



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY  
CARNEGIE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE  
FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS



## School Mental Health Award Final Assessment Validation Report

**School:** Alexandra Park Primary School

**School Lead:** Charlotte Millward

**Coach:** Andrew Cowley **Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Alexandra Park Primary School has presented a detailed profile of evidence that demonstrates they are at least 'Embracing' across all eight competencies of the School Mental Health Award. The school has used the framework and content of the Award to very good effect to develop their mental health and wellbeing strategies, structures, and practices.

The school has been on a journey for some considerable period of time, aided by the fact that the named lead for mental health and the headteacher have worked together for a number of years; I spoke with both colleagues for the verification call. The core values 'Care, Aspire, Achieve' echo through the workbook and evidence, demonstrating the commitment to a positive culture in which mental health can thrive and prosper. The culture includes training for teaching assistants as Mental Health First Aiders and to a Level 2 counselling qualification. Governors are engaged on the process, with a sub-committee for wellbeing as part of the governing body. Governors are involved in looking at the wellbeing surveys, staff absence and external agency referrals. Wellbeing has been on the school improvement plan since 2020, a range of policies and practices being put in place to support mental health across the school.



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Staff are asked at least once a year about their mental health in an anonymous survey. The culture is one of 'asking twice' to ensure staff are feeling at their best and providing support if they are not. Surveys are analysed and acted upon, enabling staff to feel confident to self-refer if necessary and to raise issues if they wish. Staff often waive anonymity, indicating their confidence in the system. Staff emails emphasise the wellbeing message, scheduled send is encouraged, and staff also engage a school hours protocol in communicating with parents. Care for staff includes a feedback marking model, additional time for assessment periods, access to BUPA and days in lieu of additional time given. Positive language is modelled by staff, which ripples into the language used with pupils. The ethos and values promote and respect diversity, evidenced in the range of documents submitted for evidence. Staff CPD has provided plentiful opportunity to develop appropriate skills around mental health, especially for support staff.

Pupils also are fully aware of the 'Care, Aspire, Achieve' ethos and the evidence supports the high levels of trust the children have in the staff of the school. The school uses Jigsaw to meet the statutory requirements for PSHE and this is supplemented by the language of the Zones of Regulation, positive shared language for communication, problem solving and emotional understanding. Leadership opportunities exist through the role of Wellbeing Ambassadors, giving the children a sense of ownership of the mental health support available for them. Children share their concerns through a range of available strategies. They are familiar with the surveys used with them, which employ the Stirling scale which employs positive wording. The wellbeing provision pyramid is familiar to the children but also acts as a referral pathway for the staff. Events such as Children's Mental Health Week are undertaken to keep mental health on the pupils' radar and to promote the positive language around mental health. Parent surveys reveal a high level of parental satisfaction with the school, especially in regard to the approachability of staff and to the positive relationships they have forged with them. Class forums add an additional layer to the pupil voice. A values-based curriculum and Zones of Regulation promote emotional literacy. Wellbeing ambassadors have led assemblies and acted in leading a Kindness project. The weekly drink and biscuit session with the headteacher is used not only as a reward but as an additional opportunity to develop student voice.

Parents are signposted to support for their child's mental health if they require support. Parental

satisfaction is high. Support in school is offered by a Mental Health Support Team member for one day per week. Parental engagement is encouraged through the active parent association and there is a strong



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sense of community in the parent-school relationship. Parent workshops are well attended. External services are referred to in a timely fashion and the school has built strong relationships with local CAMHS. Several Third Sector ventures are engaged to provide links to local support too.

Alexandra Park Primary School is reaching beyond the school in its exemplars of mental health support. The Headteacher spoke to other Stockport school leaders about the impact of class forums and the structures supporting them. A number of other schools have taken up the offer of support and are using these in their contexts. The MH lead took part in the pilot scheme for launching Mental Health Support Workers in schools across the town, evaluated the impact of the work and shared these findings with the local authority. This helped shape local provision, and the MH lead presented also to Stockport Headteachers as part of the roll out of the project. In addition, the school is an EEF research school, leading training on metacognition and self-regulation, emphasising the holistic link between being a successful learner and having improved overall wellbeing. This training is also being delivered to schools in the Liverpool area.

I have no hesitation in concurring with the self-assessment made by the school and recommend that Alexandra Park Primary School is awarded the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools School Mental Health Award at Silver level.

Andrew Cowley

Coach

School Mental Health Award

16<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## Competency profiles provided by the school.

<b>Leadership and Strategy</b>	
The school has a named senior lead for mental health of pupils and staff	Y
The school has a named Governor for mental health of pupils and staff	Y
Governors understand, embrace, and lead the ethos and business case for a comprehensive mental health and wellbeing approach within the school	4
Governors hold school leaders to account for the mental health of staff and pupils	5
Senior Leaders develop and implement the strategies and structures needed to improve mental health in the school	4
Staff have mental health as a core part of their job description and role requirements	3
Leaders' performance management includes a focus relating to mental health	4
The school has a range of robust staff-focussed policies that support mental health which were developed in consultation with all staff groups and leaders and approved by Governors	5
The school has pupil-focussed policies that support good mental health that were developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents and approved by governors.	5
Senior leaders use regular reports and updates including data about the mental health of staff and pupils to implement future actions, channel resources and commissioning external agencies	5

<b>Organisational Structure &amp; Culture – Staff</b>	
The school is a positive working environment where staff feel safe and supported to be and do their best and to share concerns which affect their mental health	4
Leaders regularly consult with a range of employees from across the school to gain informal and formal feedback on stress-related issues and how to improve and support mental health and wellbeing	5
Communication protocols are well established and adhered to e.g., restrictions on unnecessary emailing in evenings, overnight and weekends	3

Workload expectations are made explicit and are well managed, such as marking & assessment, hours in school, working at home	3
Staff self-care is encouraged	4
Senior leaders model the expectations they have of all staff to promote good mental health	5
All staff in school are responsible for the health and wellbeing of themselves and promoting that of others	4
The norms of professional dialogue are developed, and positive language is modelled and used by all staff	5
A culture of tolerance, trust and openness is developed	5
Stigma regarding mental health and support for individuals and groups is challenged	5
Job flexibility is supported where possible within a secure business case	5



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<b>Organisational Structure &amp; Culture – Pupils</b>	
The school values, acknowledges and utilises knowledge and expertise of staff, parents and professionals working with the school with regards to mental health and wellbeing	5
Strategies that promote and develop mental health and wellbeing are embedded in the curriculum and is designed to meet the needs of the pupils specific to their social and emotional needs and developmental age	5
The school has clear strategies which are understood by pupils, school staff and parents to support pupils whose mental health is a cause for concern	5
The school has clear strategies on how to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils with special educational needs, disabilities, disadvantaged and vulnerable children	5
The school ensures that pupils expressing concerns are listened to	5
The school has clear pathways and provisions available to discuss mental health concerns, managing student difficulties and create strategies with follow ups	5
Talk about mental health is normalised, any stigma is challenged by creating a culture of empathy and openness through an ongoing forum of discussion and exploration	5
The school promotes positive and healthy relationships amongst pupils, staff and with parents	5
Pupils are engaged through encouraging pupil voice, authentic involvement in learning, decision making and peer-led approaches.	4

<b>Support for Staff</b>	
A comprehensive staff health and wellbeing offering supports staff mental health	5

The school consistently works towards reducing the stressors that affect staff mental health	5
School has clear pathways to staff support which are understood by all colleagues	5
Access to coaching and counselling is available and encouraged where deemed helpful	4
Staff are encouraged and supported to establish and participate in activities that foster good mental health and wellbeing, based on sound evidence of their impact	3
Successes are regularly acknowledged and celebrated	5



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<b>Professional Development &amp; Learning</b>	
The school has a proportion of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid for adults appropriate to the size of the staff cohort	3
The school lead for mental health and other key staff are trained in evidence-based, and preferably professionally accredited mental health and wellbeing training, appropriate to the age group of the pupils in their school	4
The school's named Governor for mental health has training which develops understanding of mental health and wellbeing in schools for pupils and staff and the role of the Governing Body in supporting good mental health	3
All Governors access professional development opportunities to develop their understanding skills in mental health linked to the role of the Governing Body	4
Staff CPD relating to pupil and staff mental health is aligned to clearly defined, expected outcomes which set out the mental health requirements for their role	5
All staff access professional development opportunities to develop their skills in pupil mental health and wellbeing	4
Staff are able to develop their understanding and practice in adult mental health, wellbeing, and self-care through effective CPD opportunities and act as role models for pupils	5
Staff have access to information and have the opportunities to develop their practice in relation to new challenges posed by information technology and social media such as cyber bullying	3
All teaching and associate staff have been trained and have a broad understanding of mental health issues and promoting wellbeing in pupils appropriate to the age of the children in the school	4
ECTs and all new staff complete an induction programme which ensures they have the understanding and skills expected of all staff in the school with regards to mental health	5
All staff mental health CPD is underpinned by evidence and expertise, aligned to DfE CPD standards	5
Staff feel supported to take forward any new learning from training into their practice	3



<b>Support for Pupils</b>	
Mental health and wellbeing are embedded in the curriculum with supporting activities including assemblies, focus days, lessons and other events where mental health, wellbeing, social and emotional skills, attitudes, and values are explicitly taught by well trained and enthusiastic teachers using positive, experiential, and interactive methods and resources. This learning is integrated into the mainstream processes of school life	5
Pupil wellbeing is developed through implicit methods of teaching and learning such as: emotional literacy, character strengths, values, virtues, resilience, and self-awareness	5
Relationships within the school are positive providing a nurturing, safe and supportive environment which creates a sense of belonging for pupils	5
Pupils understand and can express a range of emotions and are able to share their emotions and ask for help to support their emotional awareness	5
Pupils feel able to disclose incidence of bullying and any form of discriminatory behaviours, they feel their worries and concerns are heard, respected, and taken seriously by staff	5
Staff respond wisely to 'challenging' behaviour, both responding actively with clear consequences and also understanding its deeper roots, taking opportunities to model and teach positive alternatives	5
Pupils know how to ask for support, and this is followed up by staff	5
There are clear internal referral procedures, understood by all staff, to ensure timely and appropriate support is sourced and accessed for pupils in need	5
Evidence based mental health support services are provided and accessed which draw on a sound understanding of child and adolescent development, such as: drop ins, mentoring, coaching, counselling, pastoral support, mindfulness, self-awareness, empathy, and resilience building interventions and wellbeing skills workshops group, peer support, mindfulness, self-awareness, empathy, and resilience building interventions and wellbeing skills workshops	5
Where pupils experience mental health difficulties, clear plans and pathways to specialist support exist, using a coherent teamwork approach, including in the involvement of outside agencies such as CAMHS, school nurse or GP. Help is rooted within the school environment	5
Displays and posters provide various information on evidence based mental health support and how to improve wellbeing such as self-help booklets, library books and other media resources	3
Effective early intervention support is provided and evaluated	4
Physical activity and relaxation activities are on offer that improve wellbeing	5
If peer mentoring is used, those who serve as peer mentors have training and a support structure which they can use if needed	3
Pupils are involved in the design of mental health and wellbeing initiatives and are encouraged to give feedback and provide new ideas	3
Achievements and successes of students are recognised and celebrated	5



<b>Working with Parents and Carers</b>	
The school ensures a non-judgemental, warm, and welcoming environment exists for parents/carers	5
Parents have access to school mental health and wellbeing policies	5
Effective relationships with parents/carers are fostered and maintained	5
The school is committed to continuously improving parental communication	5
Parents have access to staff or mental health professional/s if they have concerns about their child's mental health	5
Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school	5
Parents are involved in interventions that supports their children's mental health and wellbeing	4
Any stigma shown by parents about mental health is handled sensitively yet firmly	3
The school provides learning, guidance, and support for parents to help them:	3
The school has effective strategies in working with all parents/carers	5
Systems are in place that ensures parents/carers are regularly updated on their child's progress as well as any concerns that may exist	5
Parents share their views on how to develop the wellbeing of the school	3
Support, signposting, and referrals are made for parents who require support with their own mental health or support in their relationships with their children	5

<b>Working with External Stakeholders</b>	
Staff understand the clear referral procedures to access timely external services appropriate to the needs of pupils with escalating or long-term mental health difficulties	5
The school has developed strong links with CAMHS and other agencies ensuring regular two-way communication, support, and guidance	5
School leaders are shaping local children's mental health policy and services	4
The school is up to date with new legislation and DfE guidance	3
The school is aware of local agencies and organisations which offer mental health support services	4
Specialist organisations work with the school to develop the mental health and wellbeing of staff, children, and parents	5
The school is aware of and builds relationships with local community projects, voluntary organisations, and networks	4



<p>Due diligence is carried out prior to engaging any external agency / professional providing mental health services to pupils. This involves understanding the evidence base for their proposed work, their qualifications, recent training/CPD, obtaining references, knowledge of their professional body, their supervision structure (including the name and qualifications of their supervisor), who you should complain to regarding any concerns. In addition, the school will carry out their usual safeguarding checks</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Comprehensive Service Level Agreements are in place which clarify roles and responsibilities and reduce risks. Amongst other things, this will make clear the services being provided, the tools and methods used, issues around confidentiality, how outcome data will be recorded and evaluated and how feedback will take place</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>The school ensures robust quality assurance for all external mental health and wellbeing provision taking place, which is reported and evaluated at senior and governor level</p>	<p>5</p>



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