

Therapist is given award for research

Report by Sue Smith
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A KIDDERMINSTER businesswoman has won a national award for excellence and proving that a hands-on approach can help turn around a school once placed in special measures.

Donna Davis, has won the award in recognition of her research into the benefits of the Massage in Schools Programme. The Federation of Holistic Therapists presented Donna with her award, along with a cheque for £500, at a celebratory lunch at Coombe Abbey in Coventry.

Wellbeing

Donna has been a complementary therapist for more than eleven years and runs the social enterprise Go Wellbeing CIC, working in the corporate sector as well as for educational establishments and trained as an instructor in 2007. Three years later, she was commissioned by the Massage in Schools Association to discover the difference it might make on the behaviour of the children.



Award-winning therapist Donna Davis gets her prize from Dr John Hilary, one of the top performers noted as one of the top performers based on sustained improvement. Since that time headteacher Hilary helped turn it around and the research of the programme introduced into the UK in 2000.



Teaching pupils the power of touch

An unusual scheme is making education rather more hands-on. JAMIE ROSS finds out about the positive touch offered in Worcestershire primary schools

A COMPLEMENTARY therapist working across Worcestershire has won an award recognising her research into massage in schools. Donna Davis has worked with a number of schools in the county as a Massage in Schools Programme instructor. The programme is aimed at children between four and 12 years old and is now being introduced in 2,500 schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

MESSAGE IN SCHOOLS

The Massage in Schools Programme was introduced into the UK in 2001. There are around 4,000 trained instructors in the UK. The scheme has been introduced to approximately 2,500 schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The internationally recognised programme is carried out across the globe, in countries such as Australia, USA, China, India, Canada and South Africa. It will also be introduced in a large number of countries.

Vice president of Holistic Therapists. Our awards recognise the difference to the lives of clients, it has helped regarding self-esteem and as a result of schools are programme as well as complementary and also runs social enterprise health workplace. It works with schools through sessions Merit awards.

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Fostering wellbeing: Donna Davis and Dr John Hilary.

Village Therapies

Massage for children has many benefits

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Inclusion and empathy whilst reducing bullying. "We find peer massage at school really beneficial for the children."

A complementary therapist who works with schools across Worcestershire has won a national excellence award in recognition of her research into the benefits of the Massage in Schools Programme (MISP).

The Federation of Holistic Therapists presented Donna Davis with her award at a celebratory lunch held at Coombe Abbey in Coventry. Donna has been a complementary therapist for more than 11 years and runs social enterprise Go Wellbeing CIC. She works in the corporate sector as well as for educational establishments, and trained as a MISP instructor in 2007.

Three years later, she was commissioned by the Massage in Schools Association (MISA) to implement and evaluate the effects of short regular massage sessions in schools, to formally evidence the contribution made on the behaviour and wellbeing of the children. Following a six-week study,

involving more than 100 children at a Worcestershire primary school, the success of the programme was formally substantiated by positive findings. The published research provided vital facts and figures to encourage more schools to consider peer massage. There are now around 4,000 trained instructors in the UK. Between them they have introduced massage to approximately 2,500 schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The internationally-recognised massage programme was introduced in the UK in 2000. Children are taught simple massage sequences which they carry out to each other, through clothing and with mutual consent. These taught sessions can help develop a child's concentration and memory, teach them to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touch, and help children develop respect for others, increasing social

Top marks for Donna over massage research

A BUSINESSWOMAN who implemented and evaluated the effects of short regular massage sessions in a Kidderminster school has been recognised for her research.

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regular massage sessions at Franche Primary School. The published research provided vital facts and figures to encourage more schools to consider regular massage. There are now around 4,000 trained instructors in the UK and between them



Children benefitting from massage

Children at four Solihull schools have been enjoying the benefits of specialist massage therapy. The Massage in Schools Programme (MISP) was introduced to local schools through a targeted mental health (IMH) project by Yvonne O'Leary from Solihull School Improvement and Advisory Service, working in partnership with a trained MISP instructor, Donna Davis.

The internationally-recognised Programme establishes a teacher-led routine, where massage is given over the clothes by children in a reciprocal manner. It encourages learning through positive touch games, activities, and by creating massage stories which can be curriculum based. The programme can help develop a child's concentration and memory, teaches them to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touch and helps develop respect for others, increasing social inclusion and empathy whilst reducing bullying.

The Massage in Schools Programme arrived in the UK in 2001 and is based on the pioneering work of Mia Elmäter from Sweden and Sylvie Hélu from Canada. These inspirational women, both mothers, shared a vision that within time there would be thousands of MISP instructors internationally, all teaching the program with a belief in the beneficial power of nurturing a child for school children. The Programme is now used in 26 countries and there are around 4,000 trained MISP instructors working in the UK. Between them they have introduced massage to approximately 2,000 schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Donna Davis who runs the social enterprise Go Wellbeing CIC, trained as a Massage in Schools instructor in 2007. Three years later, she was commissioned by the Massage in Schools Association (MISA) to implement and evaluate the effects of short regular massage sessions in a school situation, to formally evidence the contribution made on the behaviour and wellbeing of the children.

the work she undertakes at schools across Worcestershire and the West Midlands.

Her research and dedication to the Programme was formally recognised in November 2013, when she was presented with an Excellence Award by the Federation of Holistic Therapists.

Yvonne O'Leary comments: "This research will help schools to better explain to their whole school community the reason for choosing the Massage in Schools Programme as it is rooted in the evidence of what works rather than what we think, right work. Donna has been supporting the schools to implement the MISP and ensure that it is used with confidence by staff in school."

Donna Davis adds: "The importance and potential of massage and positive touch should never be underestimated. Participating schools have told me of better educational achievements by children, improved Ofsted reports, as well as the more day to day benefits such as helping children to settle after a busy playtime."



Donna Davis (left) with Yvonne O'Leary (right) at her award ceremony.

Relax - school massage helps improve results

Four Solihull schools are pioneering The Massage in Schools Programme which has been shown to help improve pupil performance and behaviour. The internationally-recognised Massage in Schools Programme (MISP) was introduced by Yvonne O'Leary from Solihull School Improvement and Advisory Service, working in partnership with trained MISP instructor, Donna Davis.

The peer-massage programme is teacher-led and encourages learning through positive touch games, activities, and by creating massage stories which can be curriculum based.

Ms Davis, who has evaluated the programme in Worcestershire schools, adds: "Schools have told me of better educational achievements by children, improved Ofsted reports, and day to day benefits such as helping children to settle after a busy playtime."

For more information about the Massage in School Programme contact Donna Davis on 07954 414 223 or visit www.gowellbeing.co.uk