

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	Roby Park Primary School
School address and postcode:	Easton Rd, Huyton, Liverpool L36 4NY
School telephone:	0151 477 8340
School website:	Robyparkprimary.co.uk
Head teacher:	Mrs Kat Allen
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Award verifier:	Dr Helen Mills
Award adviser (if applicable):	Dr Helen Mills
Date of verification:	21/10/20

Commentary on the evidence provided:

The award evidence was presented in an excellent way during the virtual verification, with Kathy Lion (Award Coordinator/Assistant Head teacher/Inclusion Manager) and Kat Allen (Head teacher) leading the presentation and showcasing the powerful school video and tour of the school. Kathy Lions leadership, commitment and passion for driving school wellbeing must be noted. All staff, pupils, parents and the governor, spoke with great passion, pride, and honesty during the interviews. A real sense of belonging and a strong community 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:

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. The autonomous style, financial investment, skills, commitment, and approach of the head teacher, assistant head teacher, her team including the change team, governors and the whole school community has

created innovative ways of working and a seamless and consistent, welcoming, none judgemental, caring, supportive, nurturing, safe, happy, honest, positive and aspirational culture.

A strong vision and ethos, alongside the wellbeing aim are central to the success of the school, are shared by everyone, and has created a sense of autonomy, belonging, shared responsibility, and empowerment, referred to during the verification as 'family'. Throughout the award process, the school has demonstrated continued and innovative progress to support and improve the emotional 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.

An open door policy, SLT morning greetings at the gate, stakeholder engagement and voice, listening to the needs of others, and breaking down barriers are very much part of how the school has achieved a shared sense of family where pupils, families and staff are confident to ask for or seek support, and staff are confident in identifying those who require support and signposting and/or providing support. The award evidence, stakeholder evaluations and interviews demonstrated how extensive, innovative, outstanding and open this feature is, with staff and governors going above and beyond what is expected to ensure that the whole school community is supported.

Pupils are at the heart of change in their school and commented that they enjoy going to school, playing with their friends and learning, including doing activities to relax that gets them in the mood for learning. All children named several trusted adults they would feel comfortable talking to if they had a problem and commented on the usefulness of the class charts app that they can use at home to let staff know how they are feeling. They also articulated well how the school supports them with their emotional wellbeing and mental health and how they are confident to ask for support and how they help and support each other. The newly appointed children's wellbeing champions are looking forward to starting their new role in school. Children commented, "They [staff] are great, nice, always ask if we are OK and we talk to them. I'm proud of all my work and how teachers help you to do different things. I'm proud of all the staff because of all the different things we do like the fun run and cycle4sepsis. I'm proud of playing nicely, it makes me feel happy and puts a smile on my face. Helping others makes me feel happy that someones going to get helped". This has enabled the day-to-day and longer-term emotional wellbeing and mental health activities to flourish and was evident throughout the virtual tour of the school and video with the promotion of vision and values, positive aspirations, class charter, charts and points linked to learning heroes, worry monsters, positive role models, celebration of achievements and rewards, mental health posters, extra curricular opportunities, fundraising activities, 5 ways to wellbeing, jigsaw displays, rainbow and quiet room, sensory circuits outside each classroom, mindfulness, yoga, active brain breaks, feelings and emotions, calm spaces, coupled with a sense of calm and nurturing relationships, with children demonstrating exemplary behaviour, impeccable manners, respect, confidence, pride, kindness, responsibility, engagement and enjoyment in learning.

The proactive approach and endless opportunities for parental engagement, effective communication between staff and parents and excellent working relationships with outside agencies, should be commended and ensures that all children, including vulnerable children and their families are supported swiftly and effectively; this includes school staff, SLT who meet and greet parents in the morning, numerous opportunities for parents to get together, including sessions on mental health and wellbeing (Covid has paused some of these), the parental feedback and information board, school wellbeing section on website, social media, the class chart app and wellbeing email, pupil progress meetings, school based interventions, and most importantly the whole school staff working alongside parents in a none judgemental way. Barriers to learning are addressed for example, additional emotional support, and signposting are provided to those in need.

Parent praise and gratitude for staff in school was exceptional. For example, parents commented, "School go over and above all the time. Can't thank them enough. We use the wellbeing app lots and it reassures [child] when she's worried. Teacher phones and reassures me and [child] and it stops the upset for me, my mental health is being looked after. The school genuinely cares for everyone's wellbeing and it shines. It's a close nit school and community. My child has developed so much, she masked her autism in school, they [staff] understand it and have strategies to help her express her feelings and it gives her confidence. The staff and children respect everyone. It's good to be asked to be part of the change team, it encompasses everybody, taking account of parent voice and parents have been able to access support, and we're told what's been put in place. The school did loads on wellbeing in lockdown including a COVID pack, zoom with children, weekly phone calls, our emotional needs were checked and support given, it was reassuring. I'm proud of the community feeling, it's inclusive of everyone's needs. Children enjoy school, learning, seeing their friends, they're happy there and there's no bullying. Staff are looked after by the Head teacher. Absolutely amazing in support offered to me in bereavement, school recognised what was needed, including counselling, they recognise when my son has anxiety and ask how he is, do mindfulness and breathing, they don't single him out, they have helped my children and me to cope, it's superb. School work on mental health with the wider community, supporting families and staff, fundraising, being kind and connecting families to community support such as food banks".

Attention must be drawn to the value and priority given, along with financial investment, to staff wellbeing. This has created a positive and caring culture and is valued greatly by staff. Staff feel that the strategies in place alongside the support from SLT, the change team all the staff contribute to their emotional wellbeing, enabling them to provide the most effective support to the children. The Head teacher has listened and acted upon suggestions from staff and the change team and has addressed staff stress and workload through a reduction in workload, live marking, has an open door policy, introduced emotion coaching, mental health and wellbeing training, counselling, end of term breakfasts, consultation on the staff wellbeing policy, included wellbeing in meeting agendas and staff appraisals, governors check in with SLT, new PPA room and comfortable furnishings in the staff room. The change team have introduced wellbeing boxes, support signposting in toilets, 5 ways to wellbeing cards for staff and children and numerous ideas and activities to support staff. The whole school are given freedom to take ownership of their roles, which they enjoy, and aspirations are addressed. Staff commented how supportive and approachable all staff are and how everyone looks out for each other, and importantly there is a genuine focus on positivity. The whole staff at school feel valued, listened to, involved in decision making, connected, supported, have a sense of purpose, are passionate about making a positive difference to the lives of the children and families at their school, enjoy their jobs and are proud to work at the school.

Staff and Governors commented, "The children are at the heart of what we do, their voice is always listened too. I do matter, part of the family. Teacher and Teaching Assistant appreciation day is celebrated, we received parent thank you feedback cards and Kat and Kathy wrote personalised notes and certificates, it makes you feel special, boosts morale and positively effects teams. I'm really proud to be a governor. Workload has decreased and impacting positively on staff and the children. Kathy is an amazing woman, what she has put in place for everyone is astounding. Nice practical things for staff including the wellbeing baskets, hub, inset days, online training for ourselves and children, Friday pasties, care bear Thursdays, little notes, they give you that lift knowing people care. I'm really enjoying delivering Jigsaw; everyone joins in and is responding well, having time to plan and taking ownership has developed my confidence. I've really enjoyed being part of the change team, seeing the positive impact it's making. It's nice to be a part of it, with governor and SLT support, looking after everyone's wellbeing. It's a whole school drive, everything in the change team is fed back, including to parents, and everyone feels a part of it and has embraced it. A family feel to

it, being part of the Roby Park community. Open door, everyone knows someone and people can talk [about mental health]. As a staff, we are close, we ask. School will do what ever it takes to support you and ask if you're OK, it's a testament to school. Everyone is included, we've gone the extra mile to engage and reach all stakeholders. I'm proud of our children, the way they've come back, so resilient, positive attitudes to learning, staff and one another, there's a positive shift. We've now got children acknowledging and asking for help. A sense of pride, we as leaders and staff meeting the children's needs, it's a great feeling to have".

Significant investment in the environment, curriculum, wide range of activities, highly skilled and dedicated staff, passionate change team, outstanding community links and partnership working, effective engagement and communication between staff, parents and pupils, training for the whole school staff, with formal and informal support systems, and in provision and monitoring of interventions, was apparent during the verification. The award process also highlighted the multiple examples of outstanding 'wellbeing' practice, that have a major impact on the whole school community. Furthermore, whole school emotional wellbeing and mental health is promoted through the PSHE Jigsaw curriculum, a curriculum review weaving wellbeing through all subjects, parent signposting and sessions, and the 5 ways to wellbeing.

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, parents and staff.

Impact:

Investment in staff wellbeing has resulted in open conversations about mental health issues and staff managing their own and supporting their colleague's wellbeing. Listening to the views of staff has further strengthened staff's sense of belonging, pride, motivation, job satisfaction, decreased stress and improved wellbeing and resilience.

Staff are confident to talk about their own mental health and have the skills and tools to support their own and their pupils' and families emotional wellbeing and mental health. Staff are confident in recognising the factors that affect their children and families mental health and know how to refer for and/or provide support to ensure that children and their families receive support quickly, preventing further escalation of mental health issues.

Whole school training in mental health and wellbeing has increased whole school community awareness of emotional wellbeing and mental health, resulting in the whole school recognising when they are not mentally well, able to ask for support or to support themselves and others to improve their emotional wellbeing by using a range of techniques, contributing to improved resilience.

Highly trained and passionate staff, including outside agencies, a nurturing environment, effective interventions, has resulted in all pupils with additional emotional wellbeing and mental health needs being provided with a safe space for interventions to be delivered, enabling their needs to be met, and has resulted in a reduction in behavioural incidents and improved attendance, impacting positively on learning. This, alongside a whole school PSHE curriculum, subject curriculum that supports mental health and wellbeing, has promoted developments in pupil's social and emotional skills, confidence, independence, and resilience, enabling young people to thrive and learn. Furthermore, breaking down barriers to parental and community engagement, effective consultation and communication mechanisms has led to improved working relationships and families accessing support and feeling empowered to make positive changes to their own and their children's lives, improving resilience and ensuring that pupils are ready to learn.

Areas for development:

As already highlighted by the school, ensure new staff access all mental health and wellbeing support, resources and training, further develop monitoring of mental health and wellbeing interventions, apply for funding for a sensory room and complete the development of the outside playground that supports mental health and wellbeing.

Consider moving the mental health and wellbeing information tab to the home page of the school website.

Showcase the outstanding emotional wellbeing and mental health work with your Local Authority.

Having become more aware of the multiple examples of outstanding practice, financial investment, parental engagement, and the whole schools ability to ask for support and manage their own wellbeing, and to help one another, to share the experiences and approaches with other schools.

Verifier recommendation:

Roby Park 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.

Head teacher comments:

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