

Wellbeing Award for Schools (Special) (WAS SP)

Verification Report

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| School name: | Woodlane High School |
| School address and postcode: | Du Cane Road, London, W12 0TN |
| School telephone: | 0208 743 5668 |
| School website: | www.woodlane.lbhf.sch.uk/ |
| Head teacher: | Claire Maynard |
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| WAS coordinator: | Mary Louise Jelen |
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| Award verifier: | Mark Jennett |
| Award adviser (if applicable): | |
| Date of verification: | 4 May 2022 |

Commentary on the evidence provided:

The evidence provided was clear and concise. Any gaps were more than adequately addressed during the verification process. It was clear from the meetings with colleagues that management and staff are passionate about promoting wellbeing and also have the skills and support they need to do this effectively. Students clearly feel safe at the school and can articulate both how Woodlane supports their EWMH and also how they can manage their own feelings and help others. Overall, a most impressive school.

Strengths identified during verification:

The school feels welcoming and friendly. Colleagues and students acknowledge each other (and Award verifiers!) and interactions are kind and thoughtful. I was impressed by the confidence and openness shown by the students during my conversations with them. Kindness and wellbeing are enshrined in the school's professed values and these messages are clearly replicated around the school.

Staff are very knowledgeable about all their students, their needs and the factors that might affect their wellbeing. Behaviour, anti-bullying and other policies are very much concerned with what lies behind behaviour and in helping children to manage and regulate their own feelings and actions. Students are clear about rewards and sanctions and understand and value the various tools available to help them manage and support their own wellbeing.

As part of their work on the Award, the school has clearly identified both strengths and weaknesses in current provision and has plans in place to address any areas of development – such as introducing a new, KS4 nurture group. A significant number of activities help to raise awareness and reduce stigma around EWMH including awareness days, displays and assemblies as well as more targeted interventions such as one designed to support a specific friendship group.

Zones of Regulation are used throughout the school and pupils can describe how this helps them to identify and manage emotions. Other approaches include Talking Mats which help children to articulate how they are feeling, share opinions or express wants and needs especially if they struggle with talking or writing about feelings. Other provision includes a sensory room and garden, quiet spaces and places where children can go if they struggle to go outside at break times as well as movement breaks, fidget toys and two therapy dogs. A range of extracurricular clubs – some specifically requested by pupils – including craft, drama, computing, basketball etc help to support student wellbeing.

Staff speak highly of the support available for their own wellbeing which, as well as supportive line management, includes ‘sanity days’ off, coaching and an Employee Assistance Programme. Staff confidence is enhanced by an ongoing training programme linked to EWMH, including significant inputs around ACEs and from external organisations such as the Anna Freud Foundation. Individual staff have trained as ELSAs, MHFAs etc.

Parent feedback is positive with regard to how the school supports pupil wellbeing. One commented: “at Primary school he wouldn’t tell anyone if he was upset and now he knows that there are lots of people to talk too. He has learnt that it is ok to express himself and gets help with his emotions.”

Many children have wellbeing targets linked to EHCPs and staff use a range of methods, including emotional progress trackers, to help pupils and parents to see how they are progressing. The school has recently started using CPOMs as a recording mechanism and staff are enthusiastic about how it, along with regular progress meetings etc, enables them to share information and build a picture of each student’s needs.

Students have a range of leadership opportunities and the school council has been involved in decision making around wellbeing provision. One student joined the Change Team and led an assembly on the Award.

School leaders have worked closely with the LA and others to effectively influence decisions about provision and funding.

Areas for development:

While provision is already excellent the school could also consider the following:

At the verification we discussed how the Award STEFs were not ideal for surveying Woodlane students so continue to employ other approaches such as the 'conferences' you held with staff and students to ensure that as many voices as possible continue to shape EWMH provision.

Reference provision such as 'sanity days' in your stress management policy to ensure consistency and continuation of provision. Consider asking specifically about aspects such as work/life balance in appraisals as well as introducing an optional wellbeing objective.

Consider adding more information to the school website about online resources and support for both children and parents.

Consider how more students could be involved specifically as wellbeing champions or ambassadors.

Verifier recommendation:

I am delighted to recommend that the school be awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools (Special) for a period of three years.

Head teacher comments:

We are delighted to be awarded the 'Wellbeing Award for Schools'. The award recognises the hard work of the entire Woodlane community in placing mental health and wellbeing as one of our highest priorities. A huge thank you to governors, staff, parents and pupils for their contributions. As always, our door remains open to anyone seeking support or guidance.

The verifier approached the assessment day sensitively, considering the needs of our pupils at all times, as he viewed and collected the information required.

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