

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	The Dales Primary School
School address and postcode:	Cowpen Road, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 4RE
School telephone:	01670 352556
School website:	https://www.thedales.northumberland.sch.uk/
Head teacher:	Sue Fisher
Head teacher's email:	
WAS coordinator:	Amy Taylor
WAS coordinator's email:	amytaylor@thedales.northumberland.sch.uk
Award verifier:	Colin Noble
Award adviser (if applicable):	colinnoble5@gmail.com
Date of verification:	10 th May 2022

Commentary on the evidence provided:

The written evidence had been viewed at the interim visit on 16th March 2022. So the day consisted of a tour of the Ashdale site, a presentation from the Head Teacher and Award coordinator, discussions with pupils at both the Ashdale and Blythdale sites, discussions with parents and staff from both sites and discussions with a governor.

The oral and visual evidence substantiated the written evidence. This is a school where there is enormous investment in the promotion and protection of emotional wellbeing and mental health. Children and staff were confident, relaxed and articulate and were learning in an atmosphere of mutual respect and professional good humour. Learners and teachers felt that they 'belonged' in the School – which is always a good test of emotional wellbeing. The needs of the pupils were clearly paramount, but the School was acutely conscious that this meant that the emotional and mental health of staff and parents had also to be nurtured. Staff were very appreciative of this and the parents were extremely grateful and positively emotional about the support they had received. 'This School saved my family' is not a common remark.

Strengths identified during verification:

There were numerous strengths to the School's approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health including:

- 1 the clear vision and moral purpose expressed by the senior leadership team
- 2 the weaving of therapy into education so that the pupils have a seamless and holistic experience
- 3 the effective use of zones of regulation
- 4 the train! The acquisition of the train displays both imagination and determination in the pursuit of strategies that will support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of the whole school community
- 5 the use made of the outside areas and Forest Schools; and the significant improvements at the Ashdale site where the addition of a cabin for outdoor learning or reading, and the introduction of a lending library in the entrance will make a significant difference.

Impact:

Work on the Award has impacted the School in the following ways:

- 1 it has given the School the opportunity to adopt a whole school approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health
- 2 the School has appointed mental health assistants whom are currently completing training so that they can help the occupational therapists
- 3 the School now works more closely with external agencies as well as voluntary and community groups
- 4 it has improved the staff wellbeing offer across School and ensured that the promotion of positive emotional wellbeing and mental health is woven into performance management
- 5 good quality mental health awareness training is offered to all staff, and further targeted cpd for staff in specific roles
- 6 the family partnership team offers high quality wellbeing support and signposting, alongside practical support, for families
- 7 The School has an assigned school governor who supports their work on emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Areas for development:

The areas for development, already discussed with the School, are:

- 1 more parental/carers' events – both workshops and social events
- 2 to continue and accelerate the use of the already impressive outside areas - as these seem to be of such great benefit to the children. Much could possibly be learned by a visit to Ashbrow Primary in Huddersfield (head teacher Louise Kent).

Verifier recommendation:

I recommend that The Dales School receives the Wellbeing Award for Schools – to be held for a period of three years.



Head teacher comments:

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