

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

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| School name: | West Kirby School and College |
| School address and postcode: | West Kirby, CH48 5DH |
| School telephone: | 0151 632 3201 |
| School website: | https://www.wkrs.co.uk/web |
| Head teacher: | Sian Thomas |
| Head teacher's email: | sthomas@wkrs.co.uk |
| WAS coordinator: | Sarah Wilkinson |
| WAS coordinator's email: | swilkinson@wkrs.co.uk |
| Award verifier: | Jill Tordoff |
| Award adviser (if applicable): | Jill Tordoff |
| Date of verification: | 27 th January 2022 (virtual) |

Commentary on the evidence provided:

The school has fully committed to the process of the Award and used it to build on existing skills, knowledge and practice to support the emotional well-being and mental health (EWMH) of its community. The school has sought to increase opportunities to gain the perspective of pupils, staff and parent/carers and their responses demonstrate the positive impact of the award. The portfolio evidence was well-presented and it is clear the school has developed a holistic approach to promoting EWMH. The co-ordinator reported 'well-being is at the core of what we do and if EWMH is not in the right place we cannot meet pupil's individual needs.' The co-ordinator and change team have effectively used the Award process to celebrate existing success and as a rigorous tool for analysis.

Strengths identified during verification:

EWMH is integral to the SDP and a pupil version has been developed to highlight the of communicating key aspects of EWMH to The school promotes an inclusive ethos and



friendly importance everyone. the WAS

co-ordinator has successfully led the change team. Evaluation is a key priority with all staff always seeking to review what they do in order to embed and, if necessary, adapt their practice. Governors are committed, have rigorous monitoring and evaluation in place and are keen to ensure that EWMH is embedded and sustained. The headteacher reports on a termly basis to governors and all policies have been reviewed to ensure they are linked to EWMH. In December 2021 the school was judged to be Outstanding in all areas and this was the fifth inspection where the school had been placed in this category.

The school has worked hard to share, with the whole community, their six values with wellbeing at its core. The values are now displayed throughout the school, promoted in assemblies with follow up activities to reinforce their importance and the values are shared with parents and carers. The completion of the WAS evaluations from pupils, staff and parents and their analysis demonstrates that the school has identified what is working well and what needs further development. The majority of pupil, staff and parent responses were positive and there was evidence of follow up on any ideas to improve practice. For example, following feedback from staff they appreciated that all staff now take part in EWMH activities, in mixed teams, on a Friday afternoon and as a result this has helped 'improve relationships between all staff.' Pupils responses have also been positive with comments such as 'I help my friends when they are upset and I can give them good advice' and 'staff talk to me I can tell them how I am feeling.' Parents report that the school really cares that everyone has good emotional wellbeing and mental health and they feel the school encourages parents to talk about how they and their children are feeling. Feedback and regular communication has been consistent through the use of texts, emails, virtual and in person meetings, phone calls, the website, newsletters and social media including Facebook and Twitter. Parents have also met in coffee mornings both at school and virtually.

The breadth of EWMH approaches both within the curriculum and on a whole school basis is a strength of the school. As a result of extensive training staff have an increased knowledge and understanding of how to support pupils EWMH. All staff have received training in mental health such as MindEd and a number of key staff have completed the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training and the co-ordinator has completed the Coaching and Mentoring PG certificate. The EWMH approaches include a well-established personal development curriculum, the zones of regulation programme, a mental health awareness week, utilising EWMH activities from the Happy newspaper and school pledges to support the personal development of all pupils when at West Kirby. These pledges include an opportunity to go on residentials, to watch professional performances at theatres, to access authors and extra-curricular activities, to attend work related events and to take part in international, national and local charity events. There are also numerous opportunities for pupil ambassadors to be involved in school life, for example, on aspects of the environment, to support reading and to promote EWMH and LBGQ issues.

Staff demonstrate high levels of awareness of the needs of individual and groups of pupils and information is shared effectively by use of the Behaviour Watch system. The Motional assessment tool was introduced as a pilot in 2021 and is now used by all staff. This system allows staff to screen all pupils to assess their EWMH needs, and if needs are identified, to recommend a range of appropriate in class and individual strategies. All pupils have an IEP and there is an extensive range of existing intervention in place from school and specialist staff. Given the specialist and charitable nature of the school it has extensive internal provision provided by a clinical psychologist, pastoral care team, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, a learning mentor, support and a family home-school liaison. There are also links with a range of external



OPTIMUS EDUCATION

reading
officer.
services

and the head teacher has identified increasing partnerships with other agencies, links with other schools and local authority networks as a priority in the SDP.

Staff well-being has been a key focus and there have been many developments. These include the introduction of well-being breakfasts, stress awareness training, staff loans for items such as transport, bikes and computers, yoga and mindfulness sessions and the introduction in lockdown of a staff bonus in recognition of staff increased workload. The SLT have also created progression opportunities by adopting new roles in recognition of work undertaken. Staff report they 'feel very supported', they have access to a counselling service and the introduction of a supervision pilot scheme is valued. They appreciate that joint planning helps to reduce workload and value being enabled to leave school early on a Monday and Tuesday as the end of term approaches. They appreciate that 'we need to feel emotionally strong ourselves in order to support children.'

Parents are aware of the range of support available to them and have positive relationships with staff. The majority of parents are complimentary and report staff to be responsive and supportive. Increased regular contact has aided good communication between school and home.

Impact:

- The WAS framework has helped us to 'pull our work on EWMH together to make it more cohesive' and it has 'helped communicate, monitor and analyse our approach to supporting EWMH.'
- Pupils have an increased vocabulary to express their emotions
- A reduction in pupil behaviour incidents
- Increased pupil, staff and parent/carer knowledge and understanding of the importance of mental health and wellbeing on individual well-being and pupil progress
- Families are more aware of EWMH support available and are regularly kept informed
- Pupils are more confident talking to adults

Areas for development:

- Explore the use of See-Saw to aid further communication of the school curriculum with parent/carers
- Develop a diagram or leaflet for parent/carers to make more explicit the universal strategies used to support the EWMH of pupils
- Ask pupil, staff and parent ambassadors to develop and share clips of effective practice, for example, use of the zones of regulation
- Reflect on strategies used in lockdown to identify what should be retained, for example, both in person and virtual parent meetings
- Roll out the supervision pilot to all staff
- Share the effective EWMH work with other primary and secondary schools. For example, consider open days to share everyday practice and increase outreach support to other schools

Verifier recommendation:

I am delighted to recommend that West School and College be awarded the Award for Schools for a period of three



OPTIMUS EDUCATION

Kirby Wellbeing years.

Head teacher comments:

Undergoing the process around achieving this Award has been hugely beneficial towards helping us review all the structures we have in place for supporting staff and pupils. We aim to work as a team and achieving this has demonstrated to us how effectively we have been able to meet our aims. We are very pleased.

May we use your comment for website/marketing purposes? **Yes/No**

