

Cake competition encourages pupils to talk about feelings

A TOWN mayor turned out to judge a cake competition inspired by a mental health awareness day.

Burnham Primary School's parent and teacher association (PTA) invited Wendy Stamp to judge the competition which saw children, parents and staff compete to create the most colourful cakes.

Claire McCormick, chair of the school PTA, was proud of every child's entry for the competition and felt it was an effective way of getting the children to speak about mental health.

She said: "This year we are doing the cake competition to raise money for the school, for a project here..

"We wanted to tie in the competition with the school's mental wellbeing day we did the cakes on a theme of kindness so the children who have all made two cupcakes decorated on what that theme meant to them.

"I think mental wellbeing is something that young children need to be talking about. It is

something we do not talk about enough especially at this young age.

"The pressure the children are under these days is certainly increasing and so we need to make them aware it is OK to not be OK and they need to be able to talk about it and help each other."

Mrs Stamp said: "It is vital that aware-

ness starts so young, it can affect anybody at any age.

"The school has used great terms like be happy and help each other, it is positive and they are trying to teach their pupils to look out for each other and that is the key for me. Because of social media and phones, children are more sensitised to these things now."



JUDGING ROLE: Mayor Wendy Stamp with PTA chair Angelene Groves

'Life isn't peachy but we need to help kids to cope'

School shining spotlight on mental health

By Sam Drury

sam.drury@newsquest.co.uk

A PRIMARY school is encouraging children to get talking about their mental health.

Burnham Primary School, in Dunkirk Road, held its first wellbeing day to educate youngsters about the importance of talking about and tackling difficulties in life.

The scheme is being led by Jeanette Evans, child and family support worker at the school.

Pupils will also be taught about mental health throughout the school's curriculum.

Mrs Evans said: "We know there have been tragedies in our area, especially with children a lot older than ours.

"We had one recently where children from the school were related to that person.

"We cannot change what happened but as a school we want to ask what can we do to build resilience in our children so that hopefully when they come into us, we want to have a programme that runs from reception all the way to Year Six.

"We want them to leave here healthy, happy, confident physically and mentally and know that life isn't peachy, but how to pick themselves up when things happen."

During the wellbeing day pupils took part in assemblies and talked about feeling sad.

Alex Keane, assistant headteacher at the school told the children that feeling sad, angry



LESSONS LEARNED: Pupils at Burnham Primary School listen to a talk on mental health during wellbeing day

or even happy was a normal part of life.

He said: "We all feel sad, it is a huge part of your life, you will spend many days being a bit sad, and that's OK.

"Sometimes it's OK to get a bit wound up, you have to get a bit wound up.

"It's OK to be happy, even if you think someone thinks you're supposed to be sad, it's OK to be happy."

Kelly Stock, headteacher of Burnham Primary School, has fully supported the programme and she hopes it will help set up the children for later life.

She said: "Life can be wonderful, but it can also be very hard.

"I want our children to learn how to cope when life changes and know who to go to for help.

"For some children this may be as simple as when friendship groups change whereas for others they may have to deal with more traumatic experiences."

Mrs Evans added "I think we are very lucky the headteacher thinks my role is an important role.

"Miss Stock feels this role is not a luxury, but a necessity for the school.

"If we do not keep the children safe then the teachers cannot teach them, so it is nice we have someone who recognises the importance of safeguarding."