

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Reassessment Report

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| School name: | St George's CofE Primary School |
| School address and postcode: | Telford TF2 9LJ |
| School telephone: | 01952 387750 |
| School website: | www.stgeorgesschool.org.uk |
| Head teacher: | Sally Sixsmith |
| Award coordinator: | Kathryn Watts and Sarah Foxley |
| Award verifier: | Mrs Angie Moore |
| Date of reassessment: | 15 th March 2024 |

Commentary on the mini portfolio of evidence:

The mini portfolio of evidence was thorough and well-organised, making it easy for me to find everything that I needed to verify the Award. The Stakeholder evaluation forms were carefully analysed and the feedback from parents, staff and parents was extremely positive. All the KPIs were clearly labelled and fully achieved and I was particularly impressed with the evidence provided for objective 8 – which is normally the area that schools find more difficult to comply with. The school vision is central to its ethos and everything that the school does relating to wellbeing revolves around that central vision. It was very pleasing to note that the Review team included a group of children which ensures that the voice of the child is very much embedded in the wellbeing strategy. It was clear from my perusal of the evidence provided that mental health awareness is extraordinarily strong and that parents are also very much involved in the school's work on wellbeing. Kathryn, one of the Award Coordinators and Deputy Head, explained that parents are now really open to approaching the school and regularly seek support. She also confirmed that the school regularly signposts parents as well as children to external support agencies, adding that the Pastoral Lead works in tandem with the school SENCO and the Mental Health Lead to deal with the most significant mental health signposting. I was delighted with the presentation that the Wellbeing Ambassadors delivered regarding their role in implementing and supporting the ongoing success of the Wellbeing Award at St George's. They told me that they 'meet at least once a half term to discuss new ideas and to see how things are going'. During these meetings, they talk about how they can ensure that everyone at school feels happy and what can be done to support them. They went on to explain how 'Miss Mogg and Mrs Watts listen to our ideas and thoughts and help us achieve them.' One of the most wonderful things I discovered from their presentation and my subsequent conversation with two of the ambassadors later, was the idea they had to start a special lunchtime club in the Thrive Hive 'for children who found being outside in the playground overwhelming.' They went on to explain how they run this club themselves, taking turns on a rota

basis to do so. They named the club the 'Come and Cope Club' and the children who attend take part in playing games, making paper crafts, building Lego, listening to music or simply chatting to each other. The feedback they have had from the children who use the club is extremely positive, telling me that 'the children have told us they love the club and feel safe and happy' there. They went on to tell me how they recently held an assembly for KSI and KS2 during which they talked about their roles and explained the badges that they wear in order to help them 'find us', going on to say that 'the children know that if they feel sad, lonely or worried they can come and talk to us.' They went on to explain that they have had special training to carry out their roles and that 'Tom, our mental health practitioner, will be working with us. He will show us strategies to use to help children to feel calm.' They went on to say that 'Miss Mogg, the Wellbeing lead, is training us on how to spot someone who might not be feeling ok and what to do next.' They finished with the quotation 'We believe that having a good mental health means we can do our best at school.' I was extremely impressed with these children and overwhelmed by their maturity and confidence in delivering such an excellent presentation in front of me and their teachers. This, above everything else I witnessed during my time at the school, proved that the children at St George's very definitely have a voice and the school is to be commended for all it does to ensure that its young people are listened to and valued. Overall, the evidence suggests that St George's CofE Primary has gone from strength to strength in all that it does to support the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community since achieving the Wellbeing Award for Schools at Final Verification in 2021.

Commentary on the tour of the school:

The school environment is extremely bright, cheerful and conducive to learning. The classrooms, corridors, outside spaces and offices are well-designed, warm and welcoming and bear testament to the importance the school places on the wellbeing of staff and pupils. I was taken into classrooms and was greatly impressed with the facilities, displays and the cheerful welcome I received from pupils and staff. I was also delighted to be shown around the beautiful nursery and reception areas and all of the KS2 classrooms which were all beautifully furnished and brightly decorated. The children and staff that I met on the tour were very approachable and eager to tell me about this lovely school. The children's behaviour was exemplary and their manners exceptional. I was particularly impressed with the quiet corners and little wigwams around school which the children can use if they are feeling overwhelmed or in need of some quiet time. The school values are displayed everywhere as well as interactive mood monsters boards in year 6 and the zones of regulation (emotion) boards I saw in every classroom. I was particularly impressed with the mirror placed at child height with the words 'This person is amazing!' displayed – a lovely, child friendly wellbeing resource. I particularly enjoyed talking to a Year 6 teacher who proudly showed me around her classroom with its beautiful displays and posters. She told me about an autistic child in her class, who she has sitting by her table at all times, in order to make him feel comfortable and supported. It was clear from my observations of lessons in progress and from the general tour, that the wellbeing of the children at St George's is very much central to the school's ethos and values. Other things I witnessed which are worthy of note were the inspirational posters proclaiming such things as 'We are all different but we bloom together' and the 'feed me your worries' displayed on the worry monster boxes (which are checked every day). Added to these were the 'Hello Yellow' board and the 'Rainbow of Emotions' board in the quiet area which I was shown. I was also particularly impressed with the inspirational quotations in the ladies' restroom and the cupboard which contains such essentials as sanitary items, deodorant and handwash, with the words 'We know things are tough at the moment, so help yourself' – a very lovely touch! However, the very best room that I visited and spent most of my day in, has to be the Thrive Hive (mentioned above) where the 'Come and Cope Club' is held because it used to be the Headteacher's office, but is now used by the boys and girls who really appreciate all it has to offer. I thoroughly enjoyed my tour of this wonderful school and it was clear from what I saw that this is very definitely a place which puts wellbeing at the very heart of its best practice.

Commentary on discussions with stakeholders:

Parents:

The group of parents that I met enthused about the school and its staff. They were particularly keen to let me know how supportive the school is. When asked about what they know about the Wellbeing Award, they told me that the Award is to do with mental health – not just the mental health and wellbeing of the children, but the wellbeing and mental health of the staff and parents too. They confirmed that they had all completed the questionnaires and that they are kept up to date with all the school does to ensure that wellbeing remains an important feature of what it offers. They told me about the school newsletter, the emails and other messages they receive to do with wellbeing and how their children also talk about this at home. One of the parents told me that his eldest foster child is one of the Wellbeing Ambassadors and thoroughly enjoys this role and how he likes keeping the family updated with everything he participates in! When asked how the school demonstrates that it values emotional wellbeing, they told me that the school really focuses on the happiness of the child and that parents are invited into school for assemblies and special mention awards. One of the mothers who has recently become a wheelchair user, told me how much the school did to reassure her child who was used to having a regularly active mother and how they went out of their way to explain everything to him in detail. The parent of the foster children told me how much he appreciates all the school does to help the family cope and feel supported. For example, he told me how, at the children's previous school, he was always being contacted throughout the day because of a child causing problems. He told me that this does not happen at St George's as they seem to really understand how to cope with children with emotional needs and how best to support parents. He went on to tell me that 'the staff teach the kids about how to regulate their emotions and how to deal with their feelings and, as a result, his daughter now realises how to cope better rather than just having a meltdown.' He went on to tell me that one child was removed from their last school, but St George's has taken a personal interest in his children and his son's class teacher talks to him every day, using the 'tomorrow is another day' model. He finished by telling me that 'it is clear that the school doesn't only focus on the happiness of the child, but the wellbeing of parents too'. Another parent told me that her son has a lot of medical needs and how the school has helped him and her so much and how the staff go out of their way to make him feel really included and valued – 'the same as every other child.' She went on to tell me that 'they treat all children with kindness and are very attentive to the needs of every child in their care'. The parents told me that 'the school's values are embedded and they really walk the walk not just talk the talk.' Added to this, she went on to say how 'the staff constantly keep us up to date with issues to do with our children because they really care about us and our children.'

Another parent added that the school is very aware that not all parents can afford dressing up clothes (I visited on Red Nose Day), but that they tell the parents not to buy 'posh' outfits as children can choose to either dress up or come to school in their pyjamas. In this way, children are never singled out or made to feel less than anyone else which is commendable and clearly demonstrates the very caring nature of the school. Parents also told me the school has a supply of second hand (donated by parents) Christmas jumpers which children can have if they do not have a jumper of their own. They also told me that the Headteacher tells parents not to buy the more expensive school jumpers with the logo, but to 'go to Asda and buy a plain green jumper.' The school also has a supply of second-hand uniform items which parents are encouraged to use. The parents told me that it is 'never made obvious who can afford things and who can't which ensures that the children of poorer households never feel inferior or less than anyone else.' When asked if they would feel comfortable talking about their own emotional wellbeing with staff, they were unanimous in telling me that they would have 'no hesitation in talking to staff' and confirmed that they would 'feel confident talking to absolutely anyone at the school should the need arise'. They went on to tell me that 'behaviour here is modelled from the top down because all of the staff mimic the same standards because everyone is treated equally here and, because of this, everyone feels cared for

and included.’ They added that ‘Mrs Sixsmith is really approachable and cares for us – we feel we can really talk to her and the rest of the staff as and when needed.’ I do not think I have been to many schools that do more for the whole community than St George’s does and I was extremely impressed with the testimonials of these parents.

Staff:

The staff I met were overwhelmingly supportive of all the school does to ensure their wellbeing. They confirmed that they have no hesitation in talking to the Head, SLT or each other about their emotional health. They went on to tell me about how they meet regularly to discuss these issues and how there is most definitely an ‘open door’ policy at the school. When asked about the involvement they have had in ensuring that wellbeing remains a prominent feature at the school, they told me that they have had professional development days and that the staff have been kept up to date with the progress of the Wellbeing Award since Final Verification. They told me that they very definitely have a voice at the school and gave me the example of how the SLT looked at workload because staff asked for it to be reviewed. They also told me how the marking policy was reviewed and how staff are given wellbeing afternoons off which they can use for whatever purpose they like. They continued by telling me how they are also given time out to prepare for longer tasks such as the ‘long Write’ for example and how they are given the opportunity of missing an assembly or staff meeting to allow them time for themselves from time to time, which is much appreciated. When asked for examples of how the school encourages them to be open about their own wellbeing, they told me about the noticeboards with help numbers on for counselling services and the wellbeing emails they receive from time to time. When asked how confident they are about managing and supporting each other they told me that they know that they are valued and always support each other. They went on to say that SLT are incredibly supportive should they need time off for any reason, one member of staff telling me that ‘you don’t have to ask – the SLT trust us as they know we work hard and they really value us.’ Another member of staff told me how well she was supported when she was going through some issues and how grateful she is for this, going on to tell me that ‘there is absolutely no stigma attached to mental health issues here – we are like a family and we support each other.’ When asked how they see the evolution of the wellbeing strategy going forward, they told me that the school is always scrutinising its best practice and asking itself ‘what can be done better?’ They told me that emotional wellbeing support for the children has always been great and it is so much better now for staff too. They confirmed that they have plenty of training offered to them to do with mental health and emotional wellbeing issues and told me how the introduction of the Zones of Regulation (emotion boards) has really helped the children as well as the staff and parents. They confirmed that parents are now much more open to talking about their mental health and mentioned Tom (a professional mental health worker) who comes into school twice a week to meet with parents and children to deliver nurture groups etc. The staff went on to tell me about the worry boxes and how the SLT really listen to staff and do their best to support their emotional wellbeing. All in all, the staff could not speak highly enough about all the school has done and continues to do to support the emotional wellbeing of the whole community. It was patently obvious from my discussion with them that the staff really love the school which is borne out by the fact that very few of them ever leave!

Pupils:

The pupils I spoke to impressed me greatly with the confident way they responded to my questions. When asked about what they understand by mental health, one boy told me that ‘mental health is helping our brains to help our bodies.’ Another child told me that ‘mental health helps your brain to calm down and we do meditation to calm ourselves for half an hour a day.’ They went on to tell me about the emotions boards which really help them express how they are feeling and also told me

about the worry boxes which they ‘enjoy feeding with our worries’. When asked about what they would do if they came to school feeling worried about something, they said that they could either ‘tell our mums before school or tell a teacher or, if we don’t actually want to talk about it, we could use the emotion board to show how we are feeling.’ They told me how they can write their worries down anonymously if they want, but if they do add their names, their teachers will always find the time to talk to them about it. They told me that they are kept up to date with the Wellbeing Award by the Wellbeing Ambassadors and champions and also mentioned the wellbeing board which has ‘lots of information on it.’ When asked where they learn about their emotions in school, they told me about how they talk about emotions in PHSE and how to deal with bullying issues for example. They also talked about the five ways to wellbeing model and the wellbeing ambassador assemblies that they have from time to time. They went on to tell me about the careers day they had yesterday and how two people came in to talk to them about mental health, confidence and how to have high aspirations! When asked about the things that happen at school to help them feel safe, they mentioned the safety guardians they have in school who ‘help to keep us safe’ and the NSPCC pants assembly they have had recently. They told me that ‘teachers taking the registers every day also makes sure that we are safe because they will know if we go missing!’ They went on to tell me that ‘our friends and the staff make us feel safe because we can talk to them about anything.’ When asked what they would do if they witnessed another child looking lonely or sad in the playground, they told me that they would talk to them and try and involve them in play or, if they did not want to talk or play, they would tell a teacher to help them. When asked about what they like most about St George’s, a little girl told me that ‘everyone is wanted here and everyone matters.’ Another boy told me that ‘this school is the greatest underlined!’ They finished by telling me that ‘the best thing about this school is the teachers because there are so many jobs in school that are fun like peer mentoring, ambassadors, champions and they are always doing their best to help us’, going on to add that ‘the food is great especially the pizzas and fish and chips and Breakfast club is amazing too!’ He finished by saying that ‘the teachers are the very best thing about our school because they know all our names and are always asking whether we’re okay.’ I was extremely impressed with the assurance and confidence that these children exuded – they are a credit to the school and to their families.

Governors:

I had the pleasure of meeting the Foundation Governor, Alan and the Staff Governor, Rick who impressed me greatly with their hands on approach to their roles and could not speak highly enough about all the school does to support the wellbeing and mental health of the whole community. Rick is a newly appointed staff Governor and Alan is in his third term as a Governor. When asked whether the wellbeing strategy has continued to deliver all that they expected since Final Verification in 2021, they confirmed that it most definitely had and that the school has come a long way since first embarking on the Award. They confirmed that wellbeing is definitely embedded in school life and is a standard item on the Agenda at Governors’ meetings. Alan confirmed that he is also on the review team and that they meet at least termly to discuss wellbeing issues at meetings. Rick confirmed that wellbeing and mental health are particularly critical areas of school life especially since Mrs Sixsmith assumed her headship of the school. They told me about the mental health practitioner, Tom, who comes into school to work with kids who need support and how these sessions are extremely valuable. They went on to tell me that they are incredibly lucky to have him on board and get the excellent support he offers to the school. When asked how the impact of the Award is monitored, they told me that Governors always discuss this at meetings and have had sight of the results of the stakeholder evaluation forms and the consequent analysis of said results. As staff governor, Rick told me that it is obviously part of his role to check on the wellbeing of staff. He told me that he is also the PE coordinator and talked about how wellbeing is intricately linked to this. He confirmed that the SLT have a really supportive and very approachable open-door policy and that their focus on wellbeing and mental health will always be ongoing as there are always going to be issues that ‘we

haven't come across yet and we need to be ready and prepared to face future challenges.' He went on to talk about how social media is impacting on the mental health of children so the school needs to constantly educate kids on safe usage, going on to tell me about the termly e safety newsletters and workshops held to assist parents on how to deal with these issues. As a young male teacher, Rick confirmed that he is happy to talk to anyone at the school about wellbeing, particularly as he once struggled himself because of having two young children and suffering from sleep deprivation for example. He told me how supportive the Head, SLT and staff had been towards him during that time and how much he really appreciated this. Alan went on to say that the continued success of the strategy is based on ensuring continued excellent communication with parents and on being mindful of the need to constantly update the school's best practice. When asked about what strategies are in place to support the wellbeing of the Head and the SLT, Rick confirmed that 'we always drop in on each other and communicate with each other and Alan confirmed that, historically, there has always been a real sense of care towards the Head and the SLT. He continued by saying that, outside of meetings, there always seems to be a governor having an informal chat with the Head! When asked about the training they have had as Governors, Alan confirmed that Governors attend all staff training and thoroughly enjoy being included in this. Rick told me that, as a new Governor, he has been extremely impressed with all the Governors do to support the school. He confirmed that they are very visible and well known around school and take the time to visit us as often as possible. They finished by confirming that there is an incredibly positive and inclusive relationship between school and the Governors and it is an honour to be involved with the school and all it does to ensure that wellbeing of the whole community.

Strengths identified during reassessment:

The strength and importance of pupil voice – especially those of the Wellbeing Ambassadors.
The Thrive Hive.
The 'Come and Cope Club'.
The school's open-door policy – the Headteacher and SLT are always available and happy to support.
The ongoing and unstinting support the staff provide to pupils, parents and each other.
How the school continues to take on board and respond positively to the comments from the stakeholder questionnaires.
The positive and enthusiastic way the staff, parents, governors and pupils responded to my questions.
The caring nature of Mrs Sixsmith (who even gave up her large office to accommodate the Thrive Hive), Kath and Sarah in particular, but the staff in general.
The fact that the school really does put the wellbeing and mental health of its whole community at the very heart of its best practice. There is absolutely no doubt that this is a school which is leading the way in the field of wellbeing and mental health.
The way the school has continued to improve and grow its best practice in the field of wellbeing and mental health in the three years since achieving the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

Impact: (taken from the Head's presentation)

Unity in attitude towards the importance of mental health remains strong.
Raised awareness within the school community – all speaking more openly about their own mental health, especially parents.
Stigma has significantly reduced.
Enjoyment of the wellbeing days and weeks.
Wellbeing of stakeholders is featured in the School Development Plan and will continue to feature.
Wellbeing opportunities for staff such as pizza days and dedicated Professional development days for emotional health and wellbeing and check-ins with individuals.
The implementation of the Waves of Intervention structure which ensures a consistent approach to the support given to the children.

The Mental Health Practitioner, Tom, who provides another level to the provision at St George's. The implementation of the Wellbeing Ambassadors and Champions. One of the biggest improvements at St George's is the Thrive Hive. It is a dedicated space for emotional health and wellbeing and is constantly in use. Staff are happy at St George's and rarely move on to new schools as a result. Emotional health is now so well embedded that it defines the ethos of the school. Displays around school raise awareness of emotional health and wellbeing. Emotions boards in every classroom provide the children with a way of expressing how they are feeling throughout the day.

Areas for development:

I struggle to find anything to write here, apart from suggesting that you share your best practice and achievements with other local primary schools and perhaps think about working with secondary schools during the transition period to help ensure that there is a continuation of the wellbeing and anti-stigma approach you have embedded at St George's into KS3 and beyond. You have much to be proud of and much you could share with other schools in the field of emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Verifier recommendation:

I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending that St George's Church of England Primary School be granted the Wellbeing for Schools Award for a further period of three years. Well done!

Head teacher comments:

At St George's, we always try our best to support the mental health and wellbeing of our children, families, staff and governors. We do not do this to gain an award (although we are very proud of our award!) but we feel it is an essential part of our ethos and vision for our school family. Knowing our school staff are approachable and well-trained, means that families and children trust us and are far more willing to ask for help when they need it the most. Completing the WAS has meant we have remained focused on improving our provision further and ensuring we take stakeholders' views into consideration at all times.

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