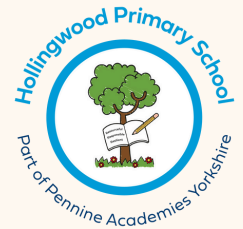


Case Study: A story-led approach to transforming PSHE

About: **Hollingwood Primary School** is a large 2-form entry school in Bradford. It serves a diverse community and has a Resourced Provision for SEMH. The school has been using The Story Project since September 2024.

Focus: The focus of this case study is to share why Hollingwood Primary chose The Story Project, how they implemented the project and what impact the project has had at their school



Finding the right PSHE programme

At Hollingwood Primary School, leaders were looking for a whole-school PSHE programme that met all **statutory and recommended requirements** and also aligned with their vision for a **reading-inspired curriculum**. Their existing scheme felt outdated, and they wanted a fresh approach that engaged both staff and pupils.

Our priority was to find a programme that supported children's mental wellbeing while also promoting a love of reading. We wanted something that would spark engagement across the whole school.

Leaders needed a programme that would help Hollingwood's children to:

- **Articulate** their emotions.
- Build **resilience** and **regulate** their feelings.
- Strengthen their **reading skills** through high-quality texts.

They were also looking for a PSHE programme that would **support teachers** and **decrease workload**.

Before signing up, we wanted to be sure the programme covered the full statutory PSHE curriculum and wouldn't create extra work for staff. We also needed something flexible that could meet our school's needs.

The Story Project offered the perfect solution.

Transforming PSHE, wellbeing and reading engagement

The school was drawn to The Story Project because it placed **high-quality stories** at the heart of PSHE learning. As a school committed to fostering a love of reading, this approach immediately stood out. The programme also provided a **fully resourced, structured curriculum**, ensuring all statutory objectives were met without the need for additional planning.

The lessons are well structured and easy to follow, which has been brilliant for staff. Having everything planned out and resourced has made a big difference to our team.

Since introducing the programme, the school has seen a **major shift in how children understand and manage their emotions**, as well as their **enthusiasm for reading**. Teachers note that pupils:

- **Speak more freely and openly** about their feelings.
- **Use a range of self-regulation strategies** when becoming heightened.
- Have a **greater awareness of their emotions** and the reasons behind them.
- **Engage more deeply with texts**, making **meaningful connections** between stories and their own lives.
- Are **developing stronger academic literacy** through the programme's **vocabulary** development, **retrieval** practice, and **inference** questions.

The comprehensive PSHE sessions have ensured dedicated time each week for emotional literacy, embedding wellbeing into everyday school life. The use of high-quality stories as a foundation for learning has also inspired children to explore books beyond the PSHE curriculum, fostering a genuine love of reading.

Impact on behaviour, learning and reading enthusiasm

The programme has had a **significant impact on behaviour**. By equipping children with emotional regulation strategies, The Story Project has helped create a calmer learning environment.

Teachers have noticed:

- **Fewer behavioural incidents** linked to emotional frustration.
- Improved **resilience** when pupils face challenges.
- Increased **focus and engagement** in lessons.
- Greater **enthusiasm for reading**, with children seeking out books linked to their PSHE learning.
- Stronger **reading comprehension**, as pupils apply vocabulary and inference skills from PSHE texts across the curriculum.

“The impact on behaviour has been incredible. Children are not only more aware of their emotions but are actively using strategies to manage them. Additionally, the stories have sparked a new level of engagement with books—we see children discussing them long after the lessons have ended.”

Embedding The Story Project

Beyond behaviour and wellbeing, the programme has become integral to Hollingwood's curriculum, and has contributed to key areas of **whole school development**, including:

- Strengthening the school's **Personal Development** and **mental health and wellbeing** provision.
- Supporting the school's **reading-inspired curriculum** by embedding high-quality texts in PSHE.
- Enhancing **oracy skills** through meaningful discussions about books and their themes.
- Improving **academic literacy** through explicit teaching of vocabulary, retrieval, and inference skills.

With enthusiastic feedback from parents, engaged and confident pupils, and a structured yet flexible approach, The Story Project has become a vital part of Hollingwood's commitment to developing emotionally literate, resilient learners while inspiring a lifelong love of reading.

“A well thought out, inspiring learning programme that has reignited a love for the subject and had remarkable impact. The Story Project has been a game changer for Hollingwood!”