



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf Morgannwg  
University Health Board



## Cwm Taf Morgannwg Healthy Schools Scheme

### Record of National Quality Award (NQA) Re-verification Visit

<b>School:</b>	<b>Héronsbridge Special School</b>
<b>Original date of the WNHSS National Quality Award:</b>	<b>July 2016</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> NQA Reverification date:</b>	<b>April 2018</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> NQA Reverification date:</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> May 2023</b>
<b>Assessors:</b>	<b>Carys Thomas</b>
<b>School Representatives:</b>	<b>Sylvia - Assistant Head Teacher for Wellbeing and In School Co-ordinator Lisa James-Smith – Deputy Head Teacher Alana Harris – Assistant Head Teacher Curriculum Jeremy Evans – Headteacher School Council representatives</b>

#### Outcome of Visit:

**Héronsbridge Special School has successfully completed the second re-verification for the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools National Quality Award**

## Summary of Visit

The core values of a Healthy School permeate every aspect of the good practice at Heronsbridge Special School. It was therefore a pleasure to undertake their second National Quality Award (NQA) re-verification.

Every member of the school community we met on the day were extremely welcoming with a sense of positivity and pride at being part of the team at Heronsbridge. The Head teacher's rapport with staff and the nurturing, caring disposition with learners creates a positive culture where all of its members feel valued. A very important point to highlight is the way in which health and well-being has been embedded into the formal and informal curriculum. The information provided in the portfolios of evidence, the visit to teaching areas and the conversations with staff and pupils, together with the displays around the school clearly demonstrated this.

The leadership of the school ensures that staff and learners are at the forefront of educational change, a great deal of work has been done in preparation for the implementation of the new curriculum for Wales embracing the opportunities it has provided to focus on health and well-being, positive relationships and promoting Children's Rights. The Heron's Squad mascots are seen throughout the school, which highlights to the learners the four core purposes within the curriculum. Developing and personalising the new curriculum for Heronsbridge is on-going and the well-being of the staff has been considered by providing professional development opportunities to enable a smooth transition to the new approach to learning. The development of the mascots, the four values and the vision statement of 'Together We Can' encompasses the schools ethos to enable learners to become healthy and confident individuals.

The relationship between parents, carers, school staff and pupils is outstanding. It was evident that relationships are based on trust and respect providing a unique experience for every individual learner that attends the school. Opportunity for family and community involvement in the life of Heronsbridge is excellent and the school successfully gained Investors in Families Diamond Award. There are also strong partnerships with health care professionals to support pupil's care needs and educational progress. The school provides a wide range of therapeutic interventions to promote pupils' health and well-being. This includes the use of the hydrotherapy pool and sensory rooms.

The highlight of the visit was undoubtedly the pupil led tour. The pupils were courteous and polite and showed respect to their peers, staff and to myself as a visitor. They demonstrated a real joy to be pupils within Heronsbridge and to being members of the School Council. From speaking with them, it was clear to see that all pupils have a strong voice across the school and they were very enthusiastic about the work they do and spoke of the many initiatives that they have been part of very highly.

Sincere congratulations are extended to the whole school for achieving and maintaining the standards of the National Quality Award.

## **Highlights of the Visit**

We would like to thank all the staff and pupils we met during our visit who gave their time so generously to talk to us. There were so many highlights from the re-verification visit at Heronsbridge School, this report can only attempt to summarise those areas.

### **Food and Fitness**

- Range of facilities outdoors to encourage physical activity
- Several cross-curricular opportunities utilised through cookery activities which encourages learners to try different tastes and textures
- Consistent messages for healthy eating and active lifestyles observed through displays
- Blas du Coffee Shop offers staff a quiet place to eat and rest. But also provides learners the experience and skills of working in a coffee shop
- Superhero's topic linked to importance of a balanced diet and eating veg alongside the eat them to defeat them

### **Mental and Emotional Health and Well-being**

Many areas of excellent practice, but of particular note:

- Achievement of the Rights Respecting Schools Award – planning, displays and monthly assemblies reinforce and promote children's rights
- Completion of the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being self-evaluation tool with identified priorities included on the School Improvement Plan
- Heronsbridge is a Trauma and Mental Health Informed School with all staff having been trained in Trauma Informed approaches
- Development of the Four Core Purposes mascots
- Heron's Hall being used for different therapy interventions
- By being part of the Carnegie school mental health award it has enabled the school to collect a lot of useful data to inform actions going forward
- The Common Room and the Drop in room with access to the Well-being Lead at break time proves to be very popular
- Numerous therapy interventions ranging from rebound, hydro therapy and dog therapy
- Wellbeing Wednesday
- Learner and family wellbeing is led by via the Pupil Support Team, Therapy Team and School Counsellor which is available for learners and families
- Out of hours counselling for families
- Partnership working with the CAMHS Shine Team via the Whole School Approach work
- Undergraduates on psychology degree have placement at the school have been invaluable in helping with data collection and tracking
- Trauma informed school with policies and strategies based on this
- Achievement of the Investors in People platinum award
- Mental Health Matters week (alongside Children's Mental Health Week) many activities for pupils and staff to engage in
- Ty Cwtch is available for drop ins for staff
- Love languages symbols on display by the entrance to classrooms for learners to choose how they would like to be greeted
- Mental health and PMLD learners study – how can schools best support PMLD learners with a recognised mental health condition

- Bore da session in the mornings to assist with regulation and check ins and a check out at the end of the school
- Developmental Individual Relationships floor time - relationship based play witnessed
- Curriculum workshops to engage with learners
- Wellbeing warriors having responsibility to monitor the wellbeing post box
- Creative Crew develop artwork around the school
- Friends of Heronsbridge (PTA) who share the Heronsbridge ethos of together we can
- Student charter linked to rights prominent around the school
- Newsletters, home school books, website and twitter inform families of the daily life of the school
- Family Engagement Officer offers weekly drop in sessions and monthly information days which offers advice and signposting to support from many organisations

### **Personal Development and Relationships**

Many areas of good practice, but of particular note:

- The school has an inclusive ethos with a celebration of diversity linked to the protected characteristics
- A member of staff supported the update of the Personal Development & Relationships resource with the NQA PLC
- Sex factor training for relevant members of staff
- Anatomically correct dolls purchased to aid the teaching of RSE
- On the back of the successful Shine group, a girl group is currently in the process of being set up
- RSE continuum developed to ensure an age and stage developmentally appropriate RSE curriculum
- Resources audit completed to ensure resources are relevant and up to date
- LGBTQI+ group being set up
- RSE cross curricular group (made up of staff) to ensure RSE remains a cross curricular element throughout all Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE)
- Health and Wellbeing AoLE group made up of different staff members demonstrates that wellbeing has a high status
- Motional assessments conducted a year as part of trauma informed approach

### **Substance Use and Misuse**

- Smoke-free Premises policy developed, precluding the use of e-cigarettes
- A clear understanding of the management of medicines by the whole school
- The school has a pupil friendly policy for Substance Use and Misuse
- Excellent partnership working with the Police Liaison Officer for the school and the use of the School Beat resource, and highlighting to all pupils the key people who can help us
- Encouragement of confidence and self-esteem amongst pupils if ever faced with peer pressures around any aspects of substance use and misuse.

## **Safety**

- Key safety information communicated to visitors via the sign-in process at Reception
- Procedures in place to train dog volunteers for dog therapy
- Procedures in place to promote the safe use of the internet including acceptable use of social media
- Relevant risk assessments in place
- Procedures in place to ensure the safety of staff and learners

## **Environment**

Many areas of excellent practice, but of particular note:

- Achievement of the Platinum Award for Eco-Schools
- Development of the outdoor areas, beautiful green spaces and raised beds for planting
- Good procedures in place for recycling
- Horticulture courses and lessons were seen to be valued by all learners
- Links with Social enterprises Bee Leaf and Wood Bee
- Kitchen garden, market garden and orchard develops learners skills and provides the opportunity for families and members of the community to visit the school

## **Hygiene**

- Completion of the Hygiene audit contained within the All Wales Infection Prevention and Control Guidance
- Stringent hygiene procedures in place for activities such as animal care, gardening and cookery
- Key information effectively shared with staff, pupils and families during the pandemic

## **Areas for Further Consideration**

- Ensure the correct smoke-free premises signage is displayed on the school gates
- The school's website offers a fantastic platform for families, the wider community and partners to access key information about Heronsbridge. It is used effectively to celebrate success, share support services, provide updates and share key documents such as whole school policies. Therefore ensure all relevant policies are uploaded on to the school website
- Adopt the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Healthy Schools Scheme Relationships and Sexuality (RSE) policy
- Continue developing your RSE curriculum and communicate these changes with parents / carers
- Review the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being self-evaluation toolkit at the end of the academic year (2022 – 2023)

