

The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools

School Mental Health Award Final Assessment Validation

School: OPA Lofthouse Gate

School Lead: Leanne Cleasby

Coach/Verifier: Pam Weeden

Date: 3rd August 2020

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

OPA Lofthouse Gate has presented a very strong profile of evidence that demonstrated they are excelling across all eight competencies of the School Mental Health Award. The school has made a great deal of progress over the last twelve months and has used the framework and content of the Award to very good effect to further develop their mental health and wellbeing strategies, structures and practices from what was a relatively early starting point. It also needs to be noted here that the leadership and enthusiasm of the MH Lead has been a significant factor in the success achieved; she has been both an asset and a role model.

There is a robust, detailed and well-developed strategy in place that is driven from the CEO down; this underpins everything the Academy does in relation to MHWB from policy and processes to decision making around actions taken to address work-life balance issues. The strong leadership and endorsement of this from the most senior level means it stays live and active. There has been some upheaval with respect to senior leadership over recent years with some changes to key positions and fractured relationships with families. The new headteacher is now a permanent appointment and works very closely with the MH Lead. They both strongly drive MHWB forward as part of a broader strategy for school improvement and growth; the impact of their leadership has been significant improvements to



relationships with parents and carers, and an increase in parental involvement with school, increased staff attendance and engagement in work and strong outcomes to an Ofsted inspection. Parents are feeding back that they now feel listened to and their views taken on board.

Governors have been active in supporting and challenging the work the academy has been doing; they monitor and evaluate the impact of the development strategy for MHWB, take part in events in school related to MHWB and access data related to children who may not have SEN/D but need support with social or emotional issues. Further to this, governors have also been proactive in helping the school as a whole to move past the relationship issues of the past and be active in shaping the new direction the school is moving in. Alongside the work of the strategic leaders, the children are actively involved in leading on MHWB throughout school; there were some inspiring examples of the work they do throughout the conversation. For example, children have an active role across all year groups and host regular assemblies and workshops. Similarly, they have been the drivers behind new initiatives throughout school such as the introduction of Buddy benches and comment boxes in each classroom. The impact of the work done through the implementation of the strategy, the development of a robust and impactful curriculum and involved children in shaping and developing provision has meant that the culture of the school is one that fully embraces MHWB; it is interwoven into all the school does. The children and staff have an open and positive vocabulary around MHWB and feel confident to express their emotions and wellbeing; negative expressions and colloquialisms relating to MHWB are actively challenged. The academy did not allow Covid-19 to stop progress; they achieved a great deal through lockdown to ensure children and their families received both the education and support needed through the lockdown period. Regular communication on Twitter featured alongside high-quality streamed work and resources, and weekly videos.

Leaders have taken action to understand staff concerns and address these promptly, or to provide support where there are specific challenges. The MH Lead provided some insightful examples of case studies where members of staff have shifted mindset and attitude, and as a result, begun to influence others around them so impacting more broadly across the organisation in a positive way. Coaching, shadowing, modelling, checking and mentoring are drawn on as methods of support; staff are empowered to use their own experiences to support others. There is a strong emphasis on making sure the 'why' is clear and then using this as the driver for change. Staff now link up during PPA time to work collaboratively; the impact of all this has meant that staff absence has reduced, and silo working has lessened. The ethos now is more focused on team and partnership. Staff surveys are used effectively to draw out data and then used to drive purposeful change; staff have access to a range of support, which is varied and relevant to individual need and in alignment with key policies.

Leaders are passionate about providing a first-class curriculum and provision for all pupils within OPA Lofthouse Gate; the curriculum aims to build resilience, character, foster independence and develop confidence as well as give all children all they need to lead a healthy life. There is a half an hour slot each week where children are provided with opportunities to explore, connect and reflect; the theme of these can be both adult and/or child led. For example, it could be news related e.g. Black history, or an incident that has happened that day. PSHE is embedded throughout the entire curriculum whilst assemblies are an extra lesson in themselves. Alongside what takes place in the classroom, the academy keeps chickens and encourages learning outside of the classroom; there is a focus on giving back and what it means to be a positive and contributing citizen.

The school highly values Parent Voice and continually looks to build on relationships with parents. Through lockdown and the barriers to face to face contact caused by Covid-19, the school has used virtual



technology and social media extensively to maintain contact and relationships with families, holding fun challenges, putting together MHWB packages etc. Relationships with parents have improved significantly over the last 12 months due to strong leadership and a focus on improving engagement.

The range of services and agencies the school works with is broad; this ensures all pupils have access to quality assured provision. There is an extensive and holistic system of wrap around support systems and care with robust referral pathways to a broad range of internal and external support services that ensure all children will be targeted and specialist needs are able to receive the support they need quickly. Support is decided on an individual basis and there is not a one size fits all approach. As with the staff examples, the MH Lead provided case studies to demonstrate where children had made significant progress due to access to key support. In one of the most powerful examples, such was the impact for the family that the mum has now decided to pursue a career in Mental health herself.

The school has made significant progress over the last twelve months and is a case study in itself of what can be achieved with leadership and passion, and a willingness to persevere. They are not restful; however, the MH Lead is clear about next steps and what progress looks like. This includes developing the leadership capacity of others within the school to ensure quality practice and provision is not lost as she begins to expand her Trust wide role.

CPD for all staff is broad, well-developed and in alignment with DfE standards; the school has a range of people trained in various aspects including Mental Health First Aid. The Mental Health Lead has been heavily involved in developing curriculum provision and resources for the entire Trust; further to this, she is becoming an influencer through social media and has established some strong relationships with key leaders in the field. The CEO has worked extensively with the DfE during this period of responding to Covid-19 and has playing a pivotal role in shaping policy and response. The Academy are leaders in the field in many respects and in a variety of ways; I have no hesitation in recommending Outwood Primary Academy Lofthouse Gate for consideration to be awarded the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools School Mental Health Award at Gold standard.

Pam Weeden
Assessor
School Mental Health Award
3rd August 2020



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	5
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	5
Staff self-care is encouraged	5
Senior leaders model the expectations they have of all staff to promote good mental health	4
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	5
A culture of tolerance, trust and openness is developed	5
Stigma regarding mental health and support for individuals and groups is challenged	5
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	5
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 of 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	Y
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	5
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	5
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	5
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
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	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	5
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	5
Pupils are involved in the design of mental health and wellbeing initiatives and are encouraged to give feedback and provide new ideas	5
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	5
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	5
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	5
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	5
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	5
The school is aware of local agencies and organisations which offer mental health support services	5
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	4
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

