

## **Children's Mental Health Week 2026** **"This Is My Place"**

This year's Children's Mental Health Week centred on the theme "This Is My Place" - a powerful opportunity for pupils to think about belonging, identity and community. Throughout the week, we explored what it means to feel seen, valued and connected, and how a sense of belonging contributes to mental health, self-esteem and academic success.

This year's Children's Mental Health Week linked seamlessly with our whole-school Spring Term topic, "A Sense of Belonging", which ran across the entire curriculum. By intentionally embedding this theme into English, PSHE, RE, art, geography and wider learning, we ensured that pupils encountered the concept of belonging through multiple lenses, deepening their understanding and strengthening retention.

This coherent, thematic approach allowed children to explore belonging not only as an emotional experience, but also as a cultural, spiritual and social one - recognising how identity is shaped by family, community, place and personal values. Because the language of belonging was already well-established through their classwork, pupils were able to engage with the Mental Health Week activities at a deeper level, making meaningful connections, expressing themselves confidently, and reflecting thoughtfully on the importance of inclusion, kindness and connection. This strong continuity across the curriculum ensured that the week had genuine impact, reinforcing our whole-school commitment to nurturing confident, grounded and emotionally literate learners.

### **Exploring Belonging**

Across the school, children took part in reflective activities to identify the places, people and moments where they feel safe and included. Pupils considered:

- which spaces in school help them feel calm and confident
- which friendships make them feel supported
- what belonging "looks like" and "feels like"
- ways they can help others feel welcomed and included

Children created maps, drawings and poems celebrating the groups they belong to - from families and faith groups to sports clubs, classrooms and friendship circles.

### **Kindness, Inclusion and Community**

Class sessions throughout the week focused strongly on kindness, empathy and taking responsibility for helping others feel like they belong.

Activities included:

- developing kindness pledges
- writing "invisible compliments" for classmates
- creating connection chains showing what links us
- group challenges emphasising teamwork and cooperation

Pupils discussed how even small acts - such as inviting someone into a game or listening carefully - can transform how others feel.

### **Creative Identity Projects**

To deepen their understanding of place and belonging, pupils worked on creative projects celebrating the people, cultures, communities and environments that make them who they are. These included:

- artwork representing special places
- collage portraits incorporating meaningful symbols
- group murals showing how our school community fits together
- storytelling activities exploring personal identity

Children spoke proudly about their families, traditions, pets, favourite hobbies and the trusted adults who help them feel grounded.

### **The Impact of Belonging on Wellbeing**

We explored research showing that a strong sense of belonging has a significant impact on children's:

- wellbeing
- emotional resilience
- academic motivation
- behaviour and social development
- confidence in learning

Throughout the week, staff saw a noticeable positive shift in pupils' interactions. Children showed increased empathy, strengthened friendships and greater pride in their school community. Mixed-age activities promoted inclusion and trust, and pupils took real ownership of looking out for one another.

One child summed up the week beautifully:

**“When people include you, you feel braver.”**

### **A Community That Cares**

Children's Mental Health Week 2026 highlighted the strength of our school as a caring, connected and compassionate community. It reminded us all that belonging is not automatic - it is created through kindness, acceptance and shared purpose.

Our ongoing work across the curriculum, including PSHE, assemblies, circle time and whole-school initiatives, ensures that every child continues to feel:

- seen
- supported
- valued
- and firmly rooted in “their place”