters and protagonists and identify their character strengths…Creating a welcoming and caring atmosphere…recognising progress; and embodying acceptance, and respect, are key elements."*

Teacher2 discussed the importance of embedding character strengths in the curriculum. Similarly, LSA2 elicited the necessity of identifying the child's interest to tap it into learning to ensure social engagement.

d. Mental Health and Physical Health

All participants recognised the necessity of ensuring students' mental health and physical wellbeing by highlighting the essential role of counselling. In fact, Teacher2 mentioned that the importance of counselling is recognised by the vast majority of stakeholders. Teacher1 added that SEND team is always available for students to seek support whenever needed. However, Teacher1, LSA2 and SENDCo1 conveyed their concerns about students not being around peers for the past six months due to Covid-19 and predicted that this may carry along repercussions once schools resume. The counselor discussed how secondary students' exposure to social media during the pandemic affected their body image and eating habits for

both typically developed peers and students with SEND. However, the school has continued counselling sessions virtually to ensure students' wellbeing.

SENDCo2 stated that parents' wellbeing and mental health is also essential and that the school is always mindful of parents' and teachers' wellbeing since they could both project their positivity on children.

2. Academic Wellbeing
a. School Attainment

Qualitative findings revealed that all participants agreed on the importance of framing success around opportunities for learning to build success and avoid students from developing a fear from failure. SENDCo1 discussed that mistakes are encouraged, and rewards are always provided for achieving targets. The inclusion teacher stated that offering a non-threatening environment and being available is key. LSA2 stated that the school does not only focus on academics, but on steps to help students become good people and provides differentiated instructions according to students' diverse needs: *"Children need to get a fair education…there are always more challenging items for higher ability children and no pressure for the lower ability children to meet the same expectation".*

b. Academic Engagement and Class Participation

Participants voiced out the importance of identifying students' character strengths and challenges. SENDCo2's words spoke for himself: "*Positive praise is always encouraged; the school ethos is not to sanction but to provide rewards to be worked towards.*" In fact, the majority of participants spoke about different ways for students to receive support, either through peer-referral, self-referral or teacher-referral to ensure that students with SEND receive accurate provisions. Teacher2 stated that identifying supportive typically developed peers when paired with students with SEND is essential to enabling a successful lesson where all

students feel valued and supported. SENDCO2 stated that the child will be more perceptive and open to learning when provided with support:*" if they are not fully in it, they will not be able to absorb information."* Teacher1 mentioned: *"All staff are committed to early identification. Provision is designed to promote confident, independent learners".* SENDCo1 confirmed that positive education and wellbeing principles have continued to occur during DL and Covid-19.

Lastly, the Inclusion Teacher stated that the wellbeing of students with SEND, does not tend to decrease as they move to upper grades, but rather staff form relationships with them and recognise if something is alarming.

4.3 Quantitative Analysis - Research Question 1

The section below illustrates an analysis of the quantitative data collected through one survey conducted among ten participants; the first section explores the Psychological and Social Wellbeing of Students with SEND, through 10 items (Psych/Soc). The survey is comprised of four different areas related to research questions. Each section will be discussed separately in conjunction with its related qualitative data. Surveys were carried out virtually, by email, with a limited access to only ten participants during Covid-19.

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
Psych/Soc1	-	-	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	10	4.6	0.70
Psych/Soc2	-	-	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	6 (60%)	10	4.5	0.71
Psych/Soc3	-	-	-	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10	4.4	0.52
Psych/Soc4	-	-	-	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10	4.6	0.52
Psych/Soc5	-	-	-	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10	4.5	0.53
Psych/Soc6	-	-	-	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	10	4.9	0.32
Psych/Soc7	-	-	-	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10	4.6	0.52
Psych/Soc8	-	-	-	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	10	4.8	0.42
Psych/Soc9	-	-	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	10	4.2	0.63
Psych/Soc10	-	-	-	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10	4.6	0.52
Overall	-	-	3 (3%)	37 (37%)	60 (60%)	100	-	-

Table 1: Analysis of Psychological/Social Wellbeing

It is evident from the table above, that 97% of participants replied with agreement on the survey questions (among them, 60% strongly agreed and 37% agreed), whereas only 3% of participants were neutral. Thus, the majority of participants agreed with the overall asked questions highlighting a general consensus towards Psych/Soc wellbeing of learners with SEND).

I. What is the impact of adopting positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with SEND?

1. Psychological/Social Wellbeing

a. Sense of Belonging

90% of participants agreed to psych/soc1, that students with SEND feel welcome and safe at school, whereas only 10% were neutral. The mean for this item (4.6) is (4.6>3.5) higher than 3.5 (Hunter 2010), thus highlighting that respondents' answers to Psych/Soc1 are in accordance. The Standard Deviation, SD, (0.70<1), which is the average of the mean, also verifies that participants' responses and sets of data to this question are tightly clustered to the mean (Barde & Barde 2012). In addition, the majority, 90% of respondents agreed with Psych/Soc2 that students with SEND have a sense of belonging to the school and 10% only were neutral. Moreover, all participants agreed with Psych/Soc3, that students experience positive, happy and flourishing emotions at school and report optimism about their future. Lastly, all participants agreed with Psych/Soc4 that students feel valued and that their opinion matter.

b. Resilience, Self-esteem and Confidence

All ten participants agreed with Psych/Soc4 that the staff and school community attempt to raise feelings of self-worth and foster resilience of students with SEND having low self-esteem. The mean for this item (4.8) and the SD (0.42) both verify that all participants responded unanimously in a similar pattern.

c. Prosocial Behaviour and Social Engagement

All ten participants agreed with Psych/Soc5 that students with SEND contribute to proactive behaviours and engage in activities. Further, 90% of participants agreed with Psych/Soc9 that sports days include activities in which everyone can take part, irrespective of skill level or impairment, including students with SEND, whereas only 10% were neutral. Moreover, all participants agreed with Psych/Soc10 that students with SEND are given opportunities to participate in activities outside the school or extracurricular activities.

d. Mental Health and Physical Health

All participants agreed with Psych/Soc6 that students are presented with a great deal of support by different stakeholders to ensure their mental and physical health. The mean for this item (4.9) and SD (0.32) ensure that participants' answers were in accordance and tightly clustered to the mean. Moreover, all participants agreed with Psych/Soc7 that students with SEND seek help from the counselor whenever needed and understand that they have someone trustworthy to resort to at school.

The psychological/social wellbeing attributes have been explored, however there are academic items that should be further explored in the following section.

2. Academic Wellbeing

In the previous section, the psychological and social wellbeing have been thoroughly explored. The second section of the survey explores the Academic Wellbeing (Acad) of students with SEND, through 7 items, related to the first research question.

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
Acad1	-	-	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	8 (80%)	10	4.7	0.67
Acad2	-	-	-	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	10	4.9	0.32
Acad3	-	-	-	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10	4.5	0.53
Acad4	-	-	-	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10	4.5	0.53
Acad5	-	-	-	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	10	4.5	0.53
Acad6	-	-	-	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10	4.4	0.52
Acad7	-	-	-	1 (11%)	8 (89%)	9	4.9	0.33
Overall	-	-	1 (1%)	24 (35%)	44 (64%)	69	-	-

Table 2: Analysis of Academic Wellbeing

It is evident from the table above, that 99% of participants agreed with the survey questions, whereas only 1% of participants were neutral. Thus, the majority of participants agreed with the overall asked questions highlighting a general consensus towards Academic Wellbeing of learners with SEND).

a. School Attainment

90% of participants agreed with Acad1, that Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and support teachers encourage peer support of students who experience difficulties in learning and students with SEND, whereas the remaining 10% were neutral. Moreover, all participants agreed with Acad2, that staff attempt to address the fear of failure of students with SEND and characterise mistakes as an opportunity for learning while highlighting their character strengths. The mean for this item (4.9) and the SD (0.32) both verify that all participants' answers were tightly clustered to the mean. Lastly, all participants agreed to Acad3, that students with SEND are being assigned differentiated and personalised material and provisions tailored to their needs.

b. Academic Engagement and Class Participation

All participants agreed with Acad4, that students with SEND are academically engaged with their learning environment and with Acad5 highlighting that staff attempt to counter negative views of learners with SEND who might portray academic struggles to ensure academic engagement and school attainment. Moreover, all participants agreed to Acad6, that teachers display work of students with SEND to reward them and allow them to take ownership of their work. All participants also agreed to Acad7, that feedback to students is conveyed in a positive and non-judgmental manner. However, one participant did not answer this element and thus the system generated a missing value. The mean for this item (4.9) and the SD (0.33) both highlight the evidence of a general consensus for this item among participants.

4.4 Summary: Conjunct Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis - Research Question 1

The qualitative and quantitative data established an understanding that positive education and wellbeing culture have a positive impact on learners with SEND. Further, the explored school, adopting positive education and wellbeing principles, endeavors pupils' character strengths which are part of the curriculum whereby the majority of staff positively address students with SEND to ensure flourishing individuals. 97% and 99% of respondents agreed to psychological/social and academic wellbeing of students with SEND respectively. The smallest gap (SD=0.32) was observed for Psych6, highlighting that all respondents had similar perspectives and opinions on the level of support presented by different stakeholders to ensure students' mental and physical health. The lowest SD was observed for Acad2 and Acad7 respectively highlighting that all participants had similar perspectives and agreed that staff attempt to address fear of failure of students with SEND and characterise mistakes as

opportunities for learning and that all respondents confirmed that feedback is conveyed in a positive and non-judgmental manner.

4.5 Qualitative Analysis - Research Question 2

II. What are the factors impacting the wellbeing of students with SEND?

a. Teachers' Attitudes and Wellbeing

The general consensus among participants during interviews, highlighted the importance of teachers' attitudes on students with SEND and was centered around tapping into students' interests and getting to know their strengths and challenges. All participants conveyed having a positive relationship with their students by inquiring on their likes and dislikes. Teacher1 highlighted the importance of recognising when students are out of source by establishing good communication skills and showing them that their opinions matter no matter how small their contribution may be and stated: *"we cannot see them as block of 22 students"*, which means that teachers understand that every student matters.

Further, LSA2 reported: *"we… focus more on nurturing well-rounded people than just academic wizards."* The inclusion teacher and SENDCo1 respectively highlighted that communication comes in various forms and behaviours are communication of behaviour states, which is essential for educators to understand. SENDCo2 stated: *"Through consistent support and reward mechanisms, students will have a better chance to flourish and will display an enhanced motivation to learn"*.

All participants confirmed that the school is taking measures towards ensuring staff's wellbeing by redesigning staff rooms as mentioned by SENDCo2 to make them more welcoming and positive, including mindfulness and yoga sessions and having the counselor around for both students and staff as stated by LSA2. LSA1 and SENDCo1 both mentioned

independently, as newcomers, that they felt welcomed into the school community. Teacher1 stated that staff can visit the SEND team and counselor to convey concerns. LSA1 mentioned that the campus holds a common courtyard for staff and students to gather and have discussions.

b. Peer Relationship, Bullying and Stigma

Qualitative findings elicited that modeling a positive school ethos based on looking after one another, aids in building positive peer relationships. In fact, SENDCo1 and SENDCo2 respectively stated that friendship social groups have been set and that activities are centered around positive mindsets towards differences in peers. All participants confirmed that the school has a zero tolerance for bullying and that assemblies aid in alleviating stigma. In fact, Teacher1 mentioned: "*Our kids are naturally inclusive, yet during play time students go off in different directions, students with SEND would sometime spend time in isolation…it is important to nudge them out of their comfort zone…we…should be conscious to aid in this transition...Bullying goes on in many schools and it is the level to which it is allowed to escalate which is problematic…it does not escalate at our school*".

SENDCo1 and 2 respectively stated that friendship social groups have been set and that activities are centered around positive mindsets. LSA1 mentioned that students also disengage during classes as they walk from one class to another with their buddies on campus.

c. Parental Engagement

The general consensus among all participants was centred around a positive and consistent parental communication through an open-door policy. Parents are provided with several opportunities to approach staff and share concerns through parent evenings, calls,

meetings or emails. LSA2 happened to be a parent at the explored school and mentioned that the senior leadership team is always available at the gates in the morning to greet children and provide parents with opportunities to talk creating a family and community feeling. Moreover, the inclusion teacher highlighted the importance of consistently tracking parents' meeting:*"The nature of our work…the issues we discuss with parents and their kids' vulnerabilities are very sensitive…touching on previous meetings…gives parents a sense of reassurance that we are listening…a sense of safety"*.

d. School Environment and Climate

Findings elicited that all participants recognised the importance of fostering students' character strengths to promote opportunities for them to flourish in a positive and well school environment. Students' wellbeing is given a significant attention to as stated by Teacher2. Further, LSA1 added: *"The daily assemblies are chosen to reflect inclusivity and positive messages…".* In fact, SENDCo 2 revealed that the school provides extracurricular activities for students with SEND to take part of, so they can experience non-academic activities, beyond the school-based years and feel valued within the school community. Moreover, the counselor added that understanding what students need is key to be able to understand if the child has any underlying difficulty.

4.6 Quantitative Analysis - Research Question 2

The third section of the survey explores the factors impacting the wellbeing of students with SEND (Factr_impct), through 14 items.

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
Factr_impct1	-	-	-	-	10 (100%)	10	5	0.00
Factr_impct2	-	-	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	8 (80%)	10	4.7	0.67
Factr_impct3	-	-	-	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	10	4.3	0.48
Factr_impct4	-	-	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	6 (60%)	10	4.5	0.71
Factr_impct5	-	-	-	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	10	4.2	0.42
Factr_impct6	-	-	1 (10%)	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	10	4.1	0.57
Factr_impct7	-	-	-	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	10	4.3	0.48
Factr_impct8	-	-	-	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	10	4.8	0.42
Factr_impct9	-	-	2 (22%)	4 (44%)	3 (33%)	9	4.1	0.78
Factr_impct10	-	-	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	8 (80%)	10	4.7	0.67
Factr_impct11	-	-	-	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	10	4.7	0.48
Factr_impct12	-	-	-	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	10	4.9	0.32
Factr_impct13	-	-	-	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10	4.6	0.52
Factr_impct14	-	-	-	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	10	4.6	0.52
Overall	-	-	6 (4%)	52 (37%)	81 (58%)	139	-	-

Table 3: Analysis of Factors Impacting the Wellbeing of Students with SEND

It is evident from the table above, that 95% of participants agreed with the survey questions, whereas only 4% of participants were neutral. Thus, the majority of participants agreed with the overall asked questions highlighting a general consensus towards the factors.

II. What are the factors impacting the wellbeing of students with SEND?

a. Teachers' Attitudes and Wellbeing

All participants (100%) strongly agreed to item1, Factr_Impct1, that teachers know their students by names, especially those with SEND who might present additional vulnerabilities. The mean for this item (5) and the SD (0.00), both verify that all participants responded unanimously in the same exact manner and answers were clustered to the mean. Further, the majority of participants (90%) agreed Factr_Impct2, that teachers and staff

understand the necessity of avoiding labelling learners with SEND to ensure their wellbeing and allow them to flourish, whereas only 10% were neutral. Moreover, all participants agreed with Factr_Impct3, that teachers are trained to positively approach students with SEND and follow-up on individualised education plans (IEPs). Lastly, all participants agreed to Factr_Impct11, that the school community actively contributes to the happiness and well-being of teachers.

b. Peer Relationship, Bullying and Stigma

All participants agreed to Factr_Impct5, that peers are acceptant and supportive of the difficulties of students with SEND. Moreover, the majority of participants 90% agreed to Factr_Impct6, that peers positively address students with SEND and do not ridicule them, thus highlighting psychological safety within the school setting, however, only 10% were neutral. Furthermore, all participants agreed with Factr_Impct7, that buddy-systems are adopted in and out of class among peers. Lastly, all participants agreed with Factr_Impct13, that the school organises and encourages anti-bullying initiatives and record anti-bullying incidents to ensure students recognise who to turn to in case of any incident.

c. Parental Engagement

All participants agreed with Factr_Impct8, that the school maintains and values consistent communication with parents of students with SEND. In fact, all participants agreed with Factr_Impct12, that the school has in place and revises the anti-bullying policy shared among staff, governors, parents and students to ensure safety, thus highlighting that parents are also aware of and involved in the anti-bullying policy at school. The mean for this item (4.9) and the SD (0.32) both verify that all participants agreed to this item, thus highlight parents; consistent involvement with the school.

d. School Environment and Climate

77% of participants agreed with Factr_Impct9, that the school works on improving aspects of access in school for students with SEND through a non-conditional acceptance, especially physical disabilities to ease mobility, whereas 22% were neutral and the remaining 1% is explained by the missing value. In contrast to only 10% who were neutral, 90% of participants agreed with Factr_Impct10, that the school community actively contributes to the happiness and wellbeing of pupils with SEND in a safe environment through wellbeing initiatives by a Wellbeing Team. In addition, all participants agreed with Factr_Impct14, that the school entrance hall and displays across the sections reflect positive education, flourishing culture and wellbeing principles.

4.7 Summary: Conjunct Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis - Research Question 2

Participants had a general consensus on factors impacting the wellbeing of students with SEND and their responses from both approached geared towards agreement on the key factors. The findings yielded an understanding on the importance of teachers' attitudes and wellbeing, peer relationships, parental communication and school environment and climate, on the wellbeing of students with SEND. Positive teacher attitudes and happy teachers at the workplace is positively projected on students with SEND, positive peer relationships and low incidence rate of bullying, along with strong and consistent parental communication and a positive and flourishing school climate, all foster a happy and flourishing young school generation with high levels of wellbeing.

4.8 Qualitative Analysis - Research Question 3

III.   What could be potentially recommended to successfully use positive education and wellbeing culture to support the development of students with SEND in Dubai inclusive mainstream schools to ensure flourishing individuals in the community?

a. Training

Findings revealed that 2 out of 8 participants reported the necessity of having additional trainings and workshops to better serve, enhance and ensure the wellbeing of students with SEND in a positive, inclusive and mainstream flourishing environment. LSA1 stated: *"Teachers are trained and attuned to identify children's needs at our school"*. SENDCo2 highlighted the importance of delivering training and awareness on SEND as some teachers and staff have different understanding and attitudes towards child's needs and implementation of IEPs, which was in agreement with Teacher1's answer. The inclusion teacher highlighted that more support staff working within the school is needed and more physical space is recommended for students to attend.

b. Well Schools Network in UAE

LSA2 mentioned that the school has been focusing on students' wellbeing and character strengths: "*this kind of language is crucial…we believe that the nicer you are, the more successful adult in the community you will be. Recognising emotions through more positive educational approaches in and out of class is crucial*".

Teacher1 mentioned that the school welcomed inspirational speakers to deliver workshops for teachers and ensure their wellbeing and highlight that looking after themselves is as crucial as looking after students: *"We facilitated yoga and mindfulness classes…which the school contributed to financially"*.

c. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

All interviewee agreed that SEL is evident across the school system. SENDCo1 stated the necessity of recognising emotions through more positive educational approaches in and out of class. Teacher1 mentioned: "*The SEND team…works collaboratively…to support diverse learning needs and ensure opportunities for academic, social and emotional success, safety and security*".

LSA2 stated that especially in the younger years, a lot of positive praise aid students in keeping positive: "*we focus…on items that are not only academic but life skills that ensure the child is a well-rounded and kind person*".

d. Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)

All participants agreed that PBS are implemented across the school to foster student resilience. The counselor discussed the necessity of looking at the behaviour policy to check whether it is really about positive behaviour and added that peer support is crucial in PBS: "*Peer mentors…year 12 students trained in mental health, first aid, have a recognised qualification from a center in Dubai (funded by school) and attended trainings in body image course and they delivered those courses to year 7 students as they facilitate…self-worth*".

e. Pen Resiliency Program (PRP)

Overall interviews elicited that all participants highlighted the necessity of focusing on students' strengths and being supportive of their weaknesses, which is embedded in strategies related to fostering students' resilience. SENDCo2 stated: "*we have to holistically work together…to remove barriers…that students with SEND may face*". Further, Teacher1 added:

"We should refer to the student as an expert in his/her strengths…value students' opinion/ strengths and support their challenges is key".

4.9 Quantitative Analysis - Research Question 3

The fourth section of the survey explores the Process of Successfully Implementing Positive Education and Wellbeing Principles (Process), through 6 items.

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
Process1	-	-	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	10	4.4	0.70
Process2	-	-	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	10	4.1	0.88
Process3	-	-	-	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10	4.4	0.52
Process4	-	-	-	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	10	4.8	0.42
Process5	-	-	-	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10	4.4	0.52
Process6	-	-	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	-	10	3.6	0.52
Overall	-	-	8 (13%)	27 (45%)	25 (42%)	60	-	-

Table 4: Analysis of Processes of Successfully Implementing Positive Education and Wellbeing Culture

It is evident from the table above, that 87% of participants agreed with the survey questions, whereas only 13% of participants were neutral. Thus, the majority of participants agreed with the overall asked questions highlighting a general consensus towards items leading to a successful implementation of positive education and wellbeing culture.

III.   What could be potentially recommended to successfully use positive education and wellbeing culture to support the development of students with SEND in Dubai inclusive mainstream schools to ensure flourishing individuals in the community?

a. Training

All participants agreed with process4, that praise, positive reinforcement and reward mechanisms are evident in and out of class, thus highlighting that teachers and staff are trained on the importance of positive reinforcement and reward mechanisms. The mean for this item

(4.8) and the SD (0.42) both verify that all participants responded unanimously in a similar pattern.

b. Well Schools Network in UAE

70% of respondents agreed with Process2, stating that The Well School Network initiatives are shared and understood among all staff members to ensure flourishing individuals, while the remaining 30% were neutral. The mean for this item (4.1) and the SD (0.88) both verify that the majority of answers were clustered around the mean with the exception of 30% of participants who were neutral.

c. Social and Emotional Learning

All participants agreed with Process3, that Social and Emotional learning is evident across the school system. The mean for this item (4.4) and the SD (0.52) both highlight the evidence of a general consensus for this item among participants.

d. Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)

All participants agreed with Process5, that positive behaviour supports are implemented across the school to foster student resilience. Further, the majority of participants (60%) agreed with Process6 stating that scheduled lunch meetings with the principal and students with SEND are often scheduled to ensure students are able to voice out their concerns, whereas 40% were neutral.

e. Pen Resiliency Program (PRP)

90% of participants agreed with Process1, that a merit system has been developed to recognise and highlight the strengths of all students especially students with SEND, whereas

only 10% were neutral, thus highlighting that the school focuses on students' strengths to ensure a happy experience.

4.10 Summary: Conjunct Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis - Research Question 3

Participants agreed that the school ethos lies on positive education and wellbeing principles focusing on praise, SEL and PBS. However, although, all participants agreed with Factr_Impct3 related to the second research question, stating that teachers are trained to positively approach students with SEND and follow-up on individualised education plans (IEPs), when given the chance to discuss responses during the interviews, two out of 8 participants still stated the importance of training as some teachers have different understandings and attitudes towards the topic at hand and one other participant discussed the necessity of employing additional specialised staff. 30% of participants were neutral in regard to the Well School Network Initiative, which presented a somewhat high SD highlighting that participants' answers are somehow widely spread to the mean, and thus need to be further acquainted with its elements.

4.11 Correlation

Both parametric and nonparametric correlation tests between psychological/social and academic wellbeing were conducted.

Correlations

		Total of Psychological/ Social Wellbeing	Total of Academic Wellbeing
Total of Psychological/ Social Wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	1	.248
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.490
	N	10	10
Total of Academic Wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	.248	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.490	
	N	10	10

Table 5: Parametric Correlations

Results illustrate a small positive correlation between psychological and academic wellbeing. However, if p is greater than .05, this means that the correlation is not statistically significant. Thus, a small positive correlation is observed but there no enough evidence to conclude it exists in the population. The lack of statistical significance could be attributed to the low number of sample size due to accessibility issues during Covid-19 (r=.248, n= 10, p= ,490 > .05, two-tailed).

Correlations

			Total of Psychological	Total of Academic
Spearman's rho	Total of Psychological	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.211
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.558
		N	10	10
	Total of Academic	Correlation Coefficient	.211	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.558	.
		N	10	10

Table 6: Nonparametric Correlations

There was no significant correlation between psychological and academic wellbeing (rho= 211, N= 10, P= .558 > .05, two-tailed).

4.12 Reliability

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.916	37

Table 7: Overall Reliability

The reliability test determines the consistency of the measure, meaning that if the same survey is repeated with different informants at different points in time, the same findings would be obtained (Robson 2005). Thus, the researcher tested the reliability of the study by using Cronbach Alpha, the expected value should be above 0.7 (Foster 2001), on each of the variables. The reliability has been examined using Cronbach alpha. The value is 0.916 for all 37 items, thus highlighting a strong and solid reliability.

4.13 Overall Summary

Qualitative data was analysed by the researcher and participants' overall answers are presented in Appendix 2 for future reference. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the different areas of the surveys related to research questions. Frequency distributions showed how many participants chose each answer. The mean and SD provided an overall understanding on the patterns and trends of data sets according to the frequency distributions among key informants. Thus, findings from qualitative and quantitative data were in accordance and complemented each other. The majority of participants reported a positive impact of positive education and wellbeing principles on learners with SEND whereby mistakes were seen as opportunities for success. All participants recognised the importance of teachers' attitudes, peer relationships, parental involvement and school climate on the psychological and academic wellbeing of learners with SEND. However, some participants

raised the necessity of training to further enhance teachers' attitudes and understanding of the topic ta hand. The only observed gap was participants confirming a correlation between psychological/social and academic wellbeing during interviews, which was not statistically significant. However, this could be attributed to the low number of participants due to Covid-19.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Positive education and wellbeing culture has attracted a significant attention among researchers and a plethora of research studies. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings and suggests a set of recommendations with respect to the research questions (section 1.4) that guided the researcher throughout the study.

5.1 Key Findings and Recommendations

Participants' answers illustrated a positive impact of positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with SEND. In terms of psychological/social wellbeing, there was a general consensus among participants whereby 97% confirmed that staff value students' strengths and efforts and model optimistic thinking; mistakes were perceived as opportunities for learning, which was verified by Noble & McGrath (2010). Teacher2 and Counselor respectively mentioned that conversations around areas of improvement happen quite often to foster sense of belonging and emotional support. Findings confirm the literature discussing that by modeling structured means for students to recognise and use character strengths, the reciprocity of peer-relationships could be improved by enhancing class climate (Linley, Willars & Biswas-Diener 2010) which is also in accordance with Seligman's theory of character strengths (section 2.2.6c). All participants agreed on the importance of building resilience of learners with SEND where their strengths are promoted, and their challenges are supported.

Responsive classes take into account best practices that consider not only academic growth but also socio-emotional aspects (Taylor & Adelman 2011) equally to celebrate own differences through a unique contribution to learning settings. In agreement, SENDCo2 stated that the school pursues a curriculum that promotes socio-emotional learning fostering intrinsic motivation based on personalised activities as a foundation to success (Appendix 3). Teacher2

added: *"It all goes back to making sure character strengths are properly embedded in the curriculum"*.

The findings support previous research (Gay et al. 2017) and confirm that counselling is essential for students to learn how to express their emotions to lower risks of mental health issues. All respondents mentioned that students understand that they have someone trustworthy to return to. SENDCo2 highlighted the importance for educators to learn how to endeavor "pupil voice" providing powerful opportunities for success. 90% of respondents strongly agreed on the level of support presented to ensure students' mental and physical health. In fact, the counselor mentioned that counselling was still ongoing during DL.

In terms of academic wellbeing, SENDCo1 stated that it is crucial to get to know a student as a person before analysing them as a learner. 99% of participants agreed that staff attempt to address fear of failure of students with SEND and confirmed that feedback is conveyed in a positive and non-judgmental manner. In fact, the inclusion teacher mentioned that if academic issues are not addressed, self-esteem gets affected; academic and psychological wellbeing go hand in hand. SENDCo2 discussed that a happy child is an open learner and if things are blocking students' emotional capacity, they will not be open to learning. The Inclusion Teacher added: *"Emotional issues can stem from…lack of self-esteem with academic progress"*. Similarly, students who develop happy school connections with less exposure to bullying perform better academically, highlighting a correlation between psychological/social and academic wellbeing (Hauser & Erzinger 2017). However, quantitative findings revealed a lack of statistical significance to conclude that the correlation exists in the population, which could be attributed to the low number of sample size due to accessibility issues during Covid-19.

In contrast to Bottge et al. (2002) stating that students with SEND were less likely to be called upon by teachers, participants revealed the importance of engaging students with

SEND in heterogeneous classes through differentiated activities (Appendix 3). SENDCo2's words spoke for himself: "*We're all learning the same topic, but I coach teachers to enable all students to reach top of the mountain with different routes...*". In fact, edducators should proactively engage all students and re-engage disconnected learners (Taylor & Adelman 2011).

In contrast with the literature discussing that upper-grade students have lower levels of wellbeing as secondary teachers become less involved in students' personal problems; the focus of teaching becomes directed towards covering curriculums and students become more aware of their difficulties (Schwab, Sharma & Loreman 2018), the inclusion teacher stated that upper-grade teachers and the pastoral care team maintained positive relationships with students. Similarly, earlier studies revealed that, while school transitions are risky for some learners (Vaz et al. 2014), others experience positive transitions (Anderson et al. 2000). Some students displayed enhanced wellbeing post-transition through enhanced teacher-family-peer support (Virtanen et al. 2019), which have buffering effects on students' wellbeing and avoid detrimental effects of transitions (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008), thus validating the participant's argument. In fact, post-transition strategies by students were useful in enhancing social inclusion in the researcher's workplace.

In terms of factors impacting the wellbeing of learners with SEND, all participants recognised the necessity of approaching students with SEND positively and assessing ways to enhance social inclusion; 95% agreed on the majority of factors (teachers' attitudes and wellbeing, peer relationship, parental engagement and school climate). In accordance with Parker (2011), Skinner's behaviourism theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (section2.2.2), all participants agreed that teacher praise lowers learners' disruptive behaviour; whereby educators tap into students' interests to use them as incentives. The increased rate of mental illness insinuates that teachers and counselors should tackle students' psychological matters. Educators should acknowledge students' needs, greet them with smiles, to reinforce

"happy co-existence" (Saccardi 2017) and notice when they are absent to foster positive relationships (McMillan & Jarvis 2013).

Moreover, teacher's wellbeing and happiness affect class climate, happier teachers positively impact students (Mehdinezhad 2012), positivity is contagious (Zhao et al. 2019). Thus, policy makers shall highlight teachers' professional wellbeing. Participants revealed that the school financially contributed to staff mindfulness and yoga sessions. SENDCo2 revealed that the school is taking steps to redesign staff rooms to make them a positive environment. In fact, quantitative data revealed that all participants agreed that the school community actively contributes to teachers' happiness and wellbeing.

In addition, findings elicited that the school focuses on awareness assemblies and pastoral care days to alleviate stigma and model positive behaviour thus confirming the literature whereby anti-bullying efforts through PBS ensure a positive school climate (Winterman 2011). SENDCo1 explained that stigma is addressed from a very young age: "*students speak to one of our students with ASD like a baby…they were not trying to be unkind…they genuinely thought that it is the correct way to interact…modeling and scaffolding behaviours…to explain what is appropriate, is essential*". In accordance with the literature by Noble & McGrath (2010) stating that adopting buddy-systems refines social skills, 90% of participants agreed that peers positively address students with SEND. T2 mentioned that recognising supportive peers when paired with students with SEND enables a successful lesson. In fact, all participants confirmed that the school has a zero-tolerance for bullying and that the Anti-bullying (Appendix 5), Inclusion (Appendix 6) and Parental Complaints (Appendix 7) policies are accessible on the school website. Inclusion teacher added that if adults model treating each other with kindness and equity, children will follow; early stages are optimal phases to gain positive beliefs; children are unable to develop stigmatising behaviour despite societal stereotypes (Yuen et al. 2018).

All participants indicated that the school has an open-door policy and parents can voice concerns through parent evenings. LSA2's words spoke for herself: "*Senior Leadership Team are at the gates in the morning and afternoon to greet children…creating a family and community feeling…*". In accordance with the literature stating that parents of children with SEND tend to be sensitive to attune themselves to their child's needs and report low levels of subjective wellbeing (Shenaar-Golan 2015), SENDCo2 stated that looking after parents' wellbeing is essential to make sure they can support their children's wellbeing and facilitate learning at home (Lendrum, Barlow & Humphrey 2013).

Findings revealed that all participants felt that the school focuses on academics, on the social and emotional aspect of pupils to ensure flourishing individuals; 90% agreed that it actively contributes to the happiness and wellbeing of students with SEND. Participants agreed that diversity and practice of inclusion lead to opportunities of enrichment for learners, families and educators beyond school and in society. In fact, schools cultivating character strengths enhance intellectual developments (Waters 2011) and perseverance (Wagner & Ruch 2015).

In consistency with previous literature stating that each child has a gift that requires to be nurtured regardless of difficulties (Majid et al. 2018) and that youngsters are tomorrow's citizens, thus leveraging their awareness empowers proactive individuals (Riccio et al. 2017), the counselor mentioned: "*By valuing the uniqueness of our students, we recognise that they are all able to make a difference*".

In terms of recommendations, all participants agreed that teachers are trained to positively approach students with SEND and follow-up on IEPs, yet, when given chances to discuss responses, 2 out of 8 interviewees illustrated the importance of training as teachers have different understandings and attitudes towards SEND. Moreover, one participant discussed the necessity of employing additional specialised staff. SENDCo1 confirmed the

implementation of the power of the word "yet": "*Optimistic thinking prevents learned helplessness…Reflecting back on what they could not do before and what they can now is important*". The power of the word "yet" enhances students' wellbeing and prevents learnt helplessness. Educators should coach learners to say "I haven't learned how to do it yet" rather than "I can't do it" to build resilience. Training educators to model positive discipline through praising efforts empowers students (Bell et al. 2019). Mindfulness videos and meditation could be introduced to develop students' thoughts and enhance self-regulation (Nidich et al. 2011).

In fact, training teachers to adopt the Love Pedagogical Approach emphasising on pleasant relationships as the foundation to educate through affection and the recognition of achievements, enhances students' wellbeing and prosperity (Majid et al. 2018). Training empower teachers (Engelbrecht, Swart & Eloff 2001) and aid them to cater for their own wellbeing and that of learners (White & Kern 2018). Adopting positive discipline through praising according to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (section 2.2.2) and recognising what learners do right, enhances class management and students' wellbeing (Bell et al. 2019). Similarly, all participants verified that praise and positive reinforcement are evident and that educators should ask students how they feel when they arrive to school; T1 mentioned: "*keeping my door open…welcoming and greeting…tiny details that build a big picture of positive education*". The language used by educators matters to students' wellbeing.

The researcher recommends adopting humorous icebreakers, as coping skills and incentives to learn in joyful contexts (Noble & McGrath 2015) whereby mistakes are encouraged as mentioned by SENDCo1. Teachers can read social stories where students have to envision themselves in roles and how they would solve situations (Bell et al. 2019).

87% of participants agreed on the majority of items. The recognised gap was related to the understanding of The Well Schools Network initiatives, hence pillars could be further

shared with staff. The school could encourage healthy eating habits by preparing nutritious meals ensuring physical wellbeing and address students' self-image issues that arose during DL due to their exposure to social media as explained by the counselor. SENDCo2 stated that students' Random Act of Kindness Club acknowledges teachers' efforts by leaving thank you notes, highlighting that positive education and wellbeing principles are embedded in work relationships (Appendix 3). Nurturing prosocial behaviours and students' awareness on UAE's vision and initiatives by emphasising on eminent role-models in society to discuss long-established Emirati values helps develop hopeful future ambitions (Parker 2011). The school aimed towards including visual posters of successful adults with SEND along with emotional readiness tips for parents to build child resilience (Appendix 3). T1 mentioned that the school welcomed inspirational speakers to ensure teachers' wellbeing. All participants confirmed that the school is taking steps towards ensuring staff's wellbeing. The counselor stated that there is a school vision to ensure fundamental principles of wellbeing in different policies.

SENDCo1 stated the necessity of recognising emotions through positive educational approaches in/out of class. In fact, one of the activities related to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) could be for learners seated in circle to speculate photos of faces or upset teddy bears to rationalise solutions enhancing feelings. Educators could teach social common-sense items (hidden curriculum) to develop students' ability to understand consequences of actions. This may help students with ASD as they tend to appear as lacking common sense. Teaching students to maintain proximity and personal space through the iceberg strategy: Titanic's collision with the iceberg represents the student's infringement on another's personal space was deemed beneficial in the researcher's workplace. Young learners can be associated to social detectives whereby they complete worksheets for solving social mysteries (Myles 2011), which goes back to delegating students responsibility as mentioned by T1. Teachers could use the Incredible 5-Point Scale; students have to rate and regulate emotions and communicate

levels of frustration. Students will be able to self-reflect on happy or sad experiences while developing mentalisation skills (Leoni et al. 2017). The school has been encouraging students with SEND to listen to their bodies, recognise their emotions before and during DL (Appendix 3). Students with SEND are also recommended to participate in IEPs to ensure self-advocacy and self-determination (Montie & Abery 2011).

The counselor highlighted the necessity of revisiting behavioural policies to ensure they include positive behavioural support (PBS). The counselor added that the school provided staff and students with a "Be a Friend" survey focusing on character strengths, to work towards them, flourish and reach flow, gratification and long-term fulfilment. The counselor spoke about the importance of revisiting surveys to reflect on how character strengths change. Moreover, positive educational practices frameworks (PEP) should be established to foster circumstances that are supportive of learners' wellbeing to enhance levels of trust, care, self-esteem, positive peer-relationships, emotions, feelings, engagement, achievement and wellbeing (Noble & McGrath 2010).

90% of participants confirmed that a merit system documenting what pupils with SEND do well has been established to focus on strengths. It is a positive incentive for students (Hall & Theron 2016). Pen Resilieny Program (PRP) teaches students resilience training and focuses on students' signature strengths and should be implemented among students with SEND (Brunwasser, Gillham & Kim 2009). Findings verified that character strengths are essential. SENDCO2 added: *"Happy kids lead to happy learners".*

In fact, GGS (section 2.1.1) and the PRP based on the PERMA model (figure 2) aid in implementing wellbeing across schools through positive education (Au & Kennedy 2018) and suggests four levels to foster wellbeing: Learn it and teach it (equip learners with positive mind-sets, recognise their character strengths and enable a flourishing life); live it (staff are genuine

role models) and embed it (cultivate a culture of wellbeing through assemblies, clubs and activities) (Hoare, Bott & Robinson, 2017) as mentioned by participants.

5.2 Researcher's Voice

The pandemic was a double-edged sword; a barrier to physically collecting data, yet an eye-opening lesson that determination and perseverance are key during these uncertain times of Covid-19. Despite not getting granted access to virtual classes for matters of safeguarding as the explored school only has consent to be live with staff, rendering the triangulation of observations impossible, the researcher felt like sharing recommendations based on two previous virtual observations during DL at the school she works at as Head of Inclusion, to highlight how a positive and well environment should be. The researcher has observed firsthand the challenges that some students with SEND surface and thus felt driven to further explore the topic. The observations were not added to the data as they did not occur at the explored school, thus eliminating potential confounding variables and researcher-bias.

The researcher observed a virtual primary Math class with one student with SEND (X, diagnosed with Attention, Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD). The teacher played the greeting song during "virtual circle time" to build a harmonious class climate with a capacity for empathy and a power to care while sharing cameras to maintain a positive virtual connection and allow students to bond together. Students were then asked to download the mindfulness colouring activity (Appendix 8), colour two numbers of their choice and add them to find the sum. Instructions were chunked and prompts were provided for X. The teacher played a meditation relaxing music to create a sense of relaxation. X felt restless and needed guidance to continue with the task.

The teacher could have resorted to the "Power of the Word Yet" to build resilience (Bell et al. 2019), by saying: "I am glad you are seated in a correct posture. Instead of saying I don't know, practice saying: I don't know how to yet, but I will try because I am capable!" The

teacher could have scheduled virtual structured breaks or use the kitchen timer as a reminder of the school bell to ease transitions. X could become fidgety during afternoon classes; thus, the teacher could incorporate peer-buddy-support whereby high-ability students could collaboratively support X during break-out sessions (Dolva et al. 2010). The teacher could incorporate mood thermometers, feelings charts and mood checks (Appendix 9) to identify how does happy, neutral or sad feel to enhance emotional regulation. In reference to KHDA's post (Appendix 10), the teacher could praise X for his efforts by adding a sticker to his online reward chart, "Star of the Day", then applaud all students to avoid peer rivalry in a threat-free environment.

The researcher observed a virtual English grade 8 class with one student with SEND, Y, diagnosed with Dyslexia. The teacher engaged with students and asked them about their day. Students were reading a novel and answering comprehension related questions. Y was provided with text-to-speech reader assistive technology. The teacher referred to non-verbal praise by doing a thumbs up to instil in students a sense of independence and decrease competitiveness among students. The teacher was verbalising constructive feedback to steer students in the right direction and descriptively praise them (Polick, Carr & Hanney 2012).

In fact, academic achievements of secondary-school students vary significantly depending on levels of encouragement (Tella 2007). Thus, the interesting pattern of positive approaches highlighted Y's ability to convey answers without having a fear from failure. Interestingly, one of the participants mentioned incorporating character strengths in English lessons whereby students were asked to analyse the protagonist's character strengths and other characters to compare and contrast, thus, the teacher could prime students through a set of routine, to remind them of character strengths (Myles 2011).

The observations in both classes highlighted positive education approaches and wellbeing principles. Adopting hands on activities is essential for students to practice their fine

motor skills. Teachers could ask students to make a pizza at home, to represent the concept of addition or fractions. Teachers can ask students who do they want to be in the future to exercise goal setting and allow them to understand that strengths are a bridge to achieve future goals while working on mindfulness coloring (Appendix 9). Teachers could also remind students to share their worries in online worry boxes. The school could work towards developing a survival stay-at-home or a reflection of the DL experience similar to what the explored school has established (Appendix 3).

Yet, the difference in the nature of subjects underlined different dynamics. Students often elicited their responses through task-based activities in Math, whereas in English, they "voiced" their answers through dialogues and discussions. In agreement with Urdan and Schoenfelder (2006), positive reinforcement observed in both classes, led to student engagement. In fact, as soon as students enter the class door, they directly start learning; these initial few moments depict the learning environment. Cohesively learning together allow learners to positively contribute to their environment to grow socially knowing that their thoughts, feelings and emotions are valued.

5.3 Strengths and Limitations

I. Strengths Contributing to the Study

Through purposeful sampling, the undertaken interviews added insight to surveys and enhanced the credibility and validity of the research (Creswell 2008) and provided an understanding of respondents' answers which overweight risks of insufficient survey responses not stipulating reasons behind their answer choice. Recording interviews served in documenting key points and patterns of responses rather than relying on the researcher's unconscious selective recalling of information possibly creating a researcher-bias and note-taking which could distract respondents. Surveys ensured a comprehensive structure,

facilitated accurate counting of frequency of responses and was not time-consuming. Questions were simple rather than double-barreled thus avoiding leading or incentivising insinuations (Creswell 2008).

This study also provides readers with insightful information on how schools could join the Well Schools Network in Dubai and embodies accurate identification of updated research. The researcher complied with ethical considerations and maintained an informative tone and coherent logic of arguments.

II.   Limitations

During the course of conducting the research, the researcher stumbled upon some challenges. Due to Covid-19 (section 3.2), the researcher had to alter the methodology as schools were closed to ensure safety and was therefore unable to physically collect data. The researcher, explored research questions virtually and guided respondents through Zoom meetings to share surveys and interviews to ensure valid, credible and reliable results. The researcher was aiming to complete the triangulation by observing students with SEND across different settings (in class, break-time and extra-curricular activity) to assess their academic and social engagement, yet, due to Covid-19, the researcher was unable to proceed and was not granted access for virtual observations for matters of safeguarding.

The Covid-19 situation placed individuals, particularly educators in an uncertain phase that was not accounted for. With distance learning becoming the new norm for teaching and learning, with speech therapy, social skills groups suspended, educators were challenged to learn new methods for delivering lessons which caused both teacher and student burnout (Lee 2020). Thus, data collection was delayed as educators were trying to adjust to this unusual situation and hence were challenged to complete surveys and virtual meetings in a timely manner. The researcher had to follow-up with them on a daily basis and provide them with

consistent reminders to ensure all participants complete surveys and attend virtual meetings. Although purposeful sampling yielded accurate results, the research could be further enhanced by reaching out to additional participants to strengthen the data. Thus, the researcher advises future graduates and the field of academia to pursue further studies. If the data were to be collected previously to Covid-19, more participants would have been able to participate.

5.4 Scope for Future Research

The gaps in literature and limitations of the study paved the way for future research to examine learners' perspectives to confirm a holistic evaluation of the topic (Schwab, Sharma & Loreman 2018).

Findings stipulated a key element relating to parents' wellbeing and the centrality of the family unit (Shenaar-Goan 2015) suggests that future research includes how the wellbeing of parents of students with SEND is affected.

Observing the divergences in professional practice across distinctive schools and universities in UAE provides more goal-directed recommendations rather than limiting the research to private school domains and draws an understanding as to how each Emirate rates the significance of this approach to education.

In contrast to the literature (Schwab, Sharma & Loreman 2018), participants revealed that the wellbeing of students with SEND does not tend to decrease as they move from lower to higher grade levels. Thus, future researchers could explore how students' wellbeing varies across different phases by taking into account students with SEND as informants of their own self-identified subjective wellbeing.

The derived findings led researchers to mitigate potential issues, maintain sustainable positive environments and analyse how school climate impacts school completion and

university enrollment of students with SEND since interpersonal skills learnt at school are transferred to the actual world of work (Berndt & Kubinski 2011).

Due to the uncertainty caused by Covid-19, students with SEND are at risk of missing their chance to develop essential skills, thus leading to lower level of wellbeing and increased mental health difficulties to adjust back to "normal life routine" (Lee 2020). Teacher1 highlighted her concerns about students with SEND not having socialised with peers and the damage in social skills. In fact, change can be disruptive for students with SEND as they try to adapt to this new dynamic and they may require time to adjust to their new routine where regression in academic performance, social and emotional behaviours may appear (Lee 2020). Thus, it would be noteworthy to explore the wellbeing of educators and students with SEND before/after Covid-19.

The research could be further enhanced by reaching out to additional participants to explore the correlation between psychological/social wellbeing and academic wellbeing which was highlighted in the literature (Johnson 2018) and mentioned by the Inclusion Teacher.

5.5 Conclusion

The majority of participants advocated the positive impact of positive education and wellbeing principles on learners with SEND, through interviews and survey instrument developed by the researcher with high reliability factors. The researcher contributed to the novelty of the topic in the context of the explored school in UAE, while referring to applicable theories and relevant literature. UAE is positively partaking proactive roles in empowering individuals with SEND and highlighting the necessity of the wellbeing of students and teachers in educational contexts. UAE has managed to care for the wellbeing of all residents, particularly educators and students during the outbreak of Covid-19. One heart-warming initiative was to light up Burj Khalifa, the World's tallest building (Baker & Pawlikowski

2015), on April 1st, 2020, to salute community heroes of the World, among them teachers, with a thank you note, to instil hope and positive wellbeing during challenging times (Saseendran 2020). Also, the Ministry of Community Development in UAE, conducted a research in June 2020 on teachers' experiences during DL with students with SEND to explore the extent to which they benefit from DL and understand the challenges to further enhance DL experience.

The Wellbeing element underlined by KHDA based on Seligman's PERMAH model (Appendix 11), boosted wellbeing in the learning and work environments to understand how learners feel and think about their own wellbeing, happiness, quality of life and engagement. According to KHDA, student wellbeing is no longer considered as optional (Masudi 2019), it is a human right that the school must uphold. HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum believes that happiness and positivity in UAE are a lifestyle, a government commitment and a spirit connecting UAE community (Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & The Future 2020). Every human seeks happiness and thus the UAE government is promoting happiness and positivity among all citizens to enhance the human capital.

The majority of schools in UAE are in the process of adhering to the legislations laid out by the KHDA, by modeling and promoting effective inclusive approaches to positively impact learners with SEND, yet, despite these significant improvements, some limitations explained in the literature still reside and gaps between policies and practices of inclusive approaches remain crucial to address to avoid an illusion of inclusion affecting wellbeing. Educators should perceive student uniqueness as a treasure rather than a threat and they should act as sentinels to transform their class in favor of inclusion to protect students' wellbeing, honor their diversity and prevent their alienation (Rosier & McDonald 2011). Positive education and wellbeing can serve as mediators to prevent maladjustment and incidents of bullying. In line with previous literature and findings of the study, schools adopting positive education and wellbeing culture have a better inclusive education and empowering students

through the empowerment of teachers prevents students' strengths from remaining unused and their challenges from remaining repressed and ensures a positive and well climate. Wellbeing is wellbeing in the only condition where it is for everybody, otherwise it is not well-being (Bocci et al. 2017).

Inclusion is central to wellbeing and society to avoid marginalisation and reflect pride and value. Happy pupils tend to learn better than unhappy students and engage in extracurricular activities, highlighting the fundamental role of happiness, positive education and wellbeing principles. Just as schools are accepting of diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic differences, they must all become accepting of disability to promote diversity, positive functioning and wellbeing among all students, especially those with SEND. Celebrating diversity is a key factor; it is a blessing and not an attribute of individuals. Teachers become better members of society when teaching students with SEND. Everyone, regardless of disabilities, is believed to possess distinct character strengths and abilities to flourish.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Template

Questionnaire Examining the Impact of Positive Education and Wellbeing Culture on Learners with SEND

The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine the impact of positive education and wellbeing culture on learners with SEND from different perspectives and views within the school community in the aim to improve the practice for the future. It is defined as the processes leading to flourishing rather than languishing students whereby, they are characterized by high levels of wellbeing and mental health; it is therefore a mixture of feeling well and functioning efficiently (Noble & McGrath 2015). Note that all ethical obligations of the British University in Dubai will be adhered. Names and identities of participants will not be revealed for confidentiality purposes and at any time they can withdraw their participation if they wish to do so.

Researcher: Yasmina Keis, Date: ..../..../2020

Please tick the group(s) below indicating your involvement with the school. Your contribution is valuable.

Teachers:
☐ Homeroom/Primary/Secondary   ☐ Inclusion Teacher   ☐ Learning Support Assistant

Management:
☐ Head of Inclusion/SENDCo   ☐ Counselor   ☐ Wellbeing Team Member
☐ Other

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Psychological/ Social Wellbeing					
Students, especially those with SEND, feel welcome and safe in school.					
Students with SEND display a strong significant sense of belonging towards the school.					
Students with SEND feel that they experience positive, happy and flourishing emotions at school and report optimism about their future.					
Students with SEND feel valued and that their opinion matters.					
Students with SEND are engaged in their daily activities and contribute to prosocial and proactive behaviors.					

1

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students with SEND are presented with a great deal of support by different stakeholders to ensure mental and physical health.					
Students with SEND seek help from the counselor whenever needed and understand that they someone trustworthy to resort to at school.					
The staff and school community attempt to raise the feelings of self-worth and foster resilience of students with SEND having low self-esteem.					
Sports days include activities in which everyone can take part, irrespective of skill level or impairment, including students with SEND					
Students with SEND are given opportunities to take part in activities outside the school or extracurricular activities.					
Academic Wellbeing					
Learning Support Assistants and Support Teachers encourage peer support of students who experience difficulties in learning and students with SEND.					
Staff attempt to address the fear of failure of students with SEND and characterize mistakes as an opportunity for learning while highlighting their character strengths.					
Students with SEND are being assigned differentiated and personalized material and provisions tailored to their needs.					
Students with SEND are academically engaged with their learning environment.					
Staff attempt to counter negative views of students with SEND who might portray academic struggles to ensure academic engagement and school attainment.					
Teachers display work of students with SEND to reward them and allow them to take ownership of their work.					
Feedback to students is conveyed in a positive and non-judgmental manner.					

2

Factors Impacting Wellbeing of Students with SEND	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers know their students by names, especially those with SEND who might present additional vulnerabilities.					
Teachers and staff understand the necessity of avoiding labelling students with SEND to ensure their wellbeing and allow them to flourish.					
Teachers are trained to positively approach students with SEND and follow-up on individualized education plans (IEPs).					
Diversity is seen as a rich resource to support learning and social development of students with SEND rather than as a problem.					
Peers are acceptant and supportive of the difficulties of students with SEND.					
Peers positively address students with SEND and do not ridicule them, thus highlighting psychological safety within the school setting.					
Buddy-system are adopted in and out of class among peers.					
The school maintains and values consistent communication with parents of students with SEND.					
The school works on improving aspects of access in school for students with SEND through a non-conditional acceptance, especially physical disabilities to ease mobility.					
The school community actively contributes to the happiness and well-being of students with SEND in a safe environment through wellbeing initiatives by a Wellbeing Team.					
The school community actively contributes to the happiness and wellbeing of teachers.					
The school has in place and revises the anti-bullying policy shared among staff, governors, parents and students to ensure safety.					

3

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The school organizes and encourages anti-bullying initiatives and record anti-bullying incidents to ensure students recognize who to turn to in case of any incident.					
The school entrance hall and displays across the sections reflect positive education, flourishing culture and wellbeing principles.					
Process of Successfully Adopting Positive Education and Wellbeing Culture					
A merit system has been developed to recognize and highlight the strengths of all students especially students with SEND.					
The Well School Network initiatives are shared and understood among all staff members to ensure flourishing individuals.					
Social and Emotional learning is evident across the school system.					
Praise, positive reinforcement and reward mechanisms are evident in and out of class.					
Positive behavior supports are implemented across the school to foster student resilience.					
Scheduled lunch meetings with the principal and students with SEND are often scheduled to ensure students are able to voice out their concerns.					

End of Questionnaire

Source:

Booth, T & Ainscow, M. (2002) Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools.

Booth, T. & Ainscow, M. (2011). *Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools*. "3rd edition". Bristol: Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE).

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4

Appendix 2: Participants' Key Statements from Semi-structured Interviews

Participants' Key Statements - Semi-structured Interview Questions

Date: May & June 2020
Location: Zoom Meeting (some answers were also sent by email due to the Pandemic)
Interviewer/Researcher: Yasmina Keis
Interviewee: Subjects listed below (anonymously)

The permission to interview teachers, head of Inclusion and counselor was sought from the school administration. The researcher approached staff to explain the purpose of the interview and they agreed to audiotape it without disclosing information and thus maintaining confidentiality. The researcher Yasmina Keis (Y.K), conceived and composed all the questions and content (kindly check source at the end of the interview questions).

Subjects:

a) Class Teacher (T1)
b) Class Teacher (T2)
c) Learning Support Assistant (LSA1)
d) Learning Support Assistant (LSA2)
e) Inclusion Teacher
f) Head of Inclusion/SENDCo 1
g) Head of Inclusion/SENDCo 2
h) Counselor / Wellbeing Team

Questions that are not pertinent to the subject's work field will be answered as NA (Not Applicable).

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1. **How do you foster positive emotions in students with SEND in and out of class and allow them to recognize/ understand their emotions to ensure flourishing individuals with enhanced sense of belonging, resilience, prosocial behavior, physical and mental health?**

   > a. Teachers' attitudes and parents' attitudes are crucial. Teachers should keep an eye on children with SEND and check whether they are invited to play dates, birthdays to ensure social inclusion across all settings. Some parents even ask teachers about how they manage children with SEND in class and teachers have to be careful about matters of confidentiality. Also, visual support aids for younger students, social stories, intervention groups, one to one intervention with our inclusion team including a dedicated counselor… all these things ensure flourishing individuals.

   > b. Being proactive than reactive and doing things 10 steps ahead… that's how a school develops and changes…conversations around areas of improvement happen quite often to ensure a positive development and sense of belonging of students and particularly students with SEND. I establish good routines, good communication skills and encouragement. Getting to know my students is essential…

c. Identifying students' needs and personalities to recognize body language and facial expression is essential. Teachers are trained and attuned to identify children's needs at our school. We have peer referral as well to ensure all students including students with SEND are well. List of different avenues to get support, getting to know your students well is a key element.

d. One-to-one relationship aids in understanding child's needs through facial expressions and body language. We should observe pattern of behavior and teach students how to identify feelings, how does happy feel, why do you feel happy, through visuals (again depends on child's diagnosis). Diversity is valued and is seen as an opportunity to create a rich environment for all students to learn and succeed.

e. A lot of emotional issues can stem from some sort of lack of self-esteem with academic progress and school focuses on high flyers and standards are very high and sometimes we get kids with SEND who are not as academically bright as others which causes a real issue ...so sometimes going down academic assessment route saying you are doing very well for where you are at, at the moment, is a big of a boost and if something comes up on the emotional side, we are always ready to address it. Being open and honest while setting clear boundaries, building a relationship and speaking to students about topics not just school...

f. Making wellbeing part of the culture is important. Decisions are made for the benefit of students, parents and staff as well...the impact is on all students and not just students with SEND.

g. Recognizing and getting to know students' needs is essential. Support from inclusion teachers and the school counselor is key. Constant positive reinforcement and praise encourage motivation to continue. One to one discussion with students when non-cooperative behavior is displayed is also essential. The school pursues a curriculum not only focused on academics, but one that promotes socio-emotional learning such as encouraging intrinsic motivation for learning based on personalized activities and significant engagement for all students regardless of their disabilities on all levels as a foundation to success.

h. In terms of the emotional side, we work quite closely as a team. We have continuous conversations in terms of what students need to offer emotional support to see if there is a clinical need or underlying difficulty to foster self-esteem and resilience particularly with teenagers and all through life.

2. **How do positive education approaches and wellbeing principles at your school build on possibilities for the development of students with SEND and the identification of characters strengths rather than their challenges?**

a. We always work on identifying students' character strengths in class through individual discussions...getting to know the likes and dislikes of students with SEND is essential. By the way, I am not sure if this is relevant, but I have seen a student's personality (with SEND) come out during Distance Learning (DL) in a way that I have never witnessed in class. It seems that she felt more comfortable to voice out her answers and concerns during DL while the SENDCo is putting structured and scaffolding accommodations for her. It would be interesting to see how students will adapt once we start in September considering the damage of not having 6 months of socialization with peers, it is concerning...I believe their character strengths will change and develop into different strengths vs. challenges.

b. I guess it all goes back to making sure character strengths are properly embedded in the curriculum, it's a fluid thing…strengths change overtime that's why students and staff are asked to complete surveys at the beginning and end of the year to track their change in character strengths. We were also asked in departments to feature it in our planning and scheme of work to build on particular character strengths. During Enrichment week, we did something in music where students had to choose their task according to their character strengths: If your character strength is X, you would want to lead task X. It was hard to implement during DL but we still tried to incorporate it virtually. If it was an area that they needed to develop, then they could choose things to do in the lesson to help them develop those areas based on their character strengths.

c. Character analysis form plays, poetry and novels; we would often refer to characters and protagonists and identify their character strengths according to the model we are using to highlight character strengths and incorporate it in lessons. Creating a welcoming and caring atmosphere; fostering one-on-one relationships with students; using multiple learning strategies; rewarding efforts; recognizing progress; and embodying acceptance, and respect are key elements.

d. We really focus on character strengths and finding the child's individual interest so we can find a way to tap into their learning. We have goals and targets which we work towards and revisit to discuss progress and new target goals. Parents, Class teacher and SEN department as well as 1:1 (if applicable). We strive for the child to be more independent on their work tasks and daily routine.

e. Character strengths is important to wellbeing…it is a whole school drive… we (students and teachers) all had to work on questionnaires to identify them, it is a key feature for the wellbeing team. All kids should identify their characters strengths, build self-awareness and understand how to utilize them. Preparing students through lots of awareness and workshops with life skills such as: optimism, resilience, growth mindset, engagement, and mindfulness amongst others, builds on possibilities for the development of students with SEND. Counselor is available for students during the school time. Positive reinforcement and rewards are always in place to support students. Strengths are promoted and weaknesses are acknowledged, and support is given for improvement.

f. I have a special relationship with each child I work with, having different approaches to make students feel secured, loved and safe is key to ensure they flourish. Character strengths is essential, this kind of language is crucial. Even before officially introducing Wellbeing, our school was still working on students' personalities and building their strengths… we believe that the nicer you are, the more successful adult in the community you will be. Recognizing emotions through more positive educational approaches in and out of class is crucial. Our school is a small school with a nurturing ethos. Again, team approach where parents, class teacher and child are all involved. We all hold a collaborative responsibility towards ensuring flourishing individuals. We always frame success around character strengths. We provide an explanation as to why something was great. Children praise each other in the same way. Emphasis on the power of yet is also key for students with SEND. They have to stay optimistic and think that they are not at the required level yet, but they will reach it. Optimistic thinking prevents learned helplessness for students with SEND. Reflecting back on what they could not do before and what they can now is important.

g. Students took an online questionnaire that analyzed what their character strengths are, followed by sessions where students were asked to explore their character strengths, identify them, share them, discuss them and question how identifying them might be helpful to become better learners and learn about how they learn. When me and my staff discovered what our character strengths were, we made a display board with our character strengths. We would then sit with kids and ask them which one you think are my character strengths, you know me as Mr. X and they surprisingly get almost 3/5 correct, so I would positively reinforce them and tell them wow you know me well, making things collaborative and interactive and prompting to kids that a big part of wellbeing is to talk and to share. Students with SEND at our school are pretty good at talking and sharing especially successes and we encourage them to share weaknesses as well. When applying positive approaches, you identify the student by his/her skills and competencies and use these strengths to help them overcome challenges. Strengths are identified in IEPs, teachers and Inclusion team use these strengths in lessons and when setting targets to build confidence and to motivate students. Positive praise is always encouraged, the school ethos is not to sanction but to provide rewards to be worked towards. Wellbeing surveys are conducted with the students. The school is then able to act on this feedback. Wellbeing is always on top of the agenda.

h. Teachers and students filled a survey (Be a friend survey) focusing on character strengths…working towards your strengths to flourish and help boost your optimism to reach flow and gratification for all students including students with SEND to develop long term fulfillment. It is important to revisit surveys because strengths may change… have a look back at surveys to reflect on how character strengths change during the year.

3. **Describe whether students with SEND attend counselling sessions whenever needed and are comfortably able to share their difficulties and confident that their problems will be dealt with effectively by trustworthy staff members?**

a. The SEND Team is always available, and students with SEND seek support whenever needed. The team works collaboratively with teachers, counsellors, learning support, school staff, parents and students to support diverse learning needs and ensure opportunities for academic, social and emotional success, safety and security. Students are given chances to maximize their potential without barriers to learning.

b. I would say that the importance of counselling is recognized by the vast majority of stakeholders. Building a rapport of trust with the student is very important.

c. Students with SEND who have concerns, not being able to get homework done or any other issue usually convey their concerns, we then communicate with them and consistently refer to counselor. Peer referral to pick up on things is essential.

d. Even if students with SEND cannot exhibit their likes and dislikes or voice out their concerns, teachers should pay attention to their body language. In the younger years, a lot of positive praise and reminders really can help keep the child positive. As a school, we focus on wellbeing and on items that are not only academic but life skills that ensure the child is a well-rounded and kind person. We work on managing feelings and a lot of positive praise again. Pause checks and counselling sessions were still carried out during Distance Learning (DL). Students feel punished during DL… it is like having been put in

solitary confinement it's not natural being put at home for that long…so we will face challenges, social and emotional regression in September.

e. Normally students go to trusted staff or tutor advisor and then from there it would be taken through from the procedures set down to reach the counselor. Failing going to a member of staff that they trust, you do find with a couple, you may find them seeking to friends and then friends referring, so there is a big support between work in place if things do arise.

f. The SEND Team (name has been anonymized for confidentiality) refers to a sanctuary island theme to instill hope. Counselor joins an office with the SEND team to ensure linear and comprehensive understanding and consistency. Depends on their diagnosis as children with communication and language difficulties obviously find this much harder to do…or in some cases do not even see the importance of it. Staff are very aware of who these children are and plan accordingly to help them. I would confidently say that all of our children feel valued and listened to. The counselor at our school is very good at what she does. All of the children with SEND feel comfortable to approach her should they need to. That said, students with communication and language difficulties would obviously find this more of a challenge. Counselling sessions normally start by ensuring the environment is secure and comfortable for the student.

g. The SEND department explores the child's needs and once they establish them, they learn how to endeavor pupil voice "hear it from the pupil", pupil voice is so powerful, pupils are the ones who are conveying the message from their experience. If the team dismisses it, they might be dismissing a whole area of work and opportunities that could be very successful; taking the time to listen provides great opportunities to work with students with SEND. When issues become "trickier", the team refers the student to the counselor. We have continued proceeding with counselling sessions, academic support or just regular check ins during DL. When students develop a need or a barrier to access curriculum, we interfere to drive their motivation. Keeping kids motivated is hard during DL so checking on kids is essential. We follow up on all students and specifically students with SEND who we feel are in need to ensure they meet their targets and how they are feeling. It is important to shed light and take into consideration parents' wellbeing to make sure that their wellbeing is able to support the wellbeing of their children during these uncertain times. We are always mindful of wellbeing of parents to avoid them from feeling overwhelmed… to give tips and guidance to look after themselves and support their kids to support wellbeing all around. Projecting positivity on their children is essential to their wellbeing.

h. Students have always been open to counselling. It is actually still ongoing during DL, we have separate forms for confidentiality specifically for online depending on age and competency and we found quite a lot of need- eating habits for older students exposure to social media affecting body image…because of situation we are in and the lockdown… students are being exposed to social media on a daily basis…so we are working towards enhancing this.

4. **What methods, approaches and provisions do you offer to support students with SEND to enhance their school attainment, academic engagement and allow them to perceive mistakes as opportunities for learning?**

a. Praise is essential to support students with SEND and enhance both their academic and social wellbeing. In fact, as laid out on the school website, both formal and informal assessments contribute to an understanding of a student's relative strengths and potential barriers. All staff are committed to early identification in order to proactively understand and meet children's needs. Provision is designed to promote confident, independent learners. The Inclusion staff offer in/out of class support.

b. Our school tries to keep same member of staff whenever possible to avoid change of routine for students with SEND attending one-to-one sessions, they are already comfortable being around same staff…this eases the transition.

c. Students at our school are good at sharing things…keeping them on spot through prompts, to dig a little deeper and maintaining an open ear is essential.

d. Class size is kept to a manageable size with some classes having Teacher Assistants and LSAs in each class depending on the need. The SEND department are available for support and guidance for any child-focus groups where children that can sit together and learn rather than taking one child out of the class to be taught separately. We also highlight the idea that mistakes are opportunities to learn from.

e. All students have a form tutor, I would not say their wellbeing decreases from one phase to another, staff see students often enough and form a relationship with them and they would recognize if something is alarming. Pastoral team is always around to check in on students and ensure their wellbeing in a nutshell. We have several key members of staff that the child has access to. Offering a none-threatening learning environment, being available whenever required to offer support, ensuring students know when and where they can receive support and offering a positive approach.

f. It all goes back to our school ethos and hugely depends on the individual: children are encouraged to be together from a very young age…we address negative experiences straight away…use friendly terms…students speak to one of our students with ASD like a baby…but they were not trying to be unkind to him, but they genuinely thought that it is the correct way to interact with him so modeling and scaffolding behaviors to them to explain what is appropriate, is essential. We also encourage and keep repeating to students that mistakes are opportunities to learn (frame failure as something to learn from). It is crucial to get to know them as a person before analyzing them as a learner. Use praise and personal rewards to maintain motivation. Highlight successes. Be vulnerable yourself…adults find things difficult too. Understanding students' needs is the priority initially and from there implementing strategies for success for each individual is key. We provide students with lots of rewards for achieving targets however mistakes are always encouraged. Team approach with parents and class teacher involved…we focus on teaching strategies that the child can apply to make them a more independent learner/friend.

g. A happy child is an open learner, if things are blocking students' mental health and wellbeing or emotional capacity, they are not going to be a in a place to be open to learning they are going to be distracted by obstacles to get over… so we have to holistically work together collaboratively as a school to remove barriers, emotional, academic and social barriers that students with SEND may face. The child will be more perceptive and open to be an open learner when provided with support… because if they are not fully in it, they will not be able to absorb information. Happy kids lead to happy learners.

Self-referral, teacher-referral or peer-referral all aid in providing students with the required support. If let us consider I am a student at school and I am worried about my friend, I can do a referral to the counsellor to ensure my friend receives the needed support. Also, posters with positive affirmations are displayed all around the school. We have a real drive with lots of wellbeing programs built into extracurricular programs to promote thinking such as: after school break-yoga, coloring for mindfulness, RAK group: Random Act of Kindness: group of students look together to see how they can speak kindness around school, we make sure to include students with SEND within the extracurricular groups. As a school, we try to move from the medical model of inclusion to the social model as laid out in the KHDA updated framework and guide to promote positivity. We are all humans and we all have the right to education… we are all learning the same topic but I coach teachers to enable all students to reach top of the mountain with different routes, easy, medium, challenging... there is no one way and kids take whichever path helps them and is right for them…. we will all reach the top of the mountain, the outcome is the same, but we might take different path to reach it. Strategies are provided to all staff and embedded within classroom…social model is great.

h. Wellbeing and counseling team is the driving force behind students with SEND.

5. **How would you describe your approach with students with SEND and their relationship with peers in and out of class? [How does it impact their wellbeing?]**

a. I had a kid with SEND with very poor behavioral choice reputation, so I built with him a positive relationship from day 1 after an incident with his classmate, based on his interest. Week 2 of school year, he flipped…we had such positive relationship-we therefore have to make time for students…we cannot see them as block of 22 students, we have to get to know them individually since the start of school. Students with SEND have to know that we like them and value the contribution they make no matter how small it is... on a daily basis and they have to leave school feeling valued because of their contribution. Staff would ask: What have you done to turn that child around?" and it is frankly just keeping my door open in the morning and welcoming and greeting him by saying: good morning X and when he leaves, I would make eye contact and say good afternoon…tiny details that build a big picture of positive education. Listening to all students is crucial. We should refer to the student as an expert in his/her strengths…showing that we are interested and value students' opinion/ strengths and support their challenges is key. Recognizing when students are out of source because some students are not able to express how they are feeling and understand the forms and

functions of behaviors will aid both students and teachers to feel well and confident within the classroom setting.

b. Communication is key! Sometimes when you are on duty or lunch time, students find you and want to talk, but it is not in the right sort of area to talk about whatever it is they want to talk about. It is important to get to know students really well even if you see them once a week (i.e. music/art class) … it's a matter of getting to know their strengths and challenges. It really does vary from student to student. Personally, I aim to build a rapport very quickly by inquiring into their likes and dislikes and engaging in conversations as much as possible with them. Regarding their interaction with peers, it depends on their ability to work with others. Some non-SEND students, typically developed peers, are able to convey the situation and are supportive when paired with them. Knowing these pupils is key to enabling a successful lesson where all students including those with SEND feel valued and supported.

c. Individual reward schemes are implemented consistently. Students often come to me if they have any concerns.

d. Children are encouraged to be kind and helpful and again, we as a school, focus more on nurturing well-rounded people than just academic wizards. Children are set up with different peer groups to learn about other children's strengths and challenges while in the classroom and during mini tasks. This could be from taking a walk around the school looking for shapes in a group of 5 children who are not usually playing and have them work together and talk to each other. A lot of support is modelled by staff and the children really notice how adults react to situations and how support is praised. Peer play can be difficult and usually the child has only a few children he will include himself in play with, however teachers should encourage them and keep an eye on their progress. Children react differently to reward systems -one child may see the stickers as achievements they have achieved and others as how differently they should be to please the teachers. Communication comes in various forms-sometimes non-communicative and how we react to those will influence the future trust and communication

e. Communication comes in various forms-sometimes non-communicative and how we react to those will influence the future trust and student-teacher-peer communication. Building confidence, self-esteem and an honest and open approach.

f. Peers can recognize diverse needs and it boils down to teacher approaches, attitudes and parents in class and how they talk to their children and include that child with SEND (is he invited to birthday parties? Is he looked down upon?). Behavior is a communication of behavior state of either a lack of structure at home or whatever is going on with the student. There is no a magic wound for students with SEND but almost all children respond well when they are given time and support. They should understand that we care for them…feeling of trust and self-security is essential especially for students with SEND who might have additional vulnerabilities than typically developed peers…even if they cannot voice their concerns, their body language shows whether they are happy/sad/confused.

g. Students are very articulate and communicate verbally by expressing their feelings and emotions. They respond positively to positive reinforcement and reward mechanisms which highlight the idea of wellbeing. Through consistent support and reward mechanisms, students will have a better chance to flourish and will display an enhanced motivation to learn.

h. Finding what interests the child, tapping into interest to be able to engage in conversations and relying upon strengths is crucial.

6. **What does your school offer to ensure not only the wellbeing of students with SEND, but that of teachers as well, to empower students through the empowerment of teachers?**

a. Wellbeing program was put together when wellbeing started to become a fashionable word, we facilitated yoga and mindfulness classes in and out of class which the school contributed to financially to make sure that everyone was mindful. Speakers were invited to explain how looking after ourselves is as crucial as looking after students- we cannot keep giving, we have to take time to ourselves. The SEND teams across the school create and project such a nice environment where staff members can visit and throw their concerns and anxieties, i.e.: "Can you advise I haven't got a clue on how to deal with this child?"…all this occurs without having a fear to ask about what to do, it is human nature we need to encourage that…this culture does exist at our school whereas people at other schools are afraid to say I don't know what to do, which is difficult… at our school those dialogues do exist.. you can consistently go and ask for help.

b. The SEND Department, wellbeing group and counselling team are always available for all school staff.

c. As a new comer to my school, I was structed by how welcoming the campus is, how its laid out around a circular courtyard fosters a sense of community, involvement and inclusion, when you go out and see everyone in the circular area…communal areas are lovely and you see how students are moving around in the common courtyard… they are lovely. You see kids buzzing around and interacting, the environment is very welcoming, encourages wellbeing and we have nice display boards among them inclusion. School environment promotes inclusion, positive education and wellbeing principles. Campus is friendly, has ramps and equipped for students with SEND & physical disabilities. Students take a few minutes that they have to walk with their buddies, to talk and mentally switch off for a few minutes between classes… this is important; being able to walk from one class to another is crucial. Some students thrive on that time between lessons to disengage from one lesson to another and have a chat while getting ready for the next lesson. Moving around school in groups allows them time to talk to friend and gives chance to talk to friends and have chat about concerns, share experience with their buddies to maintain positivity between classrooms. The same thing applies to teachers.

d. Looking after your body and mind is a reminder at school and input through assemblies, PE lessons, having the school counsellor available for both staff and children and being open to challenging conversations.

e. Staff wellbeing group at school.

f. Personal relationships as staff team, welcoming staff helps in ensuring teachers' wellbeing. When I first joined school, I had teachers walk me around to explain how things go. Working with SEND can go from really tough days-full time one-to-one, if child having a bad day... I mean this can have a massive impact on us teachers and educators...we have to be vulnerable in front of other team members and teachers...say we cannot do it, we need a break, it is only normal. Being proactive and purposeful about everything helps students with SEND and teachers.
Wellbeing of Pupils: Access to YouHue app for KS2 pupils. Buddy scheme. Students and Staff: School counsellor based in SEND Team for pupils, parents and staff. Staff: Social events organized (even during Distance Learning). Weekly yoga. Treats in the staff room. Check ins with SLT.

g. Random Act of Kindness club would often prepare handmade cards for teachers to show them how amazing they are to boost their confidence with a note: Lots of love from the RAK club. Positive education and wellbeing are embedded in work relationships, very good team to be part of. The school is slowly trying to introduce changes related to staff room...the plan for September is to redesign the staff room to make it a place for sanctuary to talk share, sit on bean bags, listen to music, engage to want staff to access it. Yoga, Pilatus and meditation that go into extracurricular activities and within lessons with the main drive forces the focus on character strengths, identify them and how you can use them as educators to help yourself and others to access curriculum. Everything is transferrable from class time to social time, home and community.

h. Wellbeing strategy group which covers the three schools and then we have different groups within the schools, we have one in secondary and they aim to redevelop staff room and make it a good space for teachers while revising policies to ensure wellbeing is accounted for...Yoga sessions online. There is no policy for wellbeing, yet there is a vision to statement to ensure fundamental principles that run through everything...finance policy and annual leave policy should have a wellbeing eye over it to consider how people feel during these situations. We look at every policy to make sure whether wellbeing is considered in every policy. We look at behavior policy to check whether it is really about positive behavior. Policies are made accessible on school website for staff, students and parents. Wellbeing for teachers during DL: it has been really hard and difficult for everyone so much fear and uncertainty during these times, but school is trying to do their best to encourage talking to colleagues, let them know what your problems are and how they can help.

7. **How are supportive friendships, buddy-systems and anti-bullying initiatives among peers and students with SEND actively encouraged?**

a. Our kids are naturally inclusive, yet during play time students go off in different directions, students with SEND would sometime spend time in isolation especially those with ASD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, the library is a familiar place to them, so it is important to nudge them out of their comfort zone to include them in games playing on field, and we as teachers should be conscious to aid in this transition, conscious effort to make sure they are included. Delegating students responsibility is very important (i.e.: would you do me a favor, when you see X going to the library could you ask him to go the playground with you to avoid him from being secluded?) The school came up with a Gardening club for students who were not comfortable to play sports or take part of big groups… they would water the plants and they would have discussions…this opportunity helped a lot. In fact, bullying goes on in many schools and it is the level to which it is allowed to escalate which is problematic in schools- it does not escalate at our school- as soon as things become evident, the school takes action, we even have an open door policy for parents to report any incident– our parents feel comfortable that they can go to the counselor as soon as there is a problem. The school has a behavior policy and anti-bullying policy…sanctions against behavior incidents within the school- policies are posted on school website and made accessible to all parents- there should be no surprises to parents. A set of programs for specifically friendship issues set by SEND Department and SEND team where high ability students who are very capable are mixed with students with SEND to model organization skills to alleviate stigma and enhance positive peer perception. Even high-ability students can go to SEND team and SEND team to break down that negative self-perception and avoid students who are aware from thinking that SEND Department is only for SEND.

b. We spend a lot of time building relationship with students with SEND, that's a massive part of my role personally and I have continued to have one to one meeting during DL, sometimes students just need someone to reassure them (checking in) and sometimes they just want someone to have a chat with to make sure they are okay with the workload…falling out with friends…kids would want to talk.

c. Assemblies that look at awareness and disabilities help to alleviate or remove stigma. We are a tolerant school… we do not tolerate bullying at all, but we understand bullying happens, but no serious cases have been witnessed, zero bullying policy, no name calling or labelling, and the anti-bullying policy is made accessible on school website.

d. I have not seen bullying with the child I work with, as 1:1, however some children talk to him differently than how they would talk to another child as they think he might not understand them, hence the necessity of trainings and workshops not only teachers but for students as well. Things are dealt with sensitively, every bullying incident is different, so counselors assess the situation to address it properly. I can speak from experience from my daughter and as soon as I brought it forward, it was dealt with and I would get feedback to how it was dealt with. My daughter even felt that it was handled correctly. As a parent, I need someone to look for my child… as a parent and I got exactly what I needed.

e. The whole ethos of our school is about community and looking after one another. If the adults model treating each other with kindness and equity, then the children follow the same pattern. Pastoral care days are also essential. Moral education sessions, pastoral care days and anti-bullying incidents.

f. Friendship social group has been set: it was interesting because that child with SEN does not usually see classmates in playground and in class keeps himself to himself, yet we guided and explained students on why we are having this social group, and child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) came and sat with us and he initiated conversations... taking him out of this busy and hectic environment impacted him positively. They can exhibit emotions; it is a matter of structuring the environment. Strategies and provisions should be child-centered, proactive and engaging. All behavior is a form of communication. Keep a low arousal approach. Encourage reflective practice. Class wide and individual reward schemes implemented. Bullying occurs but not any more so than a child without SEND. No school is free from bullying, but our school has a low incidence. All students are close with their class teacher or a specialist so would know who to report to. Failing that, they would tell a parent and open the channel of communication that way instead.

g. The school organizes awareness days, celebratory days, built into innovation days, cultural awareness days and mental health awareness. All the activities are centered around positive mindsets towards differences in peers and disabilities and how they can help one another. The school focuses on the community itself in terms of CAS project at IB level, so students divide projects that are going to be kind of charitable within the community. Students with SEND receive one-to-one support during projects that are differentiated according to their needs.

h. Peer mentors which are year 12 students trained in mental health, first aid, have a recognized qualification from ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ (funded by school) and attended trainings in body image course and they delivered those courses to year 7 students as they facilitate to smaller groups around body image and self-worth. We have even tried to continue during lockdown. Inclusion should be integral to any tolerant community, and as such individuality and diversity should always be celebrated. By valuing the uniqueness of our students, we recognize that they are all able to make a difference.

8. **How does the school provide a variety of occasions and consistent communication with parents who wish to discuss the progress and concerns of their children with SEND or possibly Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)?**

a. Some staff have mixed attitudes towards SEND, but it is important for staff meetings to take place and as a class teacher you have to pushed backwards to the direction of the IEP especially that we have 22 students, so we have to be followed consistently to stare us on track to ensure IEP targets. It is challenging because a whole load of teachers have different challenges, understanding, perceptions and attitudes on SEND. It is the shared responsibility of all staff to work collaboratively to support these students on their

individual journeys through their education at our school and beyond. Parents can also email, call or send a message should they wish to get in touch.

b. We have an open-door policy, parents can contact school to ask for appointments, email teachers to inquire on students' log and progress.

c. Parents are always welcome to share their concerns.

d. As a parent, I can say yes. Senior Leadership Team are at the gates in the morning and afternoon to greet children and there is a chance for parents to talk and gather in the courtyard creating a family and community feeling to convey any concerns. As an LSA, 1:1 with a child with limited vocabulary, I discuss the daily events with the parent when collecting the child every day. The parents also talk to me in the morning about any issues from the previous day and sleep pattern etc. Parents are always invited to talk to the class teacher and the SEND department as they need. Meetings are held to discuss the IEP consistently. My relationship is very personal with the child and their family and communication is daily.

e. Communication with Parents: being available at the parents' evenings so they have individual parents' evenings, we always make sure we are there to touch base with our students and give other parents the opportunity to approach us if they have any concerns…and have a chat to support them and follow up whenever needed. We keep a log of records to ensure consistency and a standard of great observations, very meticulous with dates and times and deadlines to ensure successful outcomes…it is not always possible, but we make sure to update everything on students' profile and records to ensure ongoing documented log. If a teacher is absent, the transition would be easier and a way of being up to date with the student's observations… which are crucial elements to refer back to. The nature of our work…the issues we discuss with parents and their kids' vulnerabilities are very sensitive…therefore, touching on previous meetings to relate back gives parents a sense of reassurance that we are listening…it gives them a sense of safety. Parents can email, attend parent-teacher consultation evenings and regular coffee mornings.

f. Everyone should be involved in IEP process, it does not work perfectly all the time… trying to negotiate meeting time could be a bit of a hassle since several teachers have to attend… but it is a collaborative work with the student's contribution, teachers have a copy and they are encouraged to visit it quite often. Weekly inclusion meetings ensure everyone is on board. Revisit IEPs 3 times a year to check evidence of progress.

g. First and foremost, the structure of the pastoral team provides support to students with SEND and parents. Every student is within a tutor group who registers them throughout the day, the tutor is the first person of contact in case parents or students have any concerns. It is more of a filtration system where the tutor then makes the connection with the remaining team. Parental communication: most things to do with communication lies on collaborative approach, always meeting with parents collaboratively to ensure covering essential points through a linear understanding to ensure consistency…even teachers have to be present in meetings so they can feed into what problems may arise.

h. We have an open-door policy and meet with parents quite often.

9. **What recommendations do you suggest to better serve, enhance and ensure the wellbeing of students with SEND in a positive, inclusive and mainstream flourishing environment?**

a. Training and awareness on SEND for all teachers, some teachers have different attitudes and understanding on disability, positive education and wellbeing principles

b. NA

c. NA

d. Children need to get a fair education and that does not mean it is fair for the entire year group to focus on one item until all the children understand this item in specific…as each child learns at a different pace and I feel that our school does this very well…there are always more challenging items for higher ability children and no pressure for the lower ability children to meet the same expectation, we ensure personalized, differentiated and individualized learning tasks.

e. More support staff working within the school…more physical space for students to attend.

f. With DL experience, it has taught us that we can do things differently through high quality meeting so people can come prepared before meeting…see it as an opportunity to talk and discuss than an opportunity to moan about.

g. Some teachers are far more aware of child's needs than others so additional trainings on IEPs are needed.

h. NA

10. **Discuss whether building a supportive, positive, inclusive and well-school community is recognized as important as raising academic achievement by all stakeholders at school irrespective of disability at your school?**

a. One challenge for students is the change of teaching style from one to year to the next… which can quite frankly be brutal for some…so easing transition is key…teachers introduce each other to students with SEND in September to understand what they can do rather than cannot do, their likes, interests and dislikes…forming this relationship with the help of the former teacher is essential and alleviates the student's anxiety. Our school staff aims to work effectively with parents to produce young adults who can enter the world ready to make a difference, feeling confident in themselves and their abilities. The Aims of the Pastoral Care System are to encourage students through positive affirmation and rewards, maximize student's individual potential, develop students' independence, resilience and life skills, promote responsibility, self-esteem and respect and be aware of the community in which they live and contribute positively to the lives of others.

b. I believe the wellbeing of students in school is given huge attention.

c. We have many dedicated days to various themes in order to give the students memories and positive experiences. The daily assemblies are chosen to reflect inclusivity and positive messages to students.

d. Focusing not just on academics- focus on learning how to be a good person and I have seen all the way through since I have been at our school… that it is not just about fostering children academically, but we are good people and we have strengths to push for being a good people.

e. Inclusion is a priority at our school. Sometimes if you do not address academic issue, you can end up with a wellbeing issue, affecting self-esteem and confidence, they work in parallel and go hand in hand. There is a fine line between the two, getting to know the kids… getting them confident and gain their trust is essential to ensure their social and academic wellbeing. Without a positive and support ethos, academic success will not be achieved as effectively.

f. We strive for the child to be more independent on their work tasks and daily routine. We have prepared a good program for DL studies where LSA were involved in building plans and separate curriculums on a weekly basis… having LSA to ground us was very helpful. However, young students are struggling emotionally…that coming from not being with friends in playgrounds, however virtual counselling sessions are still taking place. Some children if they were not already seeing a counselor, they might be reluctant to seeing a new unfamiliar face. Some students enjoyed being behind the screen in a set of routine on their own, while others preferred being physically around teachers and peers.

g. Inclusion is at the top priority at our school and we try to align all our policies with the updated KHDA Framework The school supports the philosophy that education goes beyond the limitations of the classroom. Consequently, there is a varied and exciting range of extracurricular activities that are inclusive for students with SEND. The important thing for students is that they are given the opportunity to experience new areas of activity and to develop as individuals with a range of interests that go beyond the school-based years. Our school, as mentioned on the school website, is dedicated to the emotional, physical and social well-being of every student. Our aim is for every student to live healthy, sage, productive, capable and responsible lives; also, to be known and feel part of the school community and to be valued for who they are as an individual. The Pastoral Care System is designed so that students are supported in all aspects of school life so that they achieve their individual potential as well as being prepared for the rigours of the outside world.

In secondary school, we encourage students to be enterprising, creative and independent, supporting them in effective transitions, positive learning and educational/career choices and in achieving economic wellbeing.

Secondary students adjusted quite easily to Distance Learning as they are also very skillful in the use of internet.

h. In our area, in terms of counselling it is very much of the emotional support whether it is using screening to understand whether there is anxiety or signs of depression or just helping with self-esteem or self-identity issues to understand what children need. I get students self-referring to me more than any group, someone could be quite high achieving academically but struggles with concentration, possibly with undiagnosed ADHD, so I would then have to refer to different team members or ed-psych to ensure consistency.

End of Interviews

Source:
Booth, T & Ainscow, M. (2002) Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools.

Booth, T. & Ainscow, M. (2011). *Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools.* "3rd edition". Bristol: Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE).
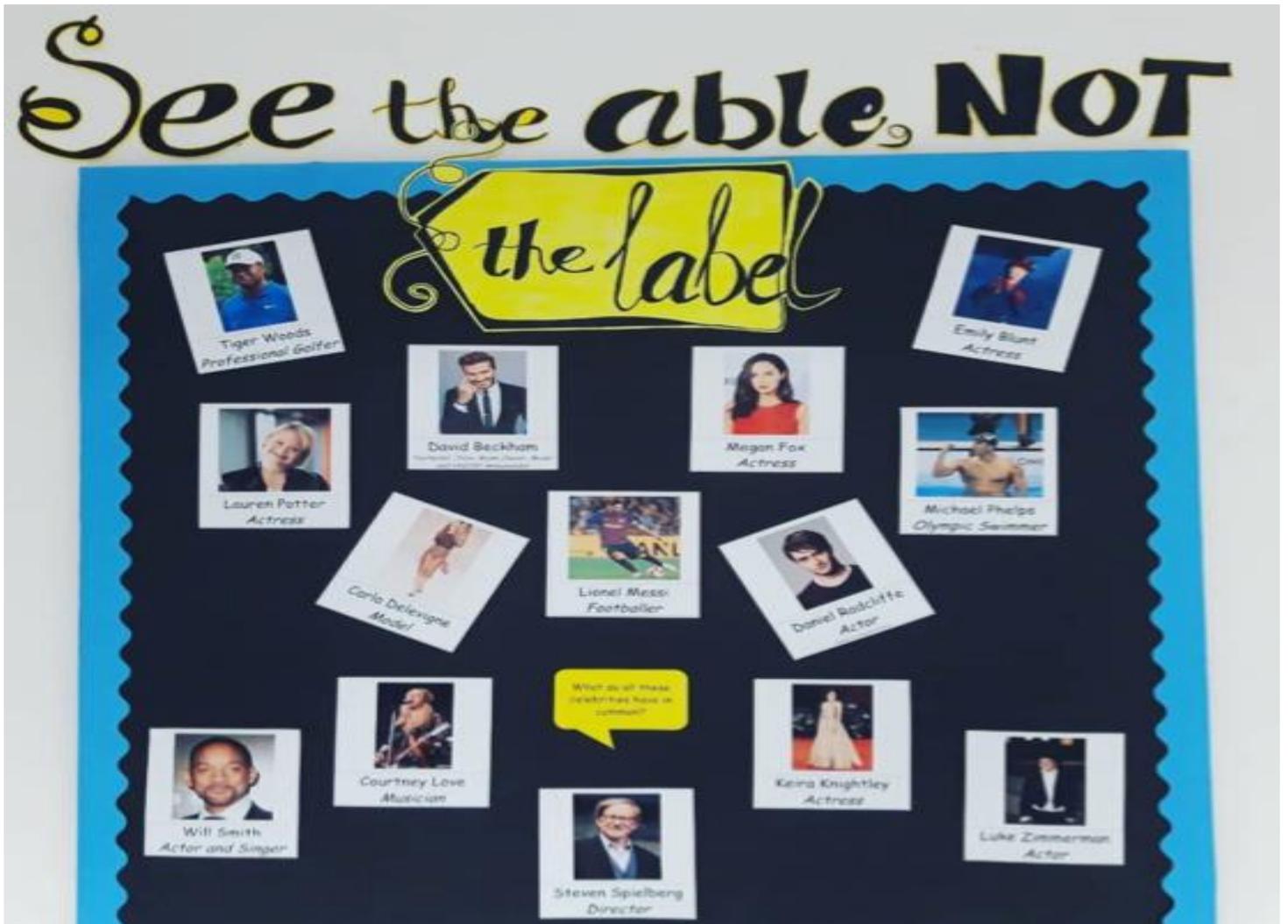
<u>Self-Regulation</u>

This week ████ I would like you to focus on your body!

You need to be listening to how it feels throughout the day and notice how it responds to the world around you.

This is rather tricky and will take a lot of practise, so you need to be doing it every day. Both mum and dad will help you.

Below there is a chart that I want you to use. You need to listen really carefully to your body in order to use it well.
There is no right or wrong answer.

My engine is running too high. I need to do something calming to slow my body down.	I am fidgety I am struggling to concentrate I feel over excited I am being silly
My engine is just right. I am ready to accomplish what I have been asked to do.	I am calm I am happy I feel focused I am ready to learn
My engine is running too low. I need to do something stimulating to wake my body up.	I am tired I am demotivated I feel bored I am moving slowly

I have sent mum and dad a list of strategies which will help your engine run 'just right'.
You can try these strategies throughout the week; some will work really well and others won't suit you at all.
Make a mental note of what is working best for you.

On Thursday, leave me a message below letting me know how you feel you are getting on with this task.

LEVEL 1

Body: a little bit cold and relaxed muscles

Mind: nothing is happening

What others see: focused

LEVEL 2

Body: feel a bit nervous

Mind: worried I'm heading to red

What others see: fidgeting, staring off into space, not listening

LEVEL 3

Body: I want to run (run away when I'm mad, run around when I'm excited)

Mind: feeling mad or super excited

What others see: they can see me getting stressed

© GREAT MINDS TOGETHER   PAGE 3

<u>A reflection on my distance learning experience</u>

Something that makes me feel… worried is if ████ is sad and I don't know why because I like him to be happy.	Something that makes me feel… happy _____ _____	Something that makes me feel… curious is what we do in our work. Making chocolate made me very curious.
Something that makes me feel… silly is wiggling when ████ is around to make him laugh.	Something that makes me feel… grateful _____ _____ _____	Something that makes me feel… excited is when I play with my family after my work; I feel all the emotions!

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English: work with teacher

Little Red Riding Hood – sequencing

Adult to tell the story of Little Red Riding Hood (using last week's script) and presenting/pointing to the large story pictures as they do.

Sequence the story together. At the start of the week, use the set of three cards. As the week progresses, increase to the full set.

Set one (three cards):

Set two (seven cards):
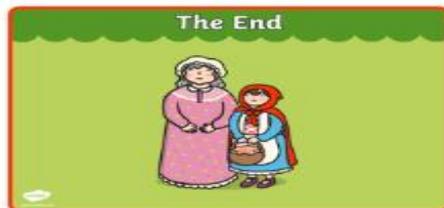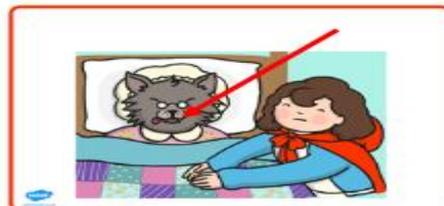
Tip: As the pictures for 'Grandma, what big eyes/ears/teeth you have' are similar you may want to point to these parts on your own or ▇▇▇ body.

English: independent activity

Little Red Riding Hood – Talk for Writing

An adaptation based on last week's feedback.
Print story map (if possible) and give ███ labels (like the ones below) to place on the story map in the correct place.

Grandma	forest	wolf
bread	mummy	Little Red Riding Hood
ran	house	teeth

If you're still unable to print, either try to draw the map out (maybe ███ would be happy to!) or try and use the iPad.

Tip: give ███ three or four labels each day, not all nine in one go. If there's one he finds difficult, present it every day.

Maths: work with teacher

Addition – doubling numbers

You will need two transparent plastic cups, a bowl and something to count with such as pompoms.
Adult to count out an amount into one cup e.g. three.
███ to do the same in his cup.
Adult to verbalise and gesture, "We have 3, add 3."
Pour them into the bowl together (could do a ready, steady, go to make it more exciting).
Count the contents of the bowl.
Adult to verbalise, "So 3 add 3 is 6."
Repeat twice but with different doubles.

Tip: if it isn't too distracting, you could write the number sentence onto a whiteboard as you go to help ███ make the link between the amounts and values.

Visual Harvesting (2020). *Home – Visual Harvesting*. [online]. [Accessed July 2020]. Available at: https://visualharvesting.com/

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Visual Harvesting (2020). Home – Visual Harvesting. [online]. [Accessed July 2020]. Available at: https://visualharvesting.com/

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Call a loved one to check up on them	**2** Send a message to a friend to show them how much you miss and love them	**3** Sing your parent's favorite song to them.	**4** Create an at home cinema for your siblings to enjoy	**5** Make your parents a nice breakfast in bed after a long tough week	**6** Donate old laptops and computers to people who don't have them, so they are able to work with the new circumstances
7 Bake some treats for your friends and drop them off at their houses for them to enjoy	**8** Play your siblings or parents favorite board game	**9** Write a letter to say Thank you to a doctor or nurse for their hard work	**10** Give a compliment to someone in your family or one of your friends to brighten their day	**11** Make a list of your favourite song/movies to send to your friends to cheer them up during quarantine.	**12** Send your grandparents a message full of love	**13** Help your siblings with some of their online schoolwork
14 Watch your parents' favorite film with them	**15** Make a nice art piece for your parents, representing how much you adore them	**16** Create a kindness card and send it to a hospital to thank them for their amazing service.	**17** Take your dog for an extra-long walk in beautiful nature	**18** Make a card showing someone how much you care about them	**19** Compliment someone and make them smile today 😊	**20** Recommend a good book or movie you enjoy to someone in quarantine
21 Send a kind message to one of your loved ones who are stuck in another country.	**22** Send a card to one of your teachers to say thank you for all their hard work.	**23** Send a funny video to a friend to cheer them up during quarantine	**24** Play a board game with your family after school and work	**25** Give your pet a shower or clean their area so that they feel clean.	**26** Make a card for your neighbour and leave it at the gate.	**27** Do a closet cleanout and donate the clothes to charity to help those in needs.
28 Make a drink like a smoothie for your whole family to share some healthy vibes.	**29** Give a gratitude gift to your gardener.	**30** Make your bed in the morning so that your helper or mum has less work to do.				
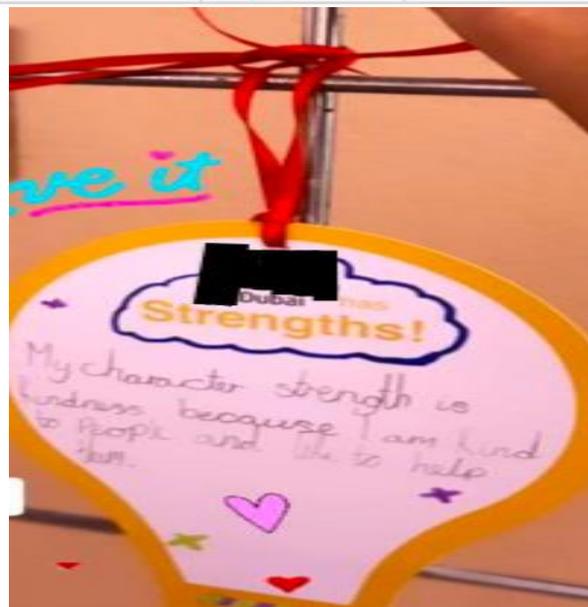
Appendix 4: Letter of Approval

الجامعة البريطانية في دبي
The British University in Dubai
www.buid.ac.ae

04/ February/ 2020

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that **Ms. Yasmina Keis** is a registered student at **The British University in Dubai** with below details:

- **Programme**: Master of Education-
- **Specialization of the programme**: Special and Inclusive Education

Kindly enable her to access your school for data collection purposes.

This letter is issued on Ms Keis 's request.

Yours sincerely,

Amer Alaya
Head of Student Administration

Appendix 5: Relevant Extracts from the Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy

1. Anti-Bullying Policy

1.1. Rationale:

███ aims to ensure that all students learn in a mutually supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and is recognised as deliberate, hurtful behaviour which is repeated over a period of time.

We believe there are three main forms of bullying:

- **Verbal**: e.g. name calling, teasing, insulting, writing notes, making threats or abuse of any kind, including online or by electronic media.

- **Physical**: e.g. hitting, kicking, spitting, removing belongings, damaging property;

- **Emotional**: e.g. ostracising, tormenting, spreading rumours, gesturing;

1.2. Expectations:

- Staff work to sustain an environment which inherently assumes a culture of mutual self-respect within which bullying is not tolerated.

- Close day to day working relationships between staff and students should facilitate relaxed and open contact where such disclosures can readily take place.

- Staff should promote awareness of the nature of bullying through the curriculum e.g. in PSHE, tutorials, assemblies, circle times and subject areas where appropriate to prevent such behaviour.

- All staff should consistently follow the **bullying report process** (below) for Primary and Secondary.

1.3. Management of anti – bullying

- Bullying is not tolerated at ███ and any reports of bullying will always be taken seriously, following the bullying report process which is closely linked to our behaviour procedures.

- Confidentiality and sensitivity are essential in all reported cases of bullying

- We will keep an open mind. Bullying can be difficult to detect, so a lack of staff awareness does not mean bullying has not occurred

- The Senior Leadership Team have a responsibility to ensure staff are kept up to date with current bullying trends, identification and support for bullies and victims through appropriate training.

- Pupils will be regularly informed that as well as their Class Teachers/Form Teacher/Subject Teacher the following staff will be available for discussion if any issue is bothering them:

1.5. Bullying Report Process

Non negotiable

All alleged reports of bullying are:

- Taken seriously and carefully recorded.

- Fed back to the class teacher/form tutor who, in conjunction with the ▮▮▮▮ completes the following process.

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ must

gather all evidence, investigate and decide...

▪ ▮▮▮▮ must be kept informed and involved as appropriate.

Is this a one-off incident?	Does this constitute bullying (as per the School Definition)?

Yes   No

Yes

- Decide on a course of action.
- Let parents know.

Constitutes

Stage ▮▮▮

▮▮▮▮▮▮

Form a plan of action that ensures the following areas have been covered. That:

- All teachers are aware of what has happened, who is involved and what is being done.
- There are suitable consequences/sanctions for the bully and support strategies for the victim.
- Parents and children of both bully and victim must be made aware of the outcome.
- Any curriculum support deemed necessary has been set up. For example:
  - Circle time
  - Buddies
  - Special assemblies
  - Social stories
  - Designated staff – DHT/AH, Nurse
- Check-in points have been established with the children/parent involved to ensure the situation has stopped and that both victim and bully have slotted back into school life.

Primary Stage 2/3 of Behaviour Disciplinary process. A record has been a▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Secondary: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

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1.6. Cyberbullying

- All students are made aware of the impact of cyberbullying and the ways it differs from other bullying - including the risks of misinterpretation of comments posted.

- Parents will be made aware of students' responsibilities in their use of ICT in school and will offer support if cyberbullying takes place out of school.

- ▇ will take all reasonable steps to block access to unsuitable internet sites, including social networking sites, chat rooms and individual website owners/forums and message board hosts. ▇ has control of the filter and so is able to respond immediately to the emergence of new sites.

- ▇ is able to conduct a search of internet use records and this is made known to students as a disincentive for bullies to misuse school equipment and systems.

- Students and staff are advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and the police can be involved to enable the service provider to look into the data of another user.

- ▇ will provide help and support for parents with regard to net safety 'netiquette', e-safety and digital literacy are actively promoted and discussed as part of the curriculum.

- Students are made aware that some cyberbullying activities could be criminal offences.

- ▇ reinforces statutory guidelines about the use of social network sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat.

Appendix 6: Relevant Extracts from the Inclusion Policy

Inclusion Policy

4   INCLUSION- PREAMBLE

4.1 This Inclusion Policy sets out the School's commitment to 'People of Determination' (those with special educational needs and disabilities) within the context of a mainstream curriculum.

4.2   The School will endeavour to;

4.2.1 maximise accessibility to the School's services, facilities and activities for all People of Determination, and will take all steps to ensure that no-one is treated less favourably on the grounds of special educational needs and disability.

4.2.2 promote a culture of inclusion which celebrates and values diversity, and in which people feel motivated and confident.

4.2.3 Take action to reduce or remove barriers to ensure that all students of determination can access education on an equitable basis with their mainstream peers.

4.2.4 create, maintain and disseminate information about services and facilities available for People of Determination.

5   INCLUSION – LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 The School is responsible for ensuring all staff that are recruited have the capacity to acquire the knowledge and skills required to operationalise the DIEPF.

5.2 The School is responsible for actively enabling People of Determination. These responsibilities are delegated by the School's Executive and Senior Leadership Team to appropriate representatives, particularly members of the Learning Support Department (▮▮▮▮).

5.3 Support for People of Determination is a general duty of **all** stakeholders, including staff, students and parents with a specific focus on promoting equality and inclusion.

5.4   Under these duties the School expects staff and students to work towards:

5.4.1 eliminating unlawful discrimination;

5.4.2 eliminating harassment of People of Determination;

5.4.3 promoting equality of opportunities for People of Determination;

5.4.4 involving People of Determination in the formulation of actions;

5.4.5 promoting positive attitudes towards People of Determination;

5.4.6 taking steps to meet People of Determination's needs wherever possible and reasonable;

5.4.7 identifying and analysing potential discriminatory policies, practices and procedures in all aspects of the School's activities.

5.5 The School has an Inclusive Education Support Team consisting of representatives of

5.5.1 School Director

5.5.2 Inclusion Governor

5.5.3 Head Teachers

5.5.4 Inclusion Champion

5.5.5 Heads of Inclusion

5.5.6 Support Teacher

5.5.7 Inclusion Support Assistant

5.5.8 Parent Representative

5.6 The list of current personnel is found in Appendix 1 (Paragraph 16).

6   INCLUSION – ADMISSIONS, PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY

6.1   ▮ welcomes applications from People of Determination. In order that they can be made aware of possible entitlements and the support that is available to assist them to achieve their potential in school.

   6.1.1 Applicants should declare identified needs or disabilities or at the time of application;

   6.1.2 Existing students should declare identified needs or disabilities that subsequently come to light at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

6.2   Information provided to the School is held in confidence and shared with relevant colleagues.

6.3   The School is responsible for ensuring that People of Determination are able to join the School.

6.4 The School will complete an 'assessment of need', including, where necessary, consulting/working in partnership with external/specialised services to develop appropriate provision upon entry to school.

6.5 The School will provide all reasonable support, interventions, accommodations, curricular and examination modifications required to enable equitable access to educational opportunities across all phases of schooling.

6.6 Admissions processes and procedures for Students of Determination are detailed in the **School's Admission Policy**.

8   INCLUSION – IDENTIFICATION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

8.1 The ▮▮▮ Department maintains a tiered list of Students of Determination. Identification of needs requires sensitivity and discretion; ensuring effective relationships (with students and families) and maximum impact of support.

8.2 Our graduated response model; is complimented by a continuum of identification processes accordingly to the nature of need and appropriate level of response.

8.3   Tiers of identification;

General Learning Support	• Provision led by Y▮▮▮▮▮ close identified gaps. • May be in 'push in' or 'pull out'
AEN provision	• 'Alert list'- to identify and monitor students with potential barriers to learning • Provision aligned to individual needs
SEND provision (Students of Determination)	• Specific needs create barriers to learning. • Partnerships with parents and students (and external agents where appropriate) enable personalised targetted interventions

8.4 The following codes will indicate priority on the register. Only **Students of Determination** (Yellow and Red categories) register are formally identified to KHDA:

Register Identification	Descriptor
BLUE	Internal identification + monitoring/short-term provision
YELLOW	Internal identification + significant ongoing need and/or provision
GREY	External identification + monitoring/short-term provision
RED	External identification + significant ongoing need and/or provision

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Appendix 7: Relevant Extracts from the Parental Complaints Procedure Policy

1.7 This document explains the feedback/ complaints procedure. This procedure is not intended to be the only means by which parent and pupil feedback is listened to and addressed, but it is an essential tool. If it becomes necessary to alter the time limits and deadlines set out within this procedure, you will be advised accordingly, given an explanation and provided with revised timescales.

This document does not apply to complaints about:

- Pupil admissions
- Pupil exclusions
- ███ Plans
- Appeals relating to internal assessment decisions for external qualifications
- Disciplinary issues relating to members of staff

1.8 Anonymous complaints will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may or may not be examined under this document. You may raise an anonymous complaint or ask for redaction of your personal details using the Feedback form on the parent portal.

2 THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

2.1 All complaints will be handled seriously and sensitively. They will be acknowledged **within five working days** if received during term time and as soon as practicable during holiday periods. It is in everyone's interest to resolve a complaint as speedily as possible: the school will complete the all stages of the procedure within 28 days.

2.2 Following resolution of a complaint, the school will keep a written record of all complaints and whether they are resolved at the preliminary stage or proceed to a panel hearing.

2.3 At the school's discretion, additional records may be kept which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised

- Name of parent
- Name of pupil
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member (s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversations)

Appendix 8: X's Mindfulness Coloring Math Activity

Twinkl.ae. 2020. [online]. *Adult Colouring Mindfulness Colouring Numbers.* [Accessed May 2020]. Available at: https://www.twinkl.ae/resource/t-n-4271-adult-colouring-mindfulness-colouring-numbers

Appendix 9: Suggested Provisions

The SLP Solution. (2020). *Mood Thermometer Activity - The SLP Solution*. [online]. [Accessed May 2020]. Available at: https://www.slpsolution.com/blog/randomizer/mood-thermometer-activity

Teachers Pay Teachers. (2020). *Feelings Chart*. [online]. [Accessed May 2020]. Available at: https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Feelings-Chart-2775501

I can **calm** myself by:

1. Deep breathing.
2. Punching a pillow.
3. Taking a break.
4. Talking about it.

When I'm **angry**, I use:

The Anger Rules

1. Don't hurt others.
2. Don't hurt yourself.
3. Don't ruin things.

Happy Words

Calm
Comfortable
Content
Pleased
Safe

Angry Words

Annoyed
Crabby
Frustrated
Grumpy
Irritated

Pinterest. (2020). *Pin On Behavior Management*. [online]. [Accessed May 2020]. Available at: https://pin.it/7smFQB5

Clipart-library.com. (2020). *Mindfulness Colouring For Kids - Clip Art Library*. [online]. [Accessed May 2020]. Available at: http://clipart-library.com/clipart/19-diraMEb9T.htm

Appendix 10: KHDA's Tips (inspired by a school in Dubai, name will not be revealed for confidentiality purposes)

Khdadubai. (2020). How Can Teachers Support Their Early Years Students Online? [Mobile app, Instagram]. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CBQ2J64JAej/?igshid=b9tvr4ivbfji

Appendix 11: KHDA's PERMAH Model

Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). (2020). *Adults@School Wellbeing Survey* [online]. [Accessed July 2020]. Available at: https://www.khda.gov.ae/en/adultwellbeing