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School pioneers lifestyle lessons

By **MARTIN FORD**

fordm@hertsessexnews.co.uk

A PRIMARY school in Waltham Abbey is pioneering a surprising method of turning pupils into model citizens with weekly life coaching sessions.

Waltham Holy Cross Junior School in Quendon Drive has enlisted the help of life coach Dale Rockell to help Year 6 pupils with their personal, social, and health education (PSHE).

Headteacher Diane Stygal said: "It helps children to develop a positive image about themselves, identifying aspirations and ambitions and to improve themselves to achieve them.

"It has helped pupils to develop a positive attitude in what is a difficult year, as an exam year."

She added that one-to-one sessions with children when playground trouble occur, have helped to improve behaviour during break-times.

"He is also available to speak to staff without appointments," added Ms Stygal. "It's been beneficial not just from the point of view of the children, but for staff as well."

Dale himself points to Government advisors' suggestions for so-called "happiness lessons" and politicians lamenting the lack of respect among modern children as reasons why he is in demand.

When asked whether what has hith-



THAT'S LIFE: Lifestyle coach Dale Rockell chats with pupils from class 6H at Waltham Holy Cross Junior School

Photo CKTL47QK.01

erto been something only used with adults can be transferred to the classroom, he recited his favourite quote: "It's easier to create effective children than to repair faulty adults."

Dale said: "Life coaching is taking people from where they are to where they want to be. The difference with these sessions is that with adults they usually come to you with a specific goal, to progress in their career or reduce stress and so on."

An example of the sort of activities with which the children are involved

is a giant snakes and ladders game where the pupils are their own pieces.

Dale added: "They can learn about the ups and downs of life and what the Government is calling emotional resilience.

"I would like to see it in all schools. It has the potential to be huge, but I don't know of any other programmes."

Since launching the Stress-Free-Kids programme with Waltham Holy Cross in April, it has been taken up by a further eight schools.