

# The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools

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### School Mental Health Award Final Assessment Validation

School: Beech Hill School

School Lead: Jo Lawless and Lewis Hoyle

Coach/Verifier: Pam Weeden

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Competency		Statements
Leadership and Strategy	Embedding	Embedding in some
Organisational structure and culture - staff	Embedding	Embedding in all
Organisational structure and culture - pupils	Embedding	Embedding in all
Support for staff	Embedding	Embedding in all
Professional development and learning	Embedding	Embedding in almost all
Support for pupils	Embedding	Embedding in all
Working with parents and carers	Embedding	Embedding in all
Working with external services	Embedding	Embedding in almost all

Beech Hill School has presented a detailed profile of evidence that demonstrates they meet the embedding standard of the School Mental Health Award across all eight competencies. The school has used the framework and content of the Award to good effect to develop their mental health and wellbeing strategies, structures and practices. In some areas, the school has some examples of strong practice which is close to the silver standard; the MH leads were able to articulate a clear vision for the further work they plan to undertake and this school is positioned well to make continued strong progress.

Both the MH lead and the HR Director took a proactive role from the outset; following the outcomes of the self-evaluation diagnostic, they prepared a detailed presentation for senior leaders in order to secure support and buy in for the changes needed to be achieved. This was impactful, leading to a ripple effect through which Governors, Trustees and Members now ask more questions, look to place MHWB at the forefront of decision making and allocate necessary resource. When changes are being discussed, such as



changes to dinner times, questions will be asked as to how they will affect the staff, children etc. The MH lead reported that now, MHWB 'just happens' and feels part of the way things are done. Further to this, Governors have developed their ability to challenge and support senior leaders. For example, leaders will be questioned on data related to MHWB, such as staff turnover or sickness levels; on the converse, through the Covid period and the last academic years in particular, Governors have been a source of support for the leadership team through the impact of the pandemic. Alongside the development of Governance, the Board of Trustees now includes a named person for MHWB; this ensures that MHWB remains at the forefront of the Board agenda.

Whilst much has been achieved, the HR Director was keen to emphasise that no one is sitting still. For example, despite the open door policy, there is still some reticence on behalf of staff to talk. As a result, the staff handbook has been updated with a new section on MHWB, which includes a reminder of the school's support systems, how to access support and, likewise, what the expectations are around work/work-life balance. There is an understanding around the risks of forming assumptions as to how well actions and strategies are impacting, and to be proactive in implementing adaptations where required.

Support for staff is well planned and a strength for the school; the school benefits from a driven HR Director keen to play an active role in developing and implementing the vision for MHWB alongside the MH lead. The school has bought into the Employee Assistance Programme through which staff can access a range of bespoke support including CBT, counselling and practice advice on things such as finance. Whilst the quality is generally reliable, the HR Director will challenge where there is a lack of robustness, so ensuring staff get the best support. At the first indication of a problem or a struggle, a member of staff will be signposted to a MH First Aider and a decision can be made as to the type and level of support required. For staff needing a period of time away from work, contact is maintained at an appropriate and responsible level. When the staff member is ready to begin considering the process of returning to work, a stress risk management plan will be constructed, which will identify triggers and a plan to manage these. A phased return to work will then be put together. In addition to the practical measures, support will be given with how to manage conversations with other members of staff and even being met in the carpark so walking into school for the first time is not something someone has to do alone. The HR Director was able to provide a particularly insightful case study with respect to a member of staff and the progress made professionally and personally following the support given through a well-managed return to work. Likewise, further evidence of impact of the quality of support can be found in the fact staff understand there is no judgement in any way towards them, there is faith in the HR Director and the fact she will do what she has said she will do, and that promises will be followed through.

The school has a well-developed curriculum that includes a strong focus on MHWB. Alongside embedding the Jigsaw curriculum, assemblies with a MH focus are held monthly; these cover these such as what is mental health, coping strategies, challenging stigma etc. Worry Boxes have been introduced to classrooms, which allow children to communicate with staff; things posted in the box are addressed quickly through an initial conversation with the year group Learning Mentor, and a plan will be actioned as appropriately. The Worry Boxes are helpful in allowing children a means to express something quickly and as such, empower staff to respond quickly; the impact is issues can be addressed before they escalate. Learning mentors are attached to year groups and progress with the children; this allows for strong and meaningful relationships between children and their families to form and strengthen over time.



Following the return to school after the first lockdown in 2020, a decision was made to focus purely on MHWB. The Jigsaw curriculum was adapted to pull out relevant material; staff considered what they may need to be ready for and time was planned in for children to discuss their feelings etc. During the lockdown periods, regular welfare checks were made for all families. That said, both the MH lead and the HR Director both feel that the pandemic has slowed down plans to improve and develop relationships with families around MHWB. The context of the school means that engagement can be challenging; however, a fundraising event for Hello Yellow raised in excess of £1K, which is a huge difference to the normal pattern of giving for fundraising events and indicative of the recognition within the community of the level of need. Moving forward, leaders plan to introduce workshops for families, some of which will have a specialist focus, alongside coffee mornings and more informal events; the emphasis will be on encouraging parents to be able to ask for help and likewise, receive signposting to appropriate support.

Support for pupils is robust and well planned. Alongside the year group Learning Mentor, the school has a fully employed counsellor, the school has a good relationship with CAMHS, which has been built over time; this has led to the delivery of intervention groups as well as training for staff. Programmes are planned depending upon specific needs and an assessment of what is required. The School Counsellor is also training in Forest Schools and as such, this is built into provision, achieving positive outcomes.

There is a strong vision in place for next steps and where the school needs to progress further. The HR Director and MH lead discussed tightening the strategy and further embedding provision. Further to this, strengthening parental engagement is a high priority. The 5Es profile included in this report mainly reflects the work carried out within the school. I concur that Beech Hill school should be awarded the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools School Mental Health Award at Bronze level.

Pam Weeden  
Coach/Verifier  
School Mental Health Award  
8<sup>th</sup> September 2021



## Competency profiles provided by the school

Leadership and Strategy	Embedding
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	2
Governors hold school leaders to account for the mental health of staff and pupils	2
Senior Leaders develop and implement the strategies and structures needed to improve mental health in the school	3
Staff have mental health as a core part of their job description and role requirements	1
Leaders' performance management includes a focus relating to mental health	2
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	3
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.	3
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	3

Organisational Structure & Culture - Staff	Embedding
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	3
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	3
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	3
Senior leaders model the expectations they have of all staff to promote good mental health	3
All staff in school are responsible for the health and wellbeing of themselves and promoting that of others	3
The norms of professional dialogue are developed and positive language is modelled and used by all staff	3
A culture of tolerance, trust and openness is developed	3
Stigma regarding mental health and support for individuals and groups is challenged	3
Job flexibility is supported where possible within a secure business case	3



<b>Organisational Structure &amp; Culture -Pupils</b>	<b>Embedding</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	3
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	3
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	3
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	3
The school ensures that pupils expressing concerns are listened to	3
The school has clear pathways and provisions available to discuss mental health concerns, managing student difficulties and create strategies with follow ups	
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	3
The school promotes of positive and healthy relationships amongst pupils, staff and with parents	3
Pupils are engaged through encouraging pupil voice, authentic involvement in learning, decision making and peer-led approaches.	3

<b>Support for Staff</b>	<b>Embedding</b>
A comprehensive staff health and wellbeing offering supports staff mental health	3
The school consistently works towards reducing the stressors that affect staff mental health	3
School has clear pathways to staff support which are understood by all colleagues	3
Access to coaching and counselling is available and encouraged where deemed helpful	3
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	3



Professional Development & Learning	Embedding
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	3
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	2
All Governors access professional development opportunities to develop their understanding skills in mental health linked to the role of the Governing Body	2
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	3
All staff access professional development opportunities to develop their skills in pupil mental health and wellbeing	3
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	3
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	3
NQTs 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	3
All staff mental health CPD is underpinned by evidence and expertise, aligned to DfE CPD standards	3
Staff feel supported to take forward any new learning from training into their practice	3



Support for Pupils	Embedding
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	3
Pupil wellbeing is developed through implicit methods of teaching and learning such as: emotional literacy, character strengths, values, virtues, resilience and self awareness	3
Relationships within the school are positive providing a nurturing, safe and supportive environment which creates a sense of belonging for pupils	3
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	3
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	3
Staff respond wisely to 'difficult' behaviour, both responding actively with clear consequences and also understanding its deeper roots, taking opportunities to model and teach positive alternatives	3
Pupils know how to ask for support and this is followed up by staff	3
There are clear internal referral procedures, understood by all staff, to ensure timely and appropriate support is sourced and accessed for pupils in need	3
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	3
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	3
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	3
Physical activity and relaxation activities are on offer that improve wellbeing	3
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	3



<b>Working with Parents and Carers</b>	<b>Embedding</b>
The school ensures a non-judgemental, warm and welcoming environment exists for parents/carers	3
Parents have access to school mental health and wellbeing policies	3
Effective relationships with parents/carers are fostered and maintained	3
The school is committed to continuously improving parental communication	3
Parents have access to staff or mental health professional/s if they have concerns about their child's mental health	3
Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school	3
Parents are involved in interventions that supports their children's mental health and wellbeing	3
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	3
Systems are in place that ensures parents/carers are regularly updated on their child's progress as well as any concerns that may exist	3
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	3

<b>Working with External Stakeholders</b>	<b>Embedding</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	3
The school has developed strong links with CAMHS and other agencies ensuring regular two-way communication, support and guidance	3
School leaders are shaping local children's mental health policy and services	3
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	3
Specialist organisations work with the school to develop the mental health and wellbeing of staff, children and parents	3
The school is aware of and builds relationships with local community projects, voluntary organisations and networks	3
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	3
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	3
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	3

