

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	Yoxall St Peter's Primary School
School address and postcode:	King Street, Yoxall, Staffordshire DE13 8NF
School telephone:	01543 472 236
School website:	www.st-peters-yoxall.staffs.sch.uk/
Head teacher:	Stuart Draper
Head teacher's email:	headteacher@yop.jtmat.co.uk
WAS coordinator:	Julie Bamber
WAS coordinator's email:	j.bamber@yop.jtmat.co.uk
Award verifier:	Mark Jennett
Award adviser (if applicable):	
Date of verification:	29 April 2022

Commentary on the evidence provided:

The portfolio of evidence was comprehensive and put together with great care. Subsequent discussions as part of the verification day helped to clarify any questions I had, as did the concise and helpful presentation. Given that the wellbeing lead has been out of school for a significant part of the time spent working on the Award, both her own and the school's commitment to the process is commendable.

It is clear that the school, while facing significant challenges as a result of the pandemic, has retained its focus on wellbeing. It is aware of the needs of its pupils and continues to evaluate the provision it has in place.

Leaders and staff all show a clear commitment to promoting wellbeing.

Strengths identified during verification:

The school has taken note of the feedback from stakeholder evaluations and responded accordingly as is clear from their ongoing strategy document which includes a number of appropriate 'next steps'. They have a clear vision for wellbeing across the school.

Post lockdown, the school worked hard to ensure that all pupils felt safe and happy to return and put provision in place (e.g. additional forest schools sessions) to support a group that they had identified as less confident.

A range of whole school provision includes discussions in PSHE lessons and daily 'calm brain' exercises and pupils can describe support - such as brief timeouts when they are feeling stressed - and how their teachers help them to deal with obstacles and challenges. As well as being able to talk to staff if they are worried, there are 'mindful monsters' which are checked regularly. The school has monitored the effectiveness of calm brain work in particular and made small changes to exercises to suit classes and individuals. There are also regular days and weeks linked to wellbeing and the children have enjoyed special events such as a trip to the local Buddhist temple where they were led in meditation by the monks

Mindful that a significant number of parents did not feel involved in their work on EWMH, the school has increased efforts around communication via newsletters, social media etc and this has resulted in improved feedback in this area. Parents can describe relevant activities that their children take part in and some have been involved in organising mindfulness and similar events.

Behaviour policies have been altered to place an increased focus on rewards and staff have noted improvements in behaviour and children taking greater pride in themselves.

Significant changes have been made to marking and other policies which staff say have resulted in reductions in workload. They also spoke about how colleagues help each other out and are always available if they have a problem or need to talk. Four members of staff have completed MHFA training.

Pupil records include a section on 'engagement' which assists staff in picking up issues and concerns at an early point and also supports information sharing with colleagues. Staff described how these also help to support conversations with parents about what might lie behind behavioural changes.

The lead governor for wellbeing meets with pupils regularly to discuss wellbeing and report back to governors and SLT.

Senior leaders have developed useful links with local services and fed into discussions about commissioning and provision. The school also continues to work with the MAT SEND lead to support the development of practice around wellbeing.

Areas for development:

Bearing in mind that stakeholder feedback has improved more significantly for staff and parents than for pupils, work with children to determine what additional support they would like. For example, I note that staff have recently discussed how they can spend less time out of class at MAT meetings etc so that children experience greater consistency. Monitor whether changes like this have an effect on things like the number of children who feel that staff don't always notice if they are worried or unhappy.

Ensure that the school's vision statement for EWMH is clearly visible on the website and share with stakeholders via social media etc

Review and update the strategy for EWMH on a regular basis. As part of this process, conduct a SWOT analysis of current provision with a range of stakeholders including staff, pupils and parents and identify areas for further development. Ensure that the strategy is retained as a standing item at governor and SLT Meetings.

Provide additional training for staff – for example around risk factors for children's wellbeing (this might perhaps be achieved through cascading the MHFA training). Continue to engage with the MAT SEND lead and see what additional support might be available. Consider recruiting individual members of staff to be trained as ELSAs or other relevant provision to increase the range of interventions that the school can offer.

Continue efforts to return to pre-pandemic levels of staff social activity (lunches etc)

Enhance the staff wellbeing policy by adding details of specific support available and include this in the staff handbook and elsewhere as relevant. Include the existing appraisal proforma as part of the policy, add specific questions in relation to how staff are feeling generally (not just in relation to workload etc) and, again, include this information in staff handbooks etc so that colleagues know that these questions are asked of everyone and to avoid any possible stigma around discussing wellbeing concerns.

Consider how you can enhance the impact of 'one-off' activities such as the visit to the Buddhist temple. For example, could you conduct short mediation sessions in classes – and for staff?

As the role of the wellbeing champions develops, consider how they can be involved more directly in wellbeing provision such as leading assemblies etc.

Verifier recommendation:

I am delighted to recommend that the school be awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools for a period of three years.

Head teacher comments:

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