

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	Oakley Cross Primary School
School address and postcode:	Lomond Walk, West Auckland, County Durham, DL14 9UD
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School website:	www.oakleycross.durham.sch.uk
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WAS coordinator:	Charlotte O'Neil
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Award verifier:	Sue Stirling
Award adviser (if applicable):	Andy Taylor
Date of verification:	1 May 2019

Commentary on the evidence provided:

- The portfolio evidences a range of comprehensive and well-organised documentation reflecting a school which strongly believes in the vital role it has in supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of all. The key performance indicators of all the objectives have been evidenced and therefore meet the requirements of the award. The evidence included:
- The school' vision encompasses the importance of emotional wellbeing. It is a core value of the school.
- Leaders have developed a long-term strategy for wellbeing. It is an integral part of the school improvement process and because of this, work in this area will continue following the final verification.

- There is clear evidence of distributed responsibility: key personnel are responsible for different objectives within the framework.
- The change team is representative of the school community.
- The school's approach to facilitating discussion about mental health is effective.
- Initially, all stakeholders were provided with a clear overview of the award. Subsequently, updates on the school's progress towards the award have been celebrated using a range of media, including newsletters.

Strengths identified during verification:

- The wellbeing of all is the central principle of the school and the foundation on which all other developments are built upon.
- The WAS award has been used as a diagnostic tool to benchmark current practice and to identify areas to develop even further.
- The Leadership team are determined to address potential barriers for any stakeholders. Because of this, there is a real drive and purpose as the school builds on its current practices.
- The WAS action plan is regularly reviewed to ascertain progress. Developments within the plan reflect live and ongoing evaluations.
- Governors are well informed about the progress towards the WAS Award and are knowledgeable about the impact of the strategies introduced.
- The governors are fully committed to the wellbeing of all. They play a very active role in the strategic development of the school, where being an integral part of the community is of high importance.
- The school is a very welcoming, nurturing and happy school. It is an organised and very effective learning environment. Wellbeing has a high profile.
- Very strong relationships exist between the staff and pupils. Should they have any worries, anxieties or concerns, pupils know that staff will support them.
- The school works effectively with a range of other agencies, e.g. the School Nurse and "One Point." As a result, there is a strong network of support available to parents and pupils.
- The staff work together effectively and support each other. They feel valued by the school leaders who manage staffs' workload effectively. Many initiatives, e.g. "Treat Tuesday" and a "Happiness Jar" have been introduced to support staff wellbeing. One member of staff commented, "...caring and supporting staff is real and not just words."
- As a result of working towards the WAS award, leaders and staff have a clear view of their effective practice and how they wish to develop this even further.
- Effective professional development relating to wellbeing and supporting mental health has ensured the staff have the skills to help pupils when the need arises.
- Systems in the school, to both record and share information, are in place. Consequently, pupils are well looked after and supported.

- The curriculum, including knowledge gained from assemblies and the work carried out by staff, provide the pupils with a range of strategies. The pupils had an excellent understanding of their own wellbeing and the importance of exercise and other factors which positively affect them. As a result, pupils are better equipped to deal with the pressures as they progress through the school.
- There is evidence of a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum. Consequently, all pupils can experience success in a range of subjects which support the development of confident and motivated learners.

Impact:

- The Wellbeing Award (WAS) co-ordinator has been highly effective in her role. The detailed portfolio is just one document which evidences the thoroughness of her approach and attention to detail. Because of this effective management, staff feel both involved and well informed about developments towards the award.
- The wellbeing of the staff, pupils and parents was a key priority even before the school embarked upon the award. A culture of mutual respect has resulted in a team whose morale is high and a staff who are very proud of their school. The staff are helping the pupils and parents to build their self-confidence and self-belief in order that they can achieve.
- The drive from leaders to ensure wellbeing is a core value has positively impacted on the school's culture. All stakeholders have had the opportunity to contribute to this.
- Staff feel highly valued and have real ownership of all the improvements that have been made. Investing in staffs' professional development has ensured these developments are sustainable.

Areas for development:

- To continue to engage and work with parents in order that school and the parent body work in partnership to support the pupils' wellbeing.
- Through a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum, to continue to support pupils to achieve of their best, develop as resilient learners and to be aspirational.

Verifier recommendation:

- Oakley Cross Primary School should be awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools for a period of three years.

Head teacher comments:

We are thrilled to have been awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools and feel this report captures the work that has been undertaken so far in developing an ethos where wellbeing is rightly prioritised. It has also been useful in helping us to develop our longer term strategy for further improvement in this area of our work and how we link this work to other areas such as developing resilience through our participation in the Durham Resilience Project and celebrating difference through participating in the Educate and Celebrate award.

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