

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Reassessment Report

School name:	St Thomas (Halliwell) CE Primary School
School address and postcode:	Eskrick Street, Bolton, BL1 3JB
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School website:	www.st-thomas-halliwell.bolton.sch.uk
Head teacher:	Mrs Abi Fielden
Award coordinator:	Mrs Laura Powell
Award verifier:	Dr Helen Mills
Date of reassessment:	04/12/2025

Commentary on the mini-portfolio of evidence:

St Thomas (Halliwell) CE Primary School showcased a holistic approach to promoting and supporting wellbeing and mental health. The schools SHINE values are embedded throughout school life. The full-time appointment of the Pastoral Care Officer/Wellbeing Coordinator has ensured key developments, including those from the previous verification and suggestions from all stakeholder groups, are implemented effectively. For example, the wonderful work of the pupil wellbeing champions, daily feelings check ins, Wellbeing Wednesdays, pupil voice, leadership and responsibilities, expansion of the breakfast club, sensory and relaxation room, new SLT structure, change team, 16 trained mental health first aiders, introduction of a staff wellbeing day and parent coffee mornings. The stakeholder questionnaire results highlighted positive responses in all areas. There is a broad range of wellbeing provision for pupils and staff and ample opportunities for parents to be involved in the school community. Targeted pupils and families receive ongoing support from the Pastoral Care Officer and outside partners.

Commentary on the tour of the school:

All staff members and pupils welcome you with immense warmth and kindness. The Christian ethos, SHINE values and environment promotes a sense of calm, positivity, inclusion, love, care, happiness, fun, community spirit and aspiration. It was clear to see the interpersonal, caring, respectful and trusting relationships between staff and pupils. Children were nurtured, engaged and encouraged in learning, happy, helpful, proud and displayed exemplary behaviour, manners, respect and kindness.

Each classroom has an individualised calm and reflection area to meet the needs of the cohort with resources to support wellbeing, regulation, communication and behaviour. The magnificent display in the hall, designed with the pupils, promotes with pride, the SHINE values. The positive promotion of wellbeing is amplified throughout the school with images of the children displayed alongside the

SHINE values. The wellbeing wall showcases images of the wellbeing champions, their role and a calendar of events. Further displays promote and celebrate aspirations, children's achievements, inclusivity, the 5 ways to wellbeing, worried posters with images of staff to speak to, and pupil leadership roles and responsibilities. The outdoor space has been improved and there is direct access to the Church that the pupils visit regularly. The sensory and relaxation room is purposeful, providing a safe and calming space for children to access interventions.

It was clear from the tour that wellbeing and positivity are embedded throughout the school. Interpersonal, caring, respectful and trusting relationships between pupils and staff was clear to see. This sense of connection, described as 'family', are central to its success.

Commentary on discussions with stakeholders:

The pupils I met were able to articulate well their understanding of mental health and wellbeing, behaviour and reward incentives, how they identify and communicate their emotions, described many trusted adults and peers they can turn to for support, areas they can go to, activities they do and the skills they have learnt to regulate their emotions and improve their mental health and wellbeing, alongside the immense care and sense of belonging they experience.

Specifically, the pupils commented, "We have ambassadors for every subject and Head Boy and Girl. The attendance bear helps little children come to school more. In assembly, the Headteacher announces who gets to wear the golden jumper; you get it for good behaviour and always letting the light shine; that's the most important thing in school; how we treat others. The zones help us learn from our mistakes. We have lots of awards; we get ladder points for behaving and working as a team, shout out cards for what we've done good and get dojos. We can go to the reflection table to have a chill".

The wellbeing champions spoke of the importance of their role and how their ideas have come into fruition. Specifically, they commented, "We wear our green jumper on Wellbeing Wednesday and at break and lunch we take our bags out to help other children; they have blankets, colouring, books and fidgets. We drew our ideas to put in the bag, like positive stickers. Every Wednesday and Friday we have meetings and a book with our to do lists. We write our ideas and put them on the Wellbeing calendar and add teachers' birthdays. We've ordered worry boxes and made posters about it. We make lots of decisions. We can cheer children up if they're down. We shine, show respect and kindness and take pride in who we are".

The pupils value the staff and the relationships they have developed and commented, "Staff are very nice and help us. They [staff] care for us and educate us. Children have feelings chats and they do calm things and have breakfast club. Mrs Powell is so kind".

When asked to describe their school, the pupils said, "I love it. Time flies because we have so much fun. It's safe and we help friends".

The incredible staff at this wonderful school go above and beyond what is expected of them to ensure children and their families flourish. Staff value the Headteacher, her leadership, autonomy, trust, transparency and the importance she places on everyone's wellbeing and the range of support they receive from her, SLT and from each other. The Governors are very much involved in the school and the strategy for wellbeing, providing support and challenge.

Staff commented on their wellbeing, "Staff recognise if you're having a down day; they ask if you're OK, listen and give hugs; it comes from the top and feeds down. We have excellent representation of

all staff on the change team, we listen, discuss and suggest improvements. Staff feel very well supported. Personal development is deeply embedded. They ask what you want, support and encourage you and give you time to study. Staff don't leave. We all get a wellbeing day. Little changes help so much, we're listened to and things are quickly actioned. The Change Team is nice because we all get a say; admin, teaching assistants and teaching staff are all involved. I know I can go to SLT at any time. We have such good relationships that we can be honest and can disagree. The SLT are so friendly and approachable. We're shown appreciation and receive staff awards, cakes and thank you emails. We all work well as a team. Inset days build team work and we have time to set up classrooms. Parents appreciate us. We have a fantastic team and work life balance; we can start early so can pick up our own children; it's so important. They're so supportive with time off. We're genuinely happy".

Staff talked about the children with pride and commented, "The children are fantastic; seeing them develop socially and emotionally. They are amazing; they want to help you and find the roles and responsibilities really rewarding. Hearing the children's feedback; they're beaming; how happy they are. The Pastoral role is having a positive impact; including the lunch time wellbeing art club and children at the bespoke breakfast club; they're coming in happy and settled. The Wellbeing Champions love their role and take so much pride in it; they support at dinner and take ownership. They all leave happy".

Staff commented on the culture and ethos of the school, "Staff relationships with the children is a real strength. The children, staff and parents, all feel cared for, valued and special; they feel part of something special. It's a family. We deeply care. We help with charities. The teaching assistants do feeling check ins with identified children; they can chat to them and log it on CPOMs, they always make time for them and can refer them to the Pastoral Officer; it's helping to build really strong relationships. This is their [children's] safe, happy place; they love being here".

Governors commented, "The school is more of an extended family; there's lots of support for children and parents. We want our whole school community to feel happy, healthy and comfortable. Every board meeting there is a report on wellbeing and the Headteachers wellbeing is always on the agenda. We're a big family. I love the ethos of the school; everyone is welcomed and valued".

Parental praise for the school and staff was exceptional and it was clear they feel a sense of belonging. Communication is effective, parent Governor's support families directly and there are many opportunities for parents to be part of the school community, including the powerful and effective parent wellbeing coffee mornings delivered by a member of the local community.

Parents commented, "The wellbeing sessions have been brilliant; they ask us what we would like to do, it's a very comfortable experience and we have time out to chat and a lot more parents come now. The Dojo app is really good; you can share achievements outside of school. We're informed about what's going on. My daughter is Head Girl and loved the school from day one; all staff are helpful. My daughter has anxiety and she had wellbeing sessions and her confidence has shot up; she's standing up in assembly now. They always strive to make sure the children are happy. The wellbeing champions have backpacks with things to help children and the buddy bench. It's an outstanding school; warm and friendly. All staff are so approachable. It's community driven; there's family bingo, swimming in the summer, cycling and they're [pupils] doing it at home. There's lots of opportunities, school trips and experiences like London and Wales. It's multi-cultural. If they [pupils] struggle, there's so much help. They did extra maths with my child as she was a bit worried; they sort things. It's a wonderful school".

Strengths identified during reassessment:

The Head Teacher and Pastoral Officer/Wellbeing Coordinator have demonstrated outstanding leadership, passion and drive; these skills, qualities and working in collaboration with the Change Teams, have ensured that mental health and wellbeing is a priority for everyone and firmly embedded across the whole school community.

The schools' wellbeing vision are reflected in the positive and nurturing culture and ethos of the school, are central to its success, and have created a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, referred to during the visit as 'family'. Throughout the award reassessment, the school has demonstrated continued and innovative progress to support and improve the wellbeing and mental health of the whole school community.

There are many opportunities for pupils to become leaders and the children take pride in making positive changes to their school and caring for their peers.

Listening to pupil voice and introducing the Wellbeing Champions, calm areas, buddy benches, worry boxes, and backpacks filled with resources, alongside meaningful behaviour initiatives, are facilitating children to regulate their emotions, and this is impacting positively on their learning.

The school has continued to provide significant investment in a wide range of wellbeing activities including breakfast, lunch and after school clubs, opportunities, experiential learning, outdoor environment, support and monitoring systems including CPOMs. There are clear referral pathways, daily feelings check in and robust provision and monitoring of action plans and targeted interventions.

Staff wellbeing continues to be prioritised and budgeted for, including the Wellbeing Day, staffing ratios, a new SLT structure, EAP, wellbeing questions in performance management, training including 16 mental health first aiders, team building and professional development.

The Governing board members are passionate, supportive, challenging and effective in their role.

The school has continued to work proactively to develop parental engagement and effective communication including delivering workshops, hosting coffee mornings and introducing the Dojo app.

Effective whole school promotion, daily check in's for identified children, Wellbeing Wednesdays, resources, Wellbeing, PSHE, SMSC and R.E. curriculum, outstanding support given to targeted pupils and families from the Pastoral and Attendance Officer, Admin Team and outside agencies, including Bright Leaders and Aspire, have ensured that pupils and staff understand the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing and are able to ask for help, look after their own and others wellbeing and improve resilience. The support given to parents and pupils is outstanding, with staff going above and beyond to break down barriers and establish trusting relationships.

Excellent community links including the Youth project and partnership working with the Local Authority, Archdiocese, Health Service and in providing leadership within local cluster schools.

The pupils I met were delightful, kind, happy, caring, respectful, confident and engaged in learning, the unconditional love and care they receive from the passionate staff, is considered to be a contributing factor. The school has drawn together the threads that connect all the different work

done and aspirations, and is able to demonstrate positive change in children, parents and staff. The school understands the importance of looking after the whole schools' mental health and wellbeing, and how this supports children to feel heard, valued, loved, safe, happy, secure, included, connected, and celebrated, enabling them to thrive, shine and achieve.

Impact:

The stakeholder questionnaire results were positive and demonstrated impact in all areas.

Whole school promotion, activities, programmes and training in wellbeing and mental health have increased whole school community awareness and removed the stigma attached to mental health. This has resulted in people having open conversations, recognising their feelings, confident in asking for support or supporting themselves and others, using a range of regulation techniques, contributing to improved wellbeing, confidence and resilience. This has led to a shared responsibility and ownership that promotes and empowers everyone to take responsibility of their own and others wellbeing and mental health.

Investment in staff wellbeing, staffing ratios, training and professional development has continued to contribute to high staff retention, staff managing their own wellbeing, and has further strengthened staff's sense of belonging, pride, motivation and job satisfaction.

Staff have increased awareness and understanding of mental health and are confident to talk about their own mental health. Staff are confident in recognising the factors that affect their children and family's mental health and know how to refer for support to ensure that children and their families receive support quickly, preventing escalation of mental health issues.

The nurturing ethos of the school, trusting relationships and effective partnerships across the whole school community has ensured that children, families and staff feel safe, valued, supported, secure and happy. The whole school team at St Thomas (Halliwell) CE Primary School work passionately to make a positive difference to the lives of all the pupils, parents and staff.

An embedded welcoming, caring, happy, inclusive, positive school culture and ethos that prioritises whole school community mental health and wellbeing, investment in passionate and nurturing staff, a creative and varied curriculum, effective behaviour incentives and rewards, informal and formal support, robust monitoring systems and targeted interventions has resulted in all pupils, including those with additional wellbeing and mental health needs, being provided with a safe space and for interventions to be delivered, enabling their needs to be met. This has promoted confidence in children's ability to talk openly about their feelings, to manage their own mental health, and to support each other, demonstrating developments in their social and emotional skills and resilience, enabling young people to thrive and achieve. St Thomas (Halliwell) CE Primary School continues to be a safe haven for every member of the school community, where everyone experiences a sense of belonging and has the opportunity to shine.

Areas for development:

As already highlighted by the school:

1. Strengthen the evaluation of wellbeing interventions to demonstrate impact. For ideas, view the Anna Freud measuring tools for wellbeing or/and consider introducing the Thrive or My Happy Minds approach.

2. Further expand pupil voice roles within wellbeing initiatives.
3. Enhance parental engagement and accessibility of wellbeing information, and deliver a parent session on how to use the school communication apps.
4. Train and introduce 'Buddy' the therapy dog in January 2026.
5. Introduce a PTA.

Research and develop a therapeutic environment.

Work in partnership with the Bolton School Mental Health Team.

Consider introducing weekly, whole class, relaxation/check in/worries and wishes/circle time to be delivered by the Pastoral Officer.

Verifier recommendation:

I am delighted to recommend that St Thomas (Halliwell) CE Primary School retain the Wellbeing Award in Schools for a further period of three years.

Head teacher comments:

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