

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	Millfields Community School
School address and postcode:	Hilsea Street, London E5 0SH
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School website:	www.millfields.hackney.sch.uk
Head teacher:	Jane Betsworth
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Award verifier:	Malcolm Goddard
Award adviser (if applicable):	Malcolm Goddard (by Arrangement with WAS Office)
Date of verification:	2/12/19

Commentary on the evidence provided:

The school was adviser led and what was planned as an initial visit in July developed into an interim assessment as it was clear the school were already near completion of the award and had been involved in a pilot project within Hackney aimed at wellbeing (WAMHS project). At that time around 50% of KPIs were fully achieved and a detailed evidence file in place.

At the final visit the evidence provided was clear and concise. It was primarily paper based in an additional evidence file but was backed up by further detailed information in the presentation. The adviser was able to have extended time with large stakeholder groups of pupils, parents and staff who spoke of a school where they felt valued, listened to and part of a community to which they belonged. They were able to talk at length about how school leaders listened to their input and made appropriate changes and how these processes were embedded.

The adviser was able to meet with the LA lead for the WAMHS project and the school practitioner to fully understand the work undertaken and the next steps for the school in the programme.

Oral evidence from stakeholders, during the learning walk (with the school's prime minister and deputy prime minister) and during the presentation triangulated well.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to fully understand the process and the journey the school has been on over an extended period of time and in the last 18 months.

Strengths identified during verification:

-It is clear from all that has been seen and reported by stakeholders that the school prioritises wellbeing of all members of the school community.

The leadership of wellbeing comes from the top with the head and deputy fully engaged and involved – the deputy is the wellbeing lead and has been able to focus on it as a main priority since other roles have passed to other staff.

The school engenders a real sense of belonging which was commented on by stakeholders. Leaders are present on the gate in the morning and are approachable to parents, children and staff. All stakeholders commented that they felt known and cared for.

The school community has been through a significant trauma but there is a sense that something positive has come out of it and it has brought the community closer together.

The school has therapeutic provision on site which is accessible to pupils and staff.

Pupil voice is well developed and students elect their own leaders who play an active role throughout the school.

The school have a wide range of actions by which they promote and support the wellbeing of staff, which has built a cohesive team who value and support each other.

School leaders are very active in helping to develop provision across the wider borough through a range of forums they participate in.

Professional development for staff is highly valued and the school have been creative with their timetable to allow support staff in particular to develop their skills and understanding, including further qualifications.

The staffroom is valued as a space for staff to relax and socialise building a sense of team and belonging. New staff report feeling supported and joining a “family.”

Impact

Through the process of the award and the school’s involvement in the Hackney Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools Programme the school has brought about a range of improvements to their provision:

Both processes provided frameworks for the school to review its processes and provision and to be more explicit about its commitment to promoting positive mental health.

The school are explicit in their use of language around mental health and wellbeing and have reduced the stigma and raised the awareness of staff, parents and students on the importance of areas such as adverse childhood experiences. It is ok to say you are not ok at this school.

There is a well-established mental health and wellbeing team at the school which meets half termly and brings together the key staff who work in this area. Under the leadership of the deputy, the team coordinates all strands of the school’s provision.

The school have developed tailored wellbeing newsletters to communicate and engage with parents, students and staff with tailored content for each group. The pupil newsletter features a key question that is then followed up in class.

The school provides a wide range of other support for parents through the website, courses and training and on a 1:1 basis.

The school have now been identified as a trailblazer school for the national rollout of educational mental health practitioners.

The school now have a CAMHS worker regularly on site working alongside leaders, teachers, and parents to support children experiencing difficulties.

School start times have been moved forward to allow teaching to finish at 2.15pm on a Friday enabling them to work together at the end of the day to keep the weekend free or to go home early. This is having a significant impact on their work life balance.

Areas for development:

- 1) Develop greater capacity within others within the school to increase the range of support the school can offer
 - Staff who have received training acting as a mentor to a vulnerable child/family
 - Students being trained and providing peer mentoring and /or daily support through the wellbeing shed
- 2) Support the rollout of the WAMHS project to other Hackney schools by providing examples of best practice and evidence of the impact of promoting positive mental health and wellbeing
- 3) Work with external partners to integrate the mental health practitioner into the schools existing provision for the benefit of the whole school community as part of the DHSC trailblazer project.
- 4) Set up a wellbeing shed to be an available wellbeing space for pupils at breaktimes (and during lesson times?) Consider how to deploy trained staff and students to support those wanting to use the provision.
- 5) Governors to ensure they have processes for ensuring the wellbeing of senior leaders is supported (as discussed)
- 6) Ensure that the posters the school use to promote MHW and inform the school community of provision available are displayed at strategic points throughout the school.
- 7) Encourage and support the school council in promoting the 5 ways to wellbeing with the student body.
- 8) Embed positive mental health and wellbeing into the new PSHCE curriculum the school are currently developing.

Verifier recommendation:

Recommend that the school receives the award in recognition of its work on wellbeing.

Request the school provide copies of their audience specific newsletters for parents, pupils and staff on wellbeing to the adviser and Optimus as an example of best practice.

Head teacher comments:

The journey to ensure that we consider the mental health and well-being of all stakeholders, pupil, staff and parents/carers has been a rewarding experience for all involved. As a school, we were already on a positive path to ensure that pupils feel confident to speak out and let someone know how they are feeling and who they can ask for support and help. And as a leadership team, we have always ensured that the well-being of all staff is considered and valued. The WBA helped us to refine and further develop many initiatives and support mechanisms to ensure that all stakeholders have someone to speak to, and have access to appropriate support and guidance. Working through the standards to achieve the WBA has successfully confirmed and recognised the hard work of our Mental Health Lead and the School Mental Health Team.

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