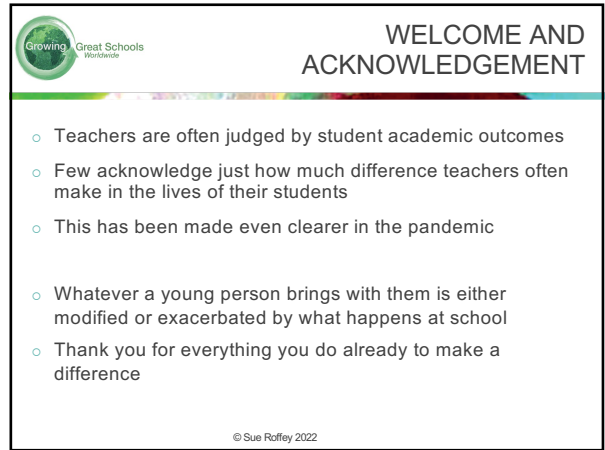


CARING FOR OUR KIDS POST-COVID

Sue Roffey
 A/Professor at University College London
 Director Growing Great Schools Worldwide

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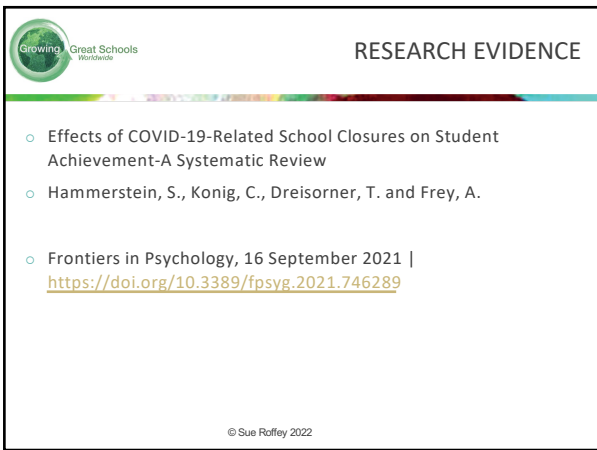




WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Teachers are often judged by student academic outcomes
- Few acknowledge just how much difference teachers often make in the lives of their students
- This has been made even clearer in the pandemic
- Whatever a young person brings with them is either modified or exacerbated by what happens at school
- Thank you for everything you do already to make a difference

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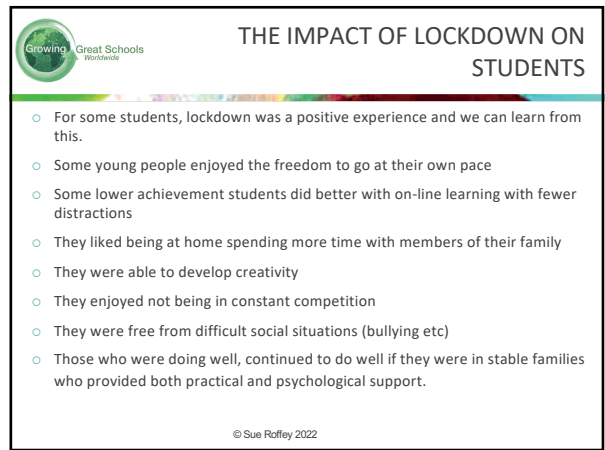




RESEARCH EVIDENCE

- Effects of COVID-19-Related School Closures on Student Achievement-A Systematic Review
- Hammerstein, S., Konig, C., Dreisorn, T. and Frey, A.
- Frontiers in Psychology, 16 September 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.746289>

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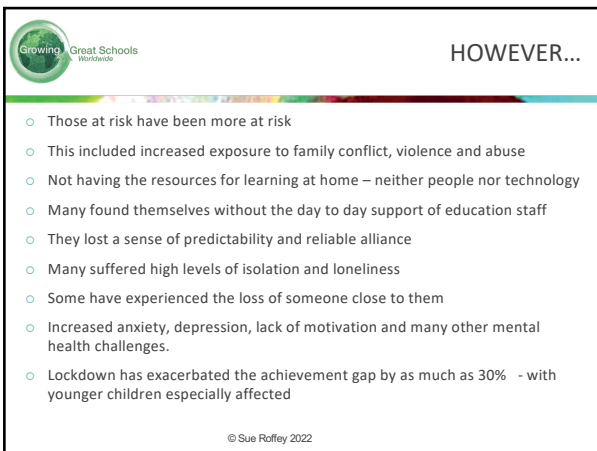




THE IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN ON STUDENTS

- For some students, lockdown was a positive experience and we can learn from this.
- Some young people enjoyed the freedom to go at their own pace
- Some lower achievement students did better with on-line learning with fewer distractions
- They liked being at home spending more time with members of their family
- They were able to develop creativity
- They enjoyed not being in constant competition
- They were free from difficult social situations (bullying etc)
- Those who were doing well, continued to do well if they were in stable families who provided both practical and psychological support.

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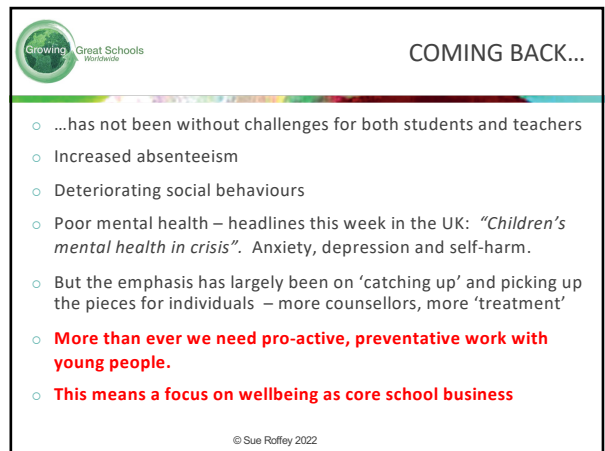




HOWEVER...

- Those at risk have been more at risk
- This included increased exposure to family conflict, violence and abuse
- Not having the resources for learning at home – neither people nor technology
- Many found themselves without the day to day support of education staff
- They lost a sense of predictability and reliable alliance
- Many suffered high levels of isolation and loneliness
- Some have experienced the loss of someone close to them
- Increased anxiety, depression, lack of motivation and many other mental health challenges.
- Lockdown has exacerbated the achievement gap by as much as 30% - with younger children especially affected

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COMING BACK...


- ...has not been without challenges for both students and teachers
- Increased absenteeism
- Deteriorating social behaviours
- Poor mental health – headlines this week in the UK: *“Children’s mental health in crisis”*. Anxiety, depression and self-harm.
- But the emphasis has largely been on ‘catching up’ and picking up the pieces for individuals – more counsellors, more ‘treatment’
- **More than ever we need pro-active, preventative work with young people.**
- **This means a focus on wellbeing as core school business**

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WE DO NOT ALWAYS KNOW WHICH STUDENT IS AT RISK...

- Sometimes we can tell by the way they look
- Often it is their behaviour
- But sometimes we just don't know



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WHICH IS WHY WE NEED WELLBEING – NOT WELFARE

- **WELFARE**
 - Individual students
 - Reactive
 - Specific, add-on
 - Picking up pieces
 - Finding the time
 - Experts and professionals
- **WELLBEING**
 - All students – universal
 - Pro-active
 - Part of school life
 - Relationships and resilience
 - Planning time
 - Everyone is a teacher for wellbeing
 - Teacher wellbeing matters

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WHEN WELLBEING IS CORE SCHOOL BUSINESS THERE IS...

- ...greater student engagement and academic outcomes
- ...better mental health and resilience
- ...more pro-social behaviour
- ...more teacher satisfaction and retention

Noble, T., McGrath, H., Roffey, S. & Rowling, L. (2008). *Scoping study on approaches to student wellbeing*. Canberra: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Federal Government.

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SUGGESTED PATHWAYS

- Physical and emotional safety
- **Pro-social values – kindness, respect, consideration**
- **A supportive and caring school community**
- **A strengths-based approach**
- A sense of meaning and purpose
- A healthy life-style
- Social and emotional learning

(Noble et al. 2008)

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WELLBEING IS...

- How people (both students and teachers) feel about being in school
- Embedded in strengths-based approaches
- Promoting and modelling values of respect, kindness, consideration
- In every interaction as well as every policy
- Threaded through the curriculum, responses to behaviour, who is acknowledged for what, interactions with families, and the power of conversations to create culture.

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NEL NODDINGS: AN ETHIC OF CARE

- *The best self of the educator seeks a caring relationship with the best self of the student*
- So how do pupils know you care?

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HOW DO STUDENTS KNOW SOMEONE CARES?



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THEY KNOW MY NAME!



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THEY SMILE AT ME...




- Smiling conveys warmth and liking - it makes others feel better, it enhances emotional resources
- Research shows that our emotional states and bodily representations can be a two way process.
- We don't only smile when we feel good - smiling can itself make us feel better.

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THEY SHOW INTEREST



- They show interest in me – and not just how I am doing at school
- They listen to me
- They make learning fun where they can


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THEY BELIEVE IN ME

I'm a success today because
I had a teacher who believed in me
and I didn't have the heart
to let them down

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



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WORDS ARE POWERFUL

- **What** we say to others helps create their self-concept
- **How** we speak to others matters
- What we say **about** others influences how they are perceived
- **What we choose to say when** can change culture the emotional climate and beliefs

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WHAT WORDS ARE WE USING?




- For student self-concept – how they think and feel about themselves
- What they live up (or down) to
- For realizing their potential and
- Who they become

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STRENGTHS BASED LANGUAGE

- Strengths-based language can change both expectations and the emotional climate



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EVERY INTERACTION IS AN OPPORTUNITY...

- ...to enhance resilience, coping and positive adaptation
- ...to show you care and believe in the best of the student
- ...to promote positive feelings for students about themselves, their peers, you and being in school
- ...develop a strengths-based self-concept
- ...to make every student understand they are making progress
- ...to help them feel they belong
- BUT
- To do this you need to look after your own wellbeing so your responses are thoughtful, not knee-jerk reaction to challenges

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POSITIVE EMOTIONS BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

- A feeling of being valued enhances cooperation
- A feeling of being cared for enhances understanding and compassion
- A feeling of being respected promotes respect for others and willingness to listen to them
- A feeling of being included enhances commitment and motivation
- A feeling of fun relieves stress and fosters belonging
- A feeling of belonging enhances resilience
- Feeling good improves creative problem-solving abilities

All of this promotes well being and caring communities

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ASPIRE TO WELLBEING

- **Agency** – giving everyone in school a voice and choice
- **Safety** – physical, emotional and psychological
- **Positivity** – positive feelings and positive words, having strengths and solution-focused conversations. And having fun
- **Inclusion** – feeling you belong. Participation, seeing progress and feeling you being there ‘matters’. (Prilleltensky)
- **Respect** – for individuals and for culture – listening carefully (including to emotions) and not making judgements on limited evidence
- **Equity** – flexibility and support to ensure equal opportunities

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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- Email sue@sueroffey.com
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