

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS) Verification Report

School name: Needwood CE and All Saints CE Primary Schools

School address and postcode: DE13 8SU

School telephone: 01283575216

School website: <https://www.theforestfederation.co.uk/page/?title=Welcome&pid=15>

Executive Head teacher: Mrs Charlene Gethin

Head teacher's email: headteacher@allsaints-rangemore.staffs.sch.uk

WAS coordinator: Mrs Charlene Gethin

WAS coordinator's email: headteacher@allsaints-rangemore.staffs.sch.uk

Date of verification: 14 & 15 July 2020

Award verifier: Grace Kew

Award advisor (if applicable):

Commentary on the evidence provided in the portfolio:

- The portfolio of evidence produced is strong and the evidence base reflects schools with a real commitment to the well-being of all its' stakeholders.
- Evidence presented in the folders was very excellent at demonstrating the school's existing culture of promoting the well-being of staff and pupils through a wide range of strategies, activities and provision and how this has merged in with the WAS Award.
- The evidence demonstrates the school's ongoing reflections and evaluations with clear action points. This is also reflected in the SIP and the long-term strategy

Strengths identified in the review:

Leadership & Management:

- The WAS framework has been used as a diagnostic tool and successfully implemented via the Action Plan, SIP and the pictorial well-being strategy. This is clearly reflected via the two schools' 'robust and ongoing monitoring and evaluating systems in place. The SIP for 2019/2020 and the 'Forest Family Well-being Strategy' clearly supports the schools' vision on the development and implementation of the strategy.
- Effective leadership and management have continued to embrace the changes and challenges during and post COVID. As a result, the schools have implemented innovative strategies to continue supporting and thriving as a school community.
- Robust policies for promoting well-being and mental health are in place. This is demonstrated via the updated annexes or guidance on COVID-19, which are also in line with government expectations.

- During lock-down the leadership team has consistently ensured that support for emotional well-being and mental health of all the stakeholders has been offered via the 'Keeping in Touch' Newsletter, virtual calls, Dojo, Seesaw (online virtual learning tool), Twitter #keepintouch, WhatsApp groups, virtual staff meetings, and the continued provision of nurture provision in school.
- The leadership team have ensured that the Christian values are explicitly integrated and reflected in the well-being strategy. For example, 'The Forest Family Vision Statement' includes statements, scriptures, values and a vision statement with specific reference to the Bible. This is explicitly articulated and shared on the website for all stakeholders.
- Leaders have actively sought to forge new links and working relationships with external agencies around the topic of mental health and well-being with MIND, HOPE (local charity), YMCA, Healthcare at home and have attended a wide range of meetings. Because of this they have been able to support and share their expertise and experiences in promoting the well-being and mental health of their stakeholders.
- The schools offer a wide range of opportunities for pupils to experience and engage in activities to promote their well-being and mental health such as, a nurturing learning environment, Forest School, Lego therapy, Happy Healthy Children Week, Mental Health Week, and more. They also provide designated nurture support through a member of staff who is specifically employed and trained.
- Emotional well-being and mental health are an integral part of the existing school vision, which is based on promoting confidence, expressing emotions, maintaining positive relationships, coping and managing stresses, and being happy. This is evident through feedback gained from a range of stakeholders, who feel that the leadership team are approachable and easy to speak to about emotional well-being and mental health concerns.
- The leadership team has involved the staff across the two schools resulting in a whole school community which has "ownership" of the award. As some staff confirmed, "I am responsible for the Wishes and Feeling interventions". "I am part of the Change Team and have been involved in looking at ways in which to best support staff".
- The governors are passionate about promoting emotional well-being and mental health and are well informed about progress towards achieving the WAS strategy. This is evident through the commitment and expectations of governors. As stated, "The Headteacher provides feedback through reports to governors, at meetings and via through virtual meetings. Governors have supported, challenged and the development and impact of the strategy".
- The governors were very confident in articulating how the strategy has successfully supported the delivery of the Well-being Award and future plans for development. As articulated, "The schools are very good at self-evaluating from all stakeholder perspectives and we will continue to drive this agenda forward."
- Governors are actively involved via their involvement as members of The Change Team, and championing contribution through worship. One of the governor's words, "The link governor for mental health feeds back to the governing board."
- Needwood CE & All Saints CE are schools where the well-being of its' stakeholders is at the heart of what that they do. They have fully committed to ensuring that lock down was not a barrier but a bridge to ensuring the well-being of all their stakeholders. Because of this, the whole school community feel highly valued, involved and looked after. As expressed, "Despite COVID the schools have delivered well and kept all the stakeholders informed".

Pupils:

- Despite lockdown, pupils have continued to get support from schools via zoom class sessions, access to bedtime stories, online resources, Seesaw, worship, nurture provision and Twitter.'

Because of this, the pupils feel very safe confident, and happy that their learning has not been disrupted.

- PSHE is a fundamental subject that is central to the school's ethos. The delivery of well-being and mental health is supported through the Jigsaw curriculum, Seesaw a designated nurture support member of staff who is specifically employed for the role and the support from staff. As expressed, 'We learn about how important it is to talk about our worries in PSHE.'
- Pupils have been given opportunities to contribute towards the strategy via assemblies, Nurture groups, Well-being Team (champions), Learning council, 'The Smart' school council, well-being committee, worship team and Eco team. All the teams have been encouraged to talk about well-being. Because of this, they have ownership of implementing and embedding the WAS strategy into their day-to-day school life. As articulated, "If I see someone sitting alone in the 'Friendship zone' I will go and speak to them".
- The pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities and support strategies for their emotional well-being and mental health such as 'safe' spaces, Artists, regulation zones, mindfulness sessions, mindful painting, and Lego therapy. These activities have a very positive impact on their well-being and mental health and is evident via the virtual tour, videos around the school and from feedback gained from the pupil stakeholders. As they expressed, "We have loads of things around school like yoga, mindfulness, breathing techniques and up a finger, down a finger to help us."
- Pupils' are provided with opportunities to talk about how they are feeling. They have access to a 'worry Box', staff to speak to, enrichment days, eco days, and Happy Children's Week. There are also designated areas in the classrooms (zones of regulation) where children can relax, read, or fiddle with stress toys. The pupils also have access to books with stories on emotional well-being and mental health. As a result, the children feel happy and confident around school and know who to speak to. As they expressed, "We tell the teacher when we are worried about something and Mrs Fenton is always there for us to speak to."
- The Forest Family School have recently introduced Ralph - nurture and reading dog. Ralph is making a positive contribution to the emotional well-being of pupils. As expressed, "I stroke Ralph when I am feeling stressed and it helps me to calm down."

Staff:

- Staff in both schools feel very well supported by the leadership team and have access to a range of support mechanisms such as WhatsApp groups, designated nurture lead, management release time, mindfulness sessions, confidential external employee support helplines, staff absence insurance, Think Well (telephone service), access to mindfulness sessions (outside school), flexible working hours including information via the induction package. Well-being is also a standing item on all agendas. Because of this staff feel confident to open up about what is troubling them. As the staff put it, "We feel confident to speak to SLT about our own well-being and mental health".
- Staff have continued to be supported virtually during lockdown by having access to 'virtual' meetings, e-messaging, newsletters, supporting own health, planning bubbles, including updates on the new academic year. As a result, they feel valued, confident to deliver the curriculum, and support one another. As mentioned, "We have held virtual well-being meetings during lockdown and chat on WhatsApp groups."
- Training on well-being and mental health has been provided to staff and those that are responsible for leading on Mental Health across the school. All staff have received training on Emotional Coaching, HOPE – includes supervision, and how to create mentally healthy classrooms. Because of this, they feel confident in supporting the implementation of the WAS strategy and feel more able to spot any signs, symptoms and risk factors associated with poor

mental health of all the stakeholders. As articulated, “Mindfulness training gave us the confidence to try out things with children.”

- The staff team work together effectively and support each other. The shared values of the staff team are clearly evident. As they expressed, “Because of the size of the school, we know each other so well and feel comfortable to approach each other”. “
- Staff have got access to positive well-being interventions and rewards such as health checks, workload audits, health and well-being audits, twice yearly gifts, hand massages, food, flowers and personalised notes from the Headteacher. Because of this they feel valued and taken good care of. As expressed, “We have good relationships and SLT always see us as human and are looked after emotionally.”

Parents:

- Parents are kept to date, informed and signposted to .gov website for updates on latest guidance on COVID-19 including upcoming activities, strategies for mindfulness, and NHS week. The schools have also shared a PowerPoint with information for September 2020 on COVID-plans with very clear expectations from all the stakeholders.
- Communication with parents has been exemplary during lockdown. The schools have kept in touch through newsletters, Dojo, Twitter, workshops and parent forums. This has had a positive impact of parents’ own well-being. As expressed, “During lockdown the school and teachers have been brilliant at communicating.”
- The ‘Keeping in Touch’ newsletter is shared with a wealth of information and signposting for help on COVID-19, NSPC, and Internet safety. The schools also encourage virtual participation of all stakeholders in celebrating events such as everything rainbows, and painting stones. Because of this, the whole school community feel included, informed and supported with their well-being and mental health.
- ‘Hope’ Parent support meetings offer encouragement and support such as how to use zoom for supporting learning at home. The nurture lead also offers signposting and parenting support.
- Parents feel that staff are very approachable, and the school is very welcoming. As a result, they feel secure and supported by the schools. In the words of some parents, “There is a real open-door policy in the schools and there is always someone to talk to”. “Happy parents, happy children”.

Impact:

- All the stakeholders have been supported during lockdown and feel that the school has given them the confidence to manage their own well-being better.
- The schools have provided a range of appropriate CPD to enhance staff’s knowledge on emotional well-being and mental health. Because of this, staff feel very confident in recognising signs of mental health and using a range of strategies to support their own wellbeing.
- The Christian values have been explicitly integrated into the well-being strategy and supported nurturing a culture of physical and mental health and well-being to enable a state of openness, happiness and contentment.
- The well-being of the stakeholders has been a key priority even before the school embarked upon working towards achieving the award. A culture of care, and positive mental health has resulted in a team whose morale is high and a staff who are very proud of their school.

- The school has supported the pupils in being able to talk about their feelings. Pupils therefore feel safe to share their worries and concerns with the adults in school and know who to go to for help.
- The schools have put effective strategies in place to support all the stakeholders. They have truly embraced the technologies and systems of how to navigate safely in the 'new normal' – this includes adhering to government guidelines on COVID-19.
- The whole school community is keen to continue working towards promoting and embedding a culture where talking about emotional well-being and mental health is completely eradicated.

Areas for development:

- Explore different ways in which you can engage parents in contributing effectively to the well-being strategy and ensuring that they understand what the well-being strategy is about.
- Ensure that all the stakeholders are shown where to access signposts to appropriate information, policies, information, services and support on emotional well-being and mental health.
- Ensure that staff engagement in driving the strategy forward is extended to staff who might not necessarily be part of 'The Change Team.' Think about 'Well-Being' Champions who genuinely wish to contribute to the strategy without necessarily being expected to commit to extra paperwork.
- To ensure that governors are provided with the basic and appropriate training on emotional well-being and mental health.
- Further develop a website that explicitly reflects schools which promote the well-being and mental health of its' stakeholders and include a directory which provides signposts to appropriate policies, information, services and support for all the stakeholder groups to access.

Verifier recommendation:

Needwood CE and All Saints Primary Schools should be awarded the Well-being Award for Schools for a period of three years.

Head teacher comments:

I would like to thank Grace for her professional and supportive approach to our verification of our award. She was rigorous and fair in her approach and assessment. She asked many and varied questions and was excellent at triangulating our comments and evidence. I feel that the approach was robust and our report reflected our schools and was positive and supportive for future development. The award was the icing on the cake for a piece of work that was integral to our development and built upon several years of work and we are thrilled with the outcome, thank you. Charlene Gethin.

May we use your comments on our website and/or publicity material? **Yes**