



School Mental Health Award Final Assessment Validation Report

School: Heronsbridge School

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Coach: Jane Acklam OBE

Date: 21st May 2024

Competency	Statements as Assessed by the School
Leadership and Strategy	Excelling
Organisational structure and culture - staff	Excelling
Organisational structure and culture - pupils	Excelling
Support for staff	Excelling
Professional development and learning	Excelling
Support for pupils	Excelling
Working with parents and carers	Excelling
Working with external services	Excelling



Heronbridge has presented a compelling profile of evidence that demonstrates they are Excelling across all eight competencies of the School Mental Health Award. The school has used the framework and content of the Award to great effect to develop their mental health and wellbeing strategies, structures, and practices from a very strong starting point.

The School Mental Health Award has given the school a framework that has helped leaders to develop an explicit approach to what they do which has led to the development of policy and clarity for staff and parents. Focussing on the competencies of the award has helped the school to think about governor involvement and the specific monitoring of mental health and wellbeing across the school. The strong and effective structures to ensure all pupils are supported and their needs are met. Heronbridge is a residential special school maintained by Bridgend local authority. The school provides education for pupils aged 4 to 19 years.

The school's MH Lead talks of the clear strategy where leaders and governors ensure all stakeholders are prioritised in the school's approach to mental health and wellbeing. Students feels safe, supported, and can focus on learning. Support is easily accessible, timely and bespoke. The lead explains how the culture and climate at the school is positive, warm, welcoming, and caring for all connected with the school. Parents say they can feel the warmth and it is a very welcoming community.

Professional learning for staff is given a very high focus by leaders; Mandatory training includes Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) training. There is a robust training programme to empower staff to care for their mental wellbeing- to be that 'emotionally available adult. There is also a range of self-care and wellbeing training for staff available.

Staff say the school is like a family. They talk about the support and care, the various campaigns and activities that are on offer, and how the mental health and wellbeing offer is dynamic. Supervision is highly developed for staff.



The schools' teams are highly skilled in their roles, ensuring those with most need or most vulnerable are included in the schools' approaches to mental health and wellbeing. Relationships are key in this highly effective schools' approach to mental health and wellbeing. Staff and pupil voice is used effectively to influence change and continual review.

“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.”

Parents are encouraged to be highly involved in the school and their child's care and education. Weekly drop ins, facilitate this relationship. Along with; family information day, held biannually, meet the Parents events, meet & greets etc.

The school holds a wide range of awards in recognition of the work and approach that the school has. The school has a very high bar for the external agencies that they work with to ensure that this complements and extend the offer for pupils.

The school has a long history of sharing their excelling practice, and has an excellent reputation across Wales, quoted in many government publications.

To spread good practice further and enhance current work, the school intends to:

- *Wellbeing is essential for pupils 'readiness to learn.' The school community is committed to realising the ambition of the Welsh government through the 4 Purposes which is to ensure all pupils in Wales are 'Healthy Confident Individuals...ready to live fulfilling lives as valued members of society.' As this is a national agenda schools are encouraged to focus on wellbeing and there is a plethora of training, resources, and funding to realise this.*



- *Within school we ensure wellbeing through or values, curriculum offer and whole school culture and ethos. External agencies such as ESTYN, IIP, IIF, RRS and WNHSA have recognised that this is a key focus.*
- *Through planning, policies, procedures and communicating our aims we can sustain our approach.*
- *Together We Can is our school motto which acts as our enabler to achieve the best possible outcomes for our pupils and staff.*

I have no hesitation in concurring with the self-assessment made by the school and recommending Heronsbridge School for consideration to be awarded the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools, School Mental Health Award at Gold standard.

Jane Acklam OBE

Coach

School Mental Health Award

22nd May 2024



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CARNEGIE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS



Competency profiles provided by the school.

Leadership and Strategy	
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	5
Governors hold school leaders to account for the mental health of staff and pupils	5
Senior Leaders develop and implement the strategies and structures needed to improve mental health in the school	5
Staff have mental health as a core part of their job description and role requirements	5
Leaders' performance management includes a focus relating to mental health	4
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	5
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.	5
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	5

Organisational Structure & Culture – Staff	
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	5
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	5
Communication protocols are well established and adhered to e.g., restrictions on unnecessary emailing in evenings, overnight and weekends	5
Workload expectations are made explicit and are well managed, such as marking & assessment, hours in school, working at home	4
Staff self-care is encouraged	5
Senior leaders model the expectations they have of all staff to promote good mental health	5
All staff in school are responsible for the health and wellbeing of themselves and promoting that of others	5
The norms of professional dialogue are developed, and positive language is modelled and used by all staff	4
A culture of tolerance, trust and openness is developed	5
Stigma regarding mental health and support for individuals and groups is challenged	4
Job flexibility is supported where possible within a secure business case	5



Organisational Structure & Culture – Pupils	
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	5
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	5
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	5
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	4
The school ensures that pupils expressing concerns are listened to	5
The school has clear pathways and provisions available to discuss mental health concerns, managing student difficulties and create strategies with follow ups	5
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	5
The school promotes positive and healthy relationships amongst pupils, staff and with parents	5
Pupils are engaged through encouraging pupil voice, authentic involvement in learning, decision making and peer-led approaches.	5

Support for Staff	
A comprehensive staff health and wellbeing offering supports staff mental health	5
The school consistently works towards reducing the stressors that affect staff mental health	5
School has clear pathways to staff support which are understood by all colleagues	5
Access to coaching and counselling is available and encouraged where deemed helpful	5
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	5
Successes are regularly acknowledged and celebrated	5



Professional Development & Learning	
The school has a proportion of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid for adults appropriate to the size of the staff cohort	5
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	4
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	5
All Governors access professional development opportunities to develop their understanding skills in mental health linked to the role of the Governing Body	3
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	5
All staff access professional development opportunities to develop their skills in pupil mental health and wellbeing	5
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	5
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	4
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	5
ECTs 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	5
All staff mental health CPD is underpinned by evidence and expertise, aligned to DfE CPD standards	5
Staff feel supported to take forward any new learning from training into their practice	5



Support for Pupils	
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	5
Pupil wellbeing is developed through implicit methods of teaching and learning such as: emotional literacy, character strengths, values, virtues, resilience, and self-awareness	5
Relationships within the school are positive providing a nurturing, safe and supportive environment which creates a sense of belonging for pupils	5
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	5
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	5
Staff respond wisely to 'challenging' behaviour, both responding actively with clear consequences and also understanding its deeper roots, taking opportunities to model and teach positive alternatives	5
Pupils know how to ask for support, and this is followed up by staff	5
There are clear internal referral procedures, understood by all staff, to ensure timely and appropriate support is sourced and accessed for pupils in need	5
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	5
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	4
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	5
Effective early intervention support is provided and evaluated	5
Physical activity and relaxation activities are on offer that improve wellbeing	5
If peer mentoring is used, those who serve as peer mentors have training and a support structure which they can use if needed	4
Pupils are involved in the design of mental health and wellbeing initiatives and are encouraged to give feedback and provide new ideas	4
Achievements and successes of students are recognised and celebrated	5



Working with Parents and Carers	
The school ensures a non-judgemental, warm, and welcoming environment exists for parents/carers	5
Parents have access to school mental health and wellbeing policies	4
Effective relationships with parents/carers are fostered and maintained	5
The school is committed to continuously improving parental communication	5
Parents have access to staff or mental health professional/s if they have concerns about their child's mental health	5
Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school	5
Parents are involved in interventions that supports their children's mental health and wellbeing	5
Any stigma shown by parents about mental health is handled sensitively yet firmly	4
The school provides learning, guidance, and support for parents to help them:	5
The school has effective strategies in working with all parents/carers	5
Systems are in place that ensures parents/carers are regularly updated on their child's progress as well as any concerns that may exist	5
Parents share their views on how to develop the wellbeing of the school	4
Support, signposting, and referrals are made for parents who require support with their own mental health or support in their relationships with their children	5

Working with External Stakeholders	
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	5
The school has developed strong links with CAMHS and other agencies ensuring regular two-way communication, support, and guidance	4
School leaders are shaping local children's mental health policy and services	5
The school is up to date with new legislation and DfE guidance	4
The school is aware of local agencies and organisations which offer mental health support services	4
Specialist organisations work with the school to develop the mental health and wellbeing of staff, children, and parents	5
The school is aware of and builds relationships with local community projects, voluntary organisations, and networks	5
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	5
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	5
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	5

