



# To what extent does the promotion of wellbeing in schools lead to improved educational outcomes?

Summary report



# Wellbeing and academic attainment

An Evidence analysis impact study was undertaken to better understand any potential links between wellbeing and academic attainment, as well as other educational outcomes, in order to inform the new Oxford International Curriculum. The impact study was conducted by **Dr. Ariel Lindorff, Departmental Lecturer in Research Methods, Department of Education, University of Oxford.**

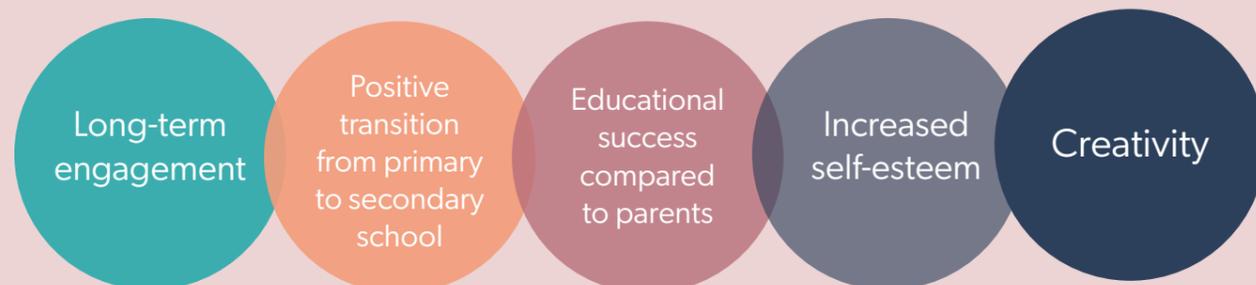
**This document summarises the key findings of the impact study, as well as how it influenced the development of the Oxford International Curriculum Professional Development offer.**

**The overarching research question was: To what extent does the promotion of wellbeing in schools lead to improved educational outcomes?** This broke down into three distinct areas of research:

- What academic research is there that might indicate that student wellbeing can improve academic attainment?
- In what way does a curriculum centred on the principles of wellbeing lead to improved physical and emotional health, and associated educational outcomes?
- What specific strategies are linked with positive outcomes?

Convincing evidence for links between wellbeing and academic attainment was drawn from research carried out internationally, including from China, Germany, Chile, the UK, Australia, and Mexico.

Furthermore, there was evidence that wellbeing was associated not only with attainment but with other educational outcomes:



To see the full findings and recommendations, please visit: [www.oxfordimpact.oup.com/wellbeing-impact-study](http://www.oxfordimpact.oup.com/wellbeing-impact-study)

An Evidence analysis impact study seeks to find and analyse a range of literature (research articles, books, etc.) on a specific topic of interest to uncover evidence and create an overall picture.

**“There is convincing evidence of a relationship between wellbeing and academic attainment.”**

Dr Ariel Lindorff,  
Department of Education,  
University of Oxford

## Oxford International Curriculum

The Oxford International Curriculum focuses on wellbeing and the development of global skills, and aims to promote academic success through the joy of learning.

The Curriculum includes six subject areas (**English, maths, science, computing, wellbeing, and global skills projects**), and covers pre-primary to the end of lower secondary school.

Through promoting wellbeing in education and developing critical and creative thinking skills, the Oxford International Curriculum helps students thrive in an ever changing world.

## What is wellbeing?

In the Curriculum, wellbeing is defined by 4 principles\*:

**Taking care of the body** – learning how to keep active and eat healthily

**Taking care of the mind** – promoting mindfulness to train learners to be more optimistic and manage stress

**Taking care of relationships** – how to build and maintain friendships and relationships with family, communicate with others more effectively and how to connect through acts of kindness

**Finding meaning** – encouraging students to have a focus and find purpose in the world around them.



\* For a complete analysis of definitions of wellbeing, refer to the full version of this report: **Wellbeing: Evidence analysis impact study** [www.oxfordimpact.oup.com/wellbeing-impact-study](http://www.oxfordimpact.oup.com/wellbeing-impact-study)

# Effects of whole-school approaches on promoting wellbeing

Evidence for the impact study was drawn from academic journals, scholarly texts, research reports, website articles and books based on the following criteria:

- phase of education (lower secondary 11 to 15 years)
- research from the last 5 to 7 years
- published in the English language (internationally and the UK)

“There is strong evidence internationally that **whole-school approaches** to promoting wellbeing can have a positive effect on academic attainment.”

Dr Ariel Lindorff,  
Department of Education,  
University of Oxford

# Strategies linked with positive outcomes

The impact study found that a wide variety of considerations may affect the ability of a whole-school intervention or strategy for promoting wellbeing to have positive effects on student academic attainment and other outcomes. Research evidence suggests that schools should:

- Tailor to specific school contexts
- Engage in appropriate self-assessment prior to implementation
- Ensure that wider school policy supports implementation
- Take an integrated, cross-level approach
- Actively engage the wider community, including parents
- Focus on professional development
- Put monitoring systems in place to keep track of implementation
- Ensure that sufficient time and resources are in place to support implementation

## Non-academic student outcomes

There is also strong evidence to suggest that whole-school approaches can have **positive effects on a wide range of non-academic (e.g. social and emotional) student outcomes**, including:

Mental health

Behaviour

Self-esteem

Self-efficacy

Motivation

Decreased probability of dropout





## How has the impact study informed the development of the Curriculum?

The findings and recommendations from the impact study have been used to inform the **Oxford International Curriculum Professional Development** offer. This includes NEW online modules developed based on the research findings:

- ✔ **A professional development online module**, 'Wellbeing: a whole school approach', aimed at school leaders and detailing practical strategy advice
- ✔ **'Introductory training for teachers' module** including practical guidance on implementing a whole-school approach to wellbeing, applying key strategies identified through the Evidence analysis impact study
- ✔ **Ongoing collaboration with 16 pilot schools** to develop wellbeing resources for parents



Find out more about the Oxford International Curriculum  
[www.oxfordinternationalcurriculum.com](http://www.oxfordinternationalcurriculum.com)

You can read the impact study report here:  
[www.oxfordimpact.oup.com/wellbeing-impact-study](http://www.oxfordimpact.oup.com/wellbeing-impact-study)

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#WellbeingShapesLearning



The Oxford Impact Framework is a systematic approach to evaluating the impact of Oxford University Press products and services. It was developed through a unique collaboration with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and is supported by the Oxford University Department of Education.

  
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