



## Context and background

In 2018 Valley Primary School decided to undertake the Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS) process. Developed in partnership with the National Children's Bureau (NCB), the WAS is intended to help schools prepare and equip themselves to promote emotional wellbeing and positive mental health across the whole school community. NCB's vision is an education system where emotional wellbeing and mental health are at the heart of the culture and ethos of school, so that pupils, with the support of teachers, can build confidence and flourish. Valley Primary School believes in these principles, beyond the award process and therefore wishes to define a longer term and sustainable wellbeing strategy.

Emotional wellbeing and mental health have many definitions but for the purposes of this strategy, the following definitions will be used, which have been taken from the NCB's Framework for Promoting Wellbeing and Responding to Mental Health in Schools.<sup>3</sup>

*'Social and emotional well-being' refers to a state of positive mental health and wellness. It involves a sense of optimism, confidence, happiness, clarity, vitality, self-worth, achievement, having a meaning and purpose, engagement, having supportive and satisfying relationships with others and understanding oneself, and responding effectively to one's own emotions.*

*'Mental health problems' will be used refer to the wide range of mental health, emotional and social challenges, difficulties, conditions and illnesses that can beset both pupils and staff, including stress and burnout, anxiety, depression, attachment difficulties and behavioural problems.*

## The case for a wellbeing strategy

- Valley Primary School prides itself on being a caring, inclusive school with a strong ethos of personal development, underpinned by its core values. It is recognised however, that more work is required to embed wellbeing and mental health within the culture of the school, enable consistency and a joined-up approach to wellbeing.
- There is increased awareness of the importance of wellbeing and mental health in children. Emotional wellbeing is considered to be a clear indicator of academic achievement, success and satisfaction in later life. Evidence shows that mental health and wellbeing programmes in schools, can lead to significant improvements in children's mental health, and social and emotional skills<sup>1</sup>.
- Wellbeing programmes in schools can also lead to a reduction in classroom misbehaviour and bullying<sup>1</sup>. Within Valley Primary School, data suggests that a small number of pupils that have been involved in repeated and more serious incidents are pupils who have emotional needs.
- Changes to the Ofsted Framework (May 2019) reflect the importance of wellbeing, with new headings of Behaviour and Attitudes; Personal Development and Quality of Education. In Personal Development wellbeing is specifically referenced; a judgement will be made on the extent to which curriculum and the school's wider work supports learners to develop their resilience, confidence and independence and helps them now how to keep physically and mentally healthy. In Quality of Education, a judgement will be made on the extent to which learners study the full curriculum.
- From September 2020, Health Education becomes statutory and the curriculum includes; giving pupils the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and



## Valley Primary School Wellbeing Strategy

wellbeing; that physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked; reducing the stigma attached to health issues, in particular those to do with mental wellbeing.

- Access to specialist support services can be impeded by high thresholds and long waiting lists, and schools have an important role to play in both preventative and targeted measures. It is therefore important that Valley Primary School has the necessary skills, knowledge and resources in place to meet the ever-changing needs of children and families.
- There is a gap in the mental health provision to capture children who are experiencing emotional difficulties but do not meet the threshold for referral to specialist services.

### Aim and objectives

Valley Primary School's wellbeing strategy aims to represent a commitment to developing a sustainable and whole school approach to emotional wellbeing and mental health and ultimately improve the emotional wellbeing of pupils and teachers.

The objectives are to:

- Bring together all those with a role to play in relation to the health and wellbeing of the whole school community
- Raise awareness of emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Identify strategies to build the capability to identify mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns early and ensure appropriate support is provided
- Capture views of parents, pupils and teachers
- Identify gaps and areas for change and create an operational action plan
- Provide a framework to monitor changes and measure improvements to wellbeing
- Support achievement of the WAS award

### Vision statement and Values

Our 5 Core Values underpin all that we do; Care, Learn together, Aim high, Be honest, Look after what we have.

Our vision is as follows:

'As a community wellbeing is at the core of everything we do at Valley Primary School. Our approach to learning encourages and enables everyone to be open-minded, integrated, and independent individuals able to meet the world with positivity, curiosity, adaptability and ambition'.

### Stakeholders and the 'whole school approach'

Whole school community stakeholders include:

- Pupils
- Parents and carers
- After School Club/Breakfast club staff
- Teaching staff
- Support staff
- School administrative staff
- Lunchtime supervisors
- Site team
- Place2Be



## SWOT / Analysis

The SWOT analysis was conducted in two staff meetings; one with teaching staff and one with support staff.

## Responsibilities

### The Wellbeing Committee

The aim of the Wellbeing Committee is to promote and protect positive emotional wellbeing and mental health across the Valley Primary School community. It aims to develop a positive and sustainable culture which regards wellbeing as the responsibility of all and actively promotes wellbeing for both pupils and staff.

The Committee's objectives are to:

- Provide a forum for the development and implementation of good wellbeing across the school
- Develop the school's wellbeing strategy and lead its dissemination and communication to all stakeholders
- Develop, monitor and update the school's wellbeing action plan and lead its dissemination and communication to all stakeholders
- Monitor the success and impact of the school's strategy and action plan and review on an annual basis
- Develop and oversee the implementation of a communication strategy to ensure ongoing engagement with pupils, staff and parents and raise awareness of wellbeing
- Identify training and development opportunities and access to resources
- To ensure emotional wellbeing is incorporated into the school's annual School Improvement Plan

The core Wellbeing Committee membership includes:

- Chair – member of senior leadership team
- School Governor
- Teaching staff representatives
- SENCO
- Administrative staff representative
- Teaching Assistant representative
- Parent representatives

The Wellbeing Committee meets at least three times a year. The Wellbeing Committee reports directly to the Senior Leadership Team meeting but where the wellbeing work results in policy or strategic change, the Wellbeing Committee will also report to the school's Board of Governors.



## Senior leadership team

The SLT is responsible for actively demonstrating a commitment to promoting and addressing emotional wellbeing needs for pupils and staff. In particular, the SLT will:

- Ensure wellbeing is a regular agenda item at SLT and governor meetings
- Communicate the wellbeing vision to the whole school community, ensuring accessibility
- Actively engage with the whole school community
- Ensure relevant policies and procedures are in place and monitored
- Identify resources and budget to support pupil and staff development in wellbeing
- Ensure wellbeing is represented within commissioning programmes
- Promote staff and pupil wellbeing by leading by example

## The Governing Body

The Local Governing body is responsible for ensuring the SLT are promoting and addressing emotional wellbeing needs for pupils and staff. In particular, the LGB will:

- Ensure wellbeing is a regular agenda item at LGB meetings
- Ensure there is Governor representation on the Change Team
- When reviewing policies, ensure they are looked at through a 'wellbeing lens'
- Ensure wellbeing is considered when policies and procedures are discussed at Trust level
- Ensure wellbeing is part of the agenda when making budgetary decisions

## Teaching and support staff

- Promote wellbeing and positive mental health with the pupils. This is done through building relationships and building self-esteem through daily interactions; creating a positive learning culture; dealing with incidents using a Restorative Approach, in line with our behaviour policy; and teaching the PSHE curriculum and any additional lessons on emotional wellbeing as directed by the PSHE lead.
- Identify and know how to support children who may be experiencing difficulties with their emotional wellbeing or be experiencing mental health issues.
- Teach a full and balanced curriculum that allows all pupils to flourish and have their talents recognised.
- Know how to look after their own well-being and look out for the emotional wellbeing of colleagues.
- Liaise with parents about emotional wellbeing. Raise concerns and support where needed.



## A 'whole school approach' to wellbeing

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) advises that primary schools should be supported to adopt a comprehensive, 'whole school' approach to promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. Furthermore, the DfE also identifies a whole-school approach to promoting good mental health as a protective factor for child and adolescent mental health.<sup>2</sup> A whole -school approach to social and emotional wellbeing is one which runs through all aspects of the life of a school and includes:

- School leadership
- Whole-school policies and practices that promote positive wellbeing
- Training and CPD for staff
- Promoting staff wellbeing and tackling staff stress
- The school culture, ethos and environment – developing a supportive school and classroom climate and ethos
- Connecting with approaches to behaviour management
- Teaching, learning and the curriculum – starting with a positive and universal focus on wellbeing
- Implementing targeted programmes and interventions
- Promoting pupil voice and peer learning
- Partnerships with parents, families and the wider school community



## The Strategic plan

The wellbeing strategy has been planned around the eight principles for promoting emotional wellbeing as defined by Public Health England<sup>2</sup> as they build on the whole-school approach described above.

This section provides a strategic plan for the period 2019 to 2021, with its implementation coordinated through the wellbeing *operational plan*.

Theme 1: Leadership and Management	
Theory of action	Goal
<p>Support from the senior leadership team (SLT) and governing body is essential to ensure that actions to promote emotional health and wellbeing are supported and embedded within the school.</p> <p>Achieving the Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS) will demonstrate a commitment to promoting and protecting positive emotional wellbeing and mental health.</p> <p>Having a clear wellbeing strategy helps stakeholders understand the school's objectives, priorities and process for evaluating improvement in relation to wellbeing. A strategy will drive forward the promotion of wellbeing for pupils and staff.</p>	<p>Establish a long-term commitment across the SLT and governing body to support the promotion of emotional wellbeing and embedding across the whole-school community.</p> <p>Achieve the WAS.</p> <p>Approved strategy and associated action plan are in place that are communicated to all those involved in the school and is well monitored.</p>
Example of activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Wellbeing Committee is established, with membership covering school community and supported by the SLT and governing body</li> <li>• The wellbeing strategy and associated action plan is approved and communicated to all key stakeholders</li> <li>• Measures in place and regularly monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy and demonstrate improvements in promoting emotional wellbeing</li> <li>• The Wellbeing Committee or its champions are consulted on changes to policy and curriculum</li> <li>• School policies and procedures are reviewed and updated with a wellbeing lens and monitored by the SLT</li> <li>• Ensure emotional wellbeing is well referenced within the school's improvement plan and is monitored by the SLT</li> <li>• Appropriately supported wellbeing champions in place to support implementation of the wellbeing strategy</li> <li>• Encourage a wellbeing assessment as part of changes to practice and work expectations, so that there is an appropriate balance between expectations and standards and impact on wellbeing</li> <li>• Explore IT solutions to support access to wellbeing resources and communicating the school's</li> </ul>	



wellbeing vision	
Measures of success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school achieves the WAS</li> <li>• Action plan monitored and progress tracked</li> <li>• Wellbeing agenda item at regular frequency at SLT and Board of Governor's meetings and minuted</li> <li>• Defined measures to assess effectiveness of strategy (within this document) are monitored regularly</li> <li>• The Wellbeing Strategy is reviewed annually</li> <li>• Budget allocation and utilisation in relation to wellbeing</li> </ul>	

Theme 2: School ethos and environment	
Theory of action	Goal
A positive physical, social and emotional environment can have a positive impact on physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. In turn this can affect academic success, satisfaction in later life and reduce poor behaviour and bullying.	Create an ethos and environment that supports positive behaviours for learning, successful relationships and an emotionally secure and safe environment. Encourage an environment in which children are encouraged to talk about how they feel and know how and when to ask for help. Support children to build a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for looking after each other.
Example of activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on the success of existing schemes for peer mediation, school council and sports leaders and learning walks incorporate a wellbeing component</li> <li>• Ensure the school curriculum and activities continue to embrace, promote and value diversity</li> <li>• Ensure where possible the school curriculum and activities build a sense of belonging and encourage positive relationships</li> <li>• Update the school values and mission statement to place wellbeing at their core</li> <li>• Pupils are given clear information about opportunities to talk about how they feel and know how to ask for help</li> <li>• Learn from the success of positive reinforcement and behaviour strategies in the school and use this expertise to promote the principles of wellbeing</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for promoting and enhancing wellbeing, using outdoor space, particularly forest school and the natural environment</li> </ul>	
Measures of success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from formal questionnaires (staff, pupils and parents) indicates improvement</li> <li>• Completion and review of PSHE Big Books</li> </ul>	



Theme 3: Curriculum teaching and learning	
Theory of action	Goal
<p>Emotional wellbeing learning embedded within the curriculum (PSHE and wider), that is relevant and has a practical application, will be more effective in helping pupils acquire skills and qualities* they need to develop their emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>*Skills and qualities include motivation, self-awareness, problem-solving, conflict management and resolution, collaborative working, confidence, independence, resilience, how to understand and manage feelings and how to manage relationships with parents, teachers and peers.</p>	<p>The curriculum includes emotional wellbeing learning and has sufficient opportunity to promote key skills*. Mechanisms are in place to assess effectiveness of learning.</p>
<p>Example of activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify wellbeing learning opportunities for the whole school community, already in place or that can be accessed</li> <li>• Identify effective strategies and opportunities to incorporate emotional wellbeing learning within the curriculum</li> <li>• Collaborate with other schools, expert bodies and organisations to share good practice and work in an evidenced based way</li> <li>• Identify specific opportunities where emotional wellbeing needs are more significant such as transition stages and intensive testing periods and consider suitable learning strategies</li> <li>• Understand where social media and digital resources can have a positive effect on wellbeing as well as negatively impact</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for promoting wellbeing and enhancing skills through creativity and the arts</li> </ul>	
<p>Measures of success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from formal questionnaires (staff, pupils and parents)</li> </ul>	

Theme 4: Staff development, health and wellbeing	
Theory of action	Goal
<p>Promoting staff wellbeing will help build staff emotional resilience to cope with increasing demands and work pressures and a greater capacity to support pupils who require wellbeing support. Staff will have a better work-life balance, improved job satisfaction and reduced levels of stress.</p> <p>Staff who have the opportunity to increase their knowledge of emotional wellbeing will be better equipped to identify pupil wellbeing concerns earlier and be confident to help.</p>	<p>There is opportunity for staff to engage positively with the wellbeing programme and be able to raise their own wellbeing concerns in a safe and supportive environment.</p> <p>Staff training and learning opportunities / resources are available and staff are supported to access.</p>





<p><b>Example of activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with staff on a regular basis to determine personal and all staff wellbeing needs. Ensure adequate representation of diversity.</li> <li>Review the appraisal process to ensure staff have the opportunity to have a meaningful and collaborative exploration of their personal wellbeing</li> <li>Reflect on previous successful staff wellbeing events and initiatives and implement an ongoing programme to promote staff wellbeing</li> <li>Identify key 'pinch points' / risk factors that can have a negative impact on staff wellbeing and engage with staff to explore solutions</li> <li>Assess staff understanding of emotional wellbeing knowledge and skills</li> <li>Develop a training plan to address staff wellbeing knowledge and skills needs and how to develop children's emotional wellbeing</li> <li>Ensure ongoing programme of training to account for new staff / induction</li> <li>Ensure staff have the skills to identify risk factors that can impact on emotional wellbeing, early intervention requirements and how to signpost / access appropriate support</li> <li>Review staff professional and personal development plans to ensure there is a focus on mental health and wellbeing</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Measures of success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from formal questionnaires of staff</li> <li>Sickness and absenteeism rates</li> <li>Staff retention / turnover rates</li> <li>Appraisal feedback</li> </ul>	

Theme 5: Identifying need and monitoring impact	
Theory of action	Goal
<p>Early identification and understanding of pupils' emotional wellbeing needs, results in a more proactive, timely and planned response.</p> <p>Defining pupil needs on formal basis can help with commissioning decisions. Recording and monitoring of interventions and support enables assessment of impact.</p>	<p>Validated and evidenced based tools in place to assess the needs of all pupils, can track progress of those that require support and assess the effectiveness of interventions in place.</p>
<p><b>Example of activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify areas of good practice and skills already used in the classroom to determine daily wellbeing of pupils and those that may require support</li> <li>Identify and implement a validated and evidence-based tool for the assessment of pupil wellbeing needs</li> <li>Implement a programme of assessment, data analysis and action planning for ongoing improvement</li> <li>Build on existing data monitoring to analyse the needs of children and their families in terms of wellbeing needs</li> <li>Continue to work with parents and carers of children with needs, to reduce risk</li> <li>Capture information on gaps in meeting needs or ability to access specialist services and communicate to senior leadership team</li> </ul>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities with partner organisations e.g. Place2Be to develop meaningful methods of monitoring pupil wellbeing before and after interventions</li> </ul>	
Measures of success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results from assessment tools</li> <li>Feedback from formal questionnaires (staff, pupils and parents) indicates improvement</li> </ul>	

Theme 6: Working with parents and carers	
Theory of action	Goal
Communicating with parents and carers can help identify risks earlier and working together will be more effective than working in isolation to promote wellbeing.	Systems are in place for regular and effective engagement with parents and carers to raise emotional wellbeing awareness.
Example of activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run regular wellbeing awareness and engagement events to engage parents / carers</li> <li>Consult with parents / carers where appropriate, regarding wellbeing matters. Ensure adequate representation of diversity</li> <li>Identify suitable information for parents / carers and provide access and give parents / carers access to the relevant policies promoting emotional wellbeing and mental health</li> </ul>	
Measures of success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased response rates to questionnaires</li> <li>Questionnaires analysed and results show improvement in feedback / scores</li> </ul>	

Theme 7: Pupil voice	
Theory of action	Goal
Involving pupils in decisions that affect them can benefit wellbeing by helping them to feel part of the school and wider community and to have some control over their lives. Pupils gain confidence and can develop their independence.	Pupils have the opportunity to express their views and influence decisions relating to emotional wellbeing, individually and collectively.
Example of activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify existing opportunities where the pupil voice can be captured. For example, year 6 leavers' survey, pupil council, circle time</li> <li>Identify further opportunities for pupil engagement, which enables engagement with pupils at all levels and particular individuals / groups such as those with disabilities, special educational needs, looked after children etc</li> <li>Pupil engagement is actively encouraged in a formal and informal capacity</li> <li>Enhance the wellbeing pupil representation via the peer mediator, sport leaders and school council programmes</li> </ul>	
Measures of success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular 'you said, we did' updates</li> </ul>	



Theme 8: Targeted support and appropriate referral	
Theory of action	Goal
Some children are at greater risk of experiencing poorer mental health. Delays in identifying and meeting needs can have an impact on children's lives.	Risk factors are understood and acted on in a timely and appropriate way.
Example of activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build an understanding of risk factors</li> <li>• Train staff to ensure the timely and effective identification of pupils who would benefit from targeted support</li> <li>• Provide information and support for staff to sign post appropriately to specialist services</li> <li>• Identify relationships in place, or that can be created, with appropriate services and support</li> <li>• Identify opportunity to network with other schools to share best practice</li> </ul>	
Measures of success	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral rates to specialist services</li> </ul>	

## Implementation of the plan

The elements of this strategy will be implemented through the wellbeing operational action plan. The plan will be maintained by The Wellbeing Committee and regular updates will be reported to the SLT and board of governors. The SLT will be responsible for monitoring the strategic action plan.

## Review and monitoring

The strategy will be monitored by The Wellbeing Committee at least once a year and updates will be approved via the SLT and noted by the Board of Governors. The success of this strategy will be monitored by tracking the defined 'measures of success'.

## References:

- 1 Wise up – Prioritising wellbeing in schools. Young Minds and National Children's Bureau
- 2 Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing - A whole school and college approach. Public Health England. March 2015.
- 3 NCB – Partnership for Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools – Advice for Schools and Framework Document – Professor Katherine Weare (2015)



