

# Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

## Verification Report

School name:	St Mary's C of E Primary School
School address and postcode:	Hart Road, Byfleet, Surrey, KT14 7NJ
School telephone:	01932 410300
School website:	www.stmarys-byfleet.surrey.sch.uk/
Head teacher:	Jacque Chambers
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Award verifier:	Mark Jennett
Award adviser (if applicable):	
Date of verification:	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2023

### Commentary on the evidence provided:

The portfolio, presentation and stakeholder meetings showcased a school that places EWMH at the core of its offer. St Mary's has a truly holistic approach to supporting the wellbeing of all its stakeholders and has used the Award process effectively to audit its provision and identify strengths and areas for development while consistently placing stakeholder voice at the heart of its planning. The Award coordinator is to be congratulated not only on leading an impressive programme of work but also compiling excellent evidence of its impact.

### Strengths identified during verification:

Over the period of the Award, the school achieved significant improvements across all stakeholder measures. This was particularly notable around staff confidence to support wellbeing and stakeholders' willingness to seek help and share concerns and reflects the care taken by school leaders to listen to all voices.

St Mary's vision and values – agreed after extensive consultation – place EWMH at the heart of its aims.

The Coordinator and Change Team conducted a thoughtful review of needs and provision across the school and devised a clear strategy to address these. As well as devising an excellent MH policy, they have ensured that wellbeing is embedded across curriculum and other provision and that robust procedures for monitoring impact are in place.

The school works consistently to raise awareness about EWMH. For example, pupils practice mindfulness and meditation daily, Zones of Regulation are used in all classes from Nursery, weekly newsletters from the Home School Link Worker (HSLW) always contain relevant information and parents are invited to coffee mornings covering a range of issues.

Staff report that support for their own wellbeing is excellent and that leaders are always available. It was good to hear about the Heart Health trial undertaken by the HT and that this is now being rolled out to other staff. Staff have access to an EAP, wellbeing hours/Marvellous Mondays which can be used as they wish and time off in lieu for running clubs etc. EWMH is also included in all appraisals.

Over the period of the Award, staff have undertaken a range of CPD, some of it linked to key risk factors identified in the Award coordinator's initial audit and this has resulted in significant increases in their skills and confidence. Recording and referral processes are clear and staff welcomed strategies such as 'spotlight' sessions which help them to better understand and support particular pupils who may present with challenging behaviours. It was clear from discussions with staff that they really understand the diverse needs of their children and understand how to address them. There is excellent communication, both formal and informal with the HSLW, for example, regularly sharing concerns with relevant staff to ensure that they are aware of any issues.

A broad range of strategies to support pupils with SEN and other needs (ELSA, play therapy, social skills work, on-site counsellor etc) has been complemented by the addition of a sensory room which children access to help them self-regulate as well as the school's own Nurture in Nature outdoor learning programme. There is a tranquillity garden, a nurture group and woodland buddy group for children who need additional support at lunchtime and many pupils enjoy the support of Meeka, the school's canine wellbeing specialist, to help them self-regulate.

School leaders, with the support of governors, have worked hard to develop effective links with local businesses and charities to enhance work on wellbeing. This ranges from Balfour Beatty's practical support for the Nurture in Nature programme - including significant improvements to the school's already attractive outdoor spaces and play provision - to counselling support from the Matthew Hackney Foundation.

There is helpful information for parents on the school website and the wellbeing lead has produced a number of highly readable documents including a stakeholder-friendly strategy document and a detailed accountability framework for EWMH.

Stakeholder voice is consistently encouraged and listened to. Leaders were able to point to a number of changes to existing procedures made as a result of feedback including amendments to staff email policies and how children use Zones of Regulation to let staff know how they are feeling. In each case, they have introduced greater flexibility to ensure that provision meets the different needs of stakeholders.

Governors know their school well and are knowledgeable about and committed to supporting the EWMH of staff, pupils and families. Pupils display impressive levels of awareness about strategies they can use to support their own and other's wellbeing and also undertake a number of relevant roles including peer mentors and wellbeing champions. They know where to get help and are confident to ask for it. They clearly feel safe and supported by a school that is both welcoming and kind. Parent feedback is excellent with many praising the help they receive from the Head and Deputy, HSLW and other members of staff.

#### Areas for development:

The Award coordinator and Change Team have already identified a number of relevant next steps and there are several exciting developments planned including significant enhancements to the tranquillity garden and Nurture in Nature programme.

They could also consider:

Including monitoring information in the EWMH strategy and reporting regularly on this to stakeholders so that all can appreciate the impact of the school's work.

Continuing to embed EWMH-related CPD for all staff and including this in the SDP

Enhancing the provision on the school website by adding links to other relevant sections to the EWMH page so that parents and others can easily find all relevant information. They could also include direct links to the HSLW's newsletters and consider sharing regular examples of EWMH-related activities, as well as hints and tips, via Instagram.

Further embedding information and messages in the curriculum, assemblies and around the school to ensure that all children feel able to ask for help when they feel worried or unhappy.

Maintaining the focus on stakeholder voice with focus groups, surveys, questionnaires, snap polls etc via a range of media. Remember to regularly feedback on these so that stakeholders can see the difference they have made.

Using external partners as 'critical friends' by asking them to comment on both their working relationship and the school's EWMH provision. What is working well, could be better etc?

#### Verifier recommendation:

I am delighted to recommend that St Mary's Primary, Byfleet, receive the Wellbeing in Schools Award for a period of three years.

#### Head teacher comments:



We are very pleased with this outcome. It means a lot to us that our wellbeing offer recognised as a strength of the school. The wellbeing of our school community has and always will be at the heart of everything we do.

May we use your comment for website/marketing purposes? **Yes**