

# Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

## Verification Report

<b>School name:</b>	Malvern Primary School
<b>School address and postcode:</b>	Willoughby Road, Huyton, Merseyside, L14 6XA
<b>School telephone:</b>	0151 477 8231
<b>School website:</b>	Malvernprimaryschool.co.uk
<b>Head teacher:</b>	Mr Tony James
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<b>WAS coordinator:</b>	Stephanie Baker
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<b>Award verifier:</b>	Dr Helen Mills
<b>Award adviser (if applicable):</b>	Dr Helen Mills
<b>Date of verification:</b>	19/11/20

### Commentary on the evidence provided:

The award evidence collated by Stephanie Baker (Wellbeing Award Coordinator) was thorough, and the video evidence outstanding, with Stephanie Baker and Tony James (Head teacher) leading the presentation. All staff, pupils, parents and governors spoke with great passion, pride, openness and honesty during the interviews. A real sense of belonging and a strong team approach was evident, demonstrating the schools ability to work effectively as a team. This provided detailed information and allowed the adviser to better understand the context and background to the schools outstanding developments and achievements.

## Strengths identified during verification:

What Malvern Primary School has achieved with the whole school community over the past 12 months is remarkable; I cannot emphasise enough that this is a 'happy school where everyone is valued and listened to'. Outstanding leadership is a key factor in understanding the success of the school in promoting emotional wellbeing and mental health as core to the whole school community, and this has enabled the Wellbeing Lead, Steph Baker, to flourish in her role.

Through the autonomous style, financial investment, skills, commitment and approach of the recently appointed head teacher and SLT, his staff and governors has created transformational change for the whole school community, and a seamless and consistent, welcoming, none judgemental, happy, kind, caring, respectful, supportive, safe, fun, positive, creative and aspirational culture.

A clear vision, values and ethos, based on a genuine focus of happiness and kindness, developed in consultation with all stakeholders, are central to the success of the school, are shared by everyone, and has created a sense of autonomy, belonging and shared responsibility. Throughout the award process and during lockdown, the school has demonstrated continued and innovative progress to support and improve the wellbeing and mental health of the whole school community. The result offers a powerful template for how emotional wellbeing of pupils, families and staff supports whole school progress.

Significant investment in people, facilities, environment, wide range of activities, staffing, with formal and informal support systems, was apparent during the school verification, and in provision and monitoring of interventions. The award process also highlighted the multiple examples of outstanding 'wellbeing' practice. Many of these have a major impact on the whole school community. For example:

- The clarity and communication placed on whole school vision and values
- Outstanding working relationships with outside agencies and the local community
- Strong pupil and parent councils
- Malvern 2020 - 10 day decathlon
- Virtual Malvern Masterpieces and Wild Week activities
- 1-1 and group targeted sessions
- Sensory circuits and dedicated intervention space
- Recently implemented PHSE Jigsaw curriculum
- Staff health and wellbeing activities (EG - Operation Smile Initiative)
- COVID wellbeing recovery curriculum
- Ongoing charity and fundraising support for the local community
- Use of outdoor learning space and allotments
- Installation of a new daily mile track
- A carefully thought out curriculum with exciting lessons
- A whole school focus on kindness
- Substantial extra-curricular activities offer
- The proactive approach to supporting families
- Parental assemblies, parental workshops and family learning programmes
- The exciting future development of school as a Community Sport Hub
- Mental health awareness training and anti-bullying work

During the award process, the school has worked innovatively to develop outstanding stakeholder voice, parental engagement, effective communication, community links and partnerships, which has led to trusting relationships, and a desire to be a part of the Malvern school community. This is central to the success of the school.

During lockdown, the school led the way nationally and developed numerous pupil, family and staff community challenges and events, all of which linked to the 5 ways to wellbeing, and had a positive impact on peoples mental health and wellbeing. These approaches ensured that all children, including vulnerable children and their families, were supported swiftly and effectively.

This includes SLT and the LM who meet and greet parents on the school yard and gate daily. The safeguarding team being clearly identifiable with pictures, numerous opportunities for parents to get together (Covid has paused some of these) and attend workshops, school wellbeing section on website, Twitter, newsletters, Seesaw, school based interventions, signposting and referrals made to outside agencies, and most importantly the whole school staff working alongside parents in a none judgemental way, listening to and implementing parent suggestions. The excellent communication methods, including the school Twitter account, weekly newsletters and website demonstrate the sense of connection and belonging to the school community. Parental praise and gratitude for staff in school is exceptional.

**Parents commented:**

“Fantastic support, Miss Baker is a superstar and Mr James has been a big help, they’re on the yard saying hello. My child had lots of issues at home and was struggling with separation and going in to school. As parents, we weren’t sleeping, they put lots in place and now he looks forward to going in, he’s so happy now, we wouldn’t have him anywhere else.”

“School offers a 360-degree approach; it’s so much more than education. They harness and cherish each child’s wellbeing. I know the support is there and I wouldn’t hesitate accessing it. My children tell me they’re happy and that there are pictures of people they can speak to. During lockdown, school phoned every week and the use of Twitter, videos and involvement of parents was excellent. They’ve done so many activities and inviting people to get involved in parent group means that I now know more parents and it’s creating a real sense of purpose and community.”

“They engage and continuously communicate with parents; I’ve attended parent meetings and now know more parents. There’s encouragement and support available all the time and they celebrate each other’s successes. Wellbeing is at the heart of everything they do. The care and support for parents and children in lockdown created a connection with others. There’s wellbeing information on the website, newsletters and parental workshops, lines of communication are so clear.”

“There’s mental health support if you need it, you can speak to any member of staff and they know everyone. It’s created a sense of community and openness. Seesaw is really good for communication; you get positive feedback and emotional support. You feel safe and happy dropping the children off. Children know how much support staff give them. The positive attitudes the children have, it gives you confidence.”

“After school clubs are a great chance for children to mix, there’s something for everyone’s needs/interests. I feel really connected with the school with the coffee mornings, celebration assemblies and being invited to be a part of the school community.”

An open door policy, being visible on the playground, stakeholder voice, listening to the needs of others, implementing change and empowering people are very much part of how the school has achieved a shared sense of community, where pupils, families and staff are confident to ask for or seek support, and staff can identify those who require support. The award evidence and interviews demonstrated how extensive, innovative and open this feature is, with staff going above and beyond what is expected to ensure that the whole school community is supported, and this is valued greatly by all stakeholders.

Children feel extremely safe and happy in school, have many friends, and articulated well how the school supports them with their emotional wellbeing and mental health. They are confident to express their feelings, to ask for support and actively help each other and are kind. Pupils commented on the enjoyment and satisfaction they get from learning inside and outside the classroom, how they make decisions to improve the school, can identify and talk openly about their feelings, are proud of their roles and celebrated achievements and described numerous tools that they can use, activities they can do and trusted adults they can work with to promote their wellbeing. This has enabled the day-to-day and longer-term emotional wellbeing and mental health activities to flourish and was evident throughout the verification with the promotion of wellbeing, positivity, aspirations, achievements, coupled with a sense of calm and nurturing relationships, with children demonstrating exemplary behaviour and manners, confidence, kindness, engagement and enjoyment in learning.

#### **Children commented:**

“Teachers are always extremely kind and help you, they look after you. Miss Baker listens to you and helps us with our feelings. School and lessons are really fun and the daily mile helps me to concentrate.”

“In PSHE, we listen to the chime [mindfulness] and think of things that makes us happy, it’s relaxing and helps us concentrate. We play lots of games at play time. We’re all kind, friendly and help each other. We get badges, certificates and head teacher stickers for being kind and helpful, it makes you feel happy. If we’re worried or sad we can tell teachers and our friends.”

“I love school, it’s the most amazing school in the world. It’s a privilege to come here. We voted for Head Boy, I said I will care for everybody and be kind. We also voted for our school council, who are listened to, and now we have healthier snacks and Mr James got us new toilets, he’s extremely kind. I can’t wait to go back to school and see all my friends. I’m a digital ambassador and show children how to keep safe online and take iPads to class.”

“In lockdown it was fun, we had different challenges activities, it was exciting, posting on Twitter and zoom with our friends. It’s such a good place to be because you feel safe and everyone is very nice. Teachers figure out how to make learning fun, they find things we’re good at and we have challenge sheets and choose which one to do. Peer mentors help others, if someone is sad, we go over and make them happy. I’m proud there’s no bullies in our school and it keeps getting better and better. Everyone loves to help”.

Attention must be drawn to the value and priority given, along with significant financial investment, to staff wellbeing and professional learning. This is valued greatly by the highly skilled and dedicated staff who feel that the training and strategies in place support their wellbeing, enabling them to provide the most effective support to the children. Staff follow up questionnaire findings improved significantly and were extremely positive. The Head Teacher has committed to reducing staff stress, workload and improving wellbeing through writing a comprehensive wellbeing policy and implementing a live feedback policy. PPA can be done at home and/or with colleagues with suitable time schedule to support the writing of reports. Additional initiatives include:

- Flexible working for all staff members
- 3 paid wellbeing days and the option of an additional 5 unpaid days
- Planned calendar of events
- Celebrating staff efforts and achievements
- A dedicated budget to improve the environment and welfare of staff
- Access to mental health and wellbeing training
- Regular teambuilding opportunities
- Dedicated PPA room
- A comfortable and positive staff room showcasing gratitude and support
- Daily free refreshments
- A staff shared drive for sharing resources
- Excellent personal and professional development opportunities including wellbeing

- An open door policy
- Importance of listening to the needs of staff
- Clear awareness and an understanding of demands of family and work life
- Providing a support system of coaching, mentoring and pastoral support.

Staff also commented on how supportive and approachable all staff are and how everyone looks out for each other. Staff feel valued, connected, supported, enjoy their jobs and are proud to be a part of the Malvern School community.

**Staff and Governors commented:**

“Mr James brought in an ethos of real energy and focus on kindness and children come home with that message. All the staff are happy. Wellbeing is discussed at Governors meetings. The response to lockdown was superior; parents comment that the school do a wonderful job for the children.”

“I love my job and working here, it’s nice to be appreciated. It is good to have flexibility in your job and not feel anxious to ask for support. SLT value your own family life, it’s really good.”

“I’m proud of the shift in culture, the leadership, our wellbeing community, children, leaders, culture of looking out for each other, being understood, focus on our emotions and achievements, who we are and what we believe in.”

“Being asked what will work for our own wellbeing and the feeling of being able speak to anyone. Steph is really approachable and signposts you to others in school with similar experiences or to outside support. We’ve had loads of wellbeing training, we’re not dictated to, all staff have accessed it too, and the Google drive is great for us to access resources.”

“We have a sense of choice and autonomy. Conversations are about character and kindness. I’m proud of the family support; parents thank us and say you’re not judging us. Steph does nurture groups and she’s always there to support the children. The whole school feel confident and valued.”

“In lockdown communication was vital and we excelled, we were still one team, our own circumstances were catered for, we worked collaboratively, it was a safety net, parents really appreciated the wellbeing check ins. We supported the change of SLT and as a community it’s brought us together, keeping connections strong and developing trust in the community. Steph has led the award so well; we’ve had whole school meetings, made suggestions and are going to have wellbeing breakfasts together. “

The school has drawn together the threads that connect all the different work done and aspirations, and is able to demonstrate positive change in children. The school understands the importance of valuing each other, working as a collective team, promoting positivity, and empowering the whole school community to look after their mental health and wellbeing, which ensures the children are happy, impacting positivity on their ability to achieve.

### Impact:

Effective stakeholder voice and consultation mechanisms, clear communication, vision and values has created trust and a sense of belonging, which has led to a shared responsibility and ownership that promotes and empowers the whole school community to take responsibility of their own and others wellbeing and mental health.

Investment in staff wellbeing and training has resulted in a reduction in staff workload, stress and an improvement in work life balance and staff managing their own wellbeing, which has strengthened staff's sense of belonging, pride, motivation and job satisfaction.

Whole school initiatives has led to an increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing, resulting in open conversations, using shared language and people asking for support and supporting each other to improve their wellbeing by using a range of techniques including kindness, connecting and contributing to improved resilience.

An embedded happy, kind, respected, positive school culture and ethos, valuing everyone's voice, investment in highly trained, passionate and nurturing staff, along with a creative and varied curriculum and extra curricular activities and targeted interventions has resulted in all pupils, including those with additional wellbeing and mental health needs, being provided with a safe space and for interventions to be delivered, enabling their needs to be met. This has promoted confidence in children's ability to talk openly about their feelings, to manage their own mental health, and to support each other, demonstrating developments in their social and emotional skills, confidence, independence and resilience, enabling young people to thrive and excel in their learning.

### Areas for development:

As already highlighted by the school, continue to focus on happiness, engage and communicate with the whole school community, work collaboratively, monitor the stakeholder feedback, hold regular change team and parent council meetings once lockdown has ended.

Continue to offer staff development/training in mental health and wellbeing.

Access ROAR training and implement whole school.

Having become more aware of the multiple examples of outstanding practice, continue to share the experiences and approaches with other schools and your local authority.

### Verifier recommendation:

Malvern Primary School has achieved the Wellbeing Award for Schools. This award covers the following 3 years. I look forward to the work the school will undertake over this time.