

## Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

# Verification Report

<b>School name:</b>	Parkside House School
<b>School address and postcode:</b>	Station Road, Backworth. Tyne and Wear. NE27 0AB
<b>School telephone:</b>	01912161051
<b>School website:</b>	www.parksidehouseschool.co.uk
<b>Head teacher:</b>	Belinda Young
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<b>WAS coordinator:</b>	Josh Turnbull
<b>WAS coordinator's email:</b>	Josh.Turnbull@parksidehouseschool.co.uk
<b>Award verifier:</b>	Sue McElrue
<b>Award adviser (if applicable):</b>	Sue McElrue
<b>Date of verification:</b>	21.02.2025

### Commentary on the evidence provided:

Parkside House School provides a caring, supportive and inclusive environment, which has high expectations and values all members within the school community. From reading the website prior to visiting to walking through the main entrance, you are greeted with an overwhelming sense that wellbeing is at the heart of everything they do. The school and in particular the Wellbeing Lead have diligently worked through the award with support evident for the achieving this from the leadership at Outcomes First Group, as well as Belinda Young, the headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team of the school. Belinda passionately demonstrates her vision of a school that encourages everyone to be a valued member of the team 'YOU SAID... WE DID!' and this is reflected in the staff voice and evidenced so positively in the 'Great Place Work Survey 2024'. The work that Josh Turnbull and the wellbeing change team have undertaken cannot be underestimated and is a credit to the school. The tour of the school provided exemplary evidence of ongoing wellbeing improvement in displays, the learning environment and incidental dialogue with both staff and children in the school. Meetings took place with members of the school leadership team including the Head of School and the School's Lead Clinician as well as the Mental Health First Aid lead, Learning Support Assistants, four children and two parents/carers. All stakeholders agreed that the work undertaken for the WAS is evident in school, is a key area of school improvement and has demonstrated positive impact on all

stakeholders with the children at the core of this. The e-portfolio, website, files of evidence and the presentation all gave an outstanding range of evidence showing an understanding of the continuing commitment for wellbeing and the WAS award as a priority across the school; the presentation is exemplary as a summary document of what has been developed and achieved.

All objectives and KPIs were covered extensively, with further evidence supported by all stakeholders in partnership with the WAS lead.

### Strengths identified during verification:

#### Leadership

The Headteacher, Belinda Young, is passionate about the team she leads and this was evident in initial discussions about the award and the impact demonstrated on the wellbeing of staff. Being able to implement the more formal OFG offer for wellbeing of staff has enabled staff retention and sickness/absence to be reduced: one moment in time day off; four day working week; staff appraisal system. Informal support for staff such as the wellbeing staff box, kind gestures, wellbeing breakfast and being present for staff to talk too all supports wellbeing to an exemplary level. The distributed leadership model embedded across the school enables all staff to feel listened to and empowered to offer support and leadership to each other. The SLT presence at the start and the end of the day was evident and also cited by a parent as excellent wellbeing support for children to support transition between home and school. Supporting staff to be able to take a comfort break during the morning session was cited as a positive and acknowledged by the staff team that this would take huge effort for SLT to make this happen. Josh Turnbull, the WAS Lead has actively involved key stakeholders to support the work in school. Driving the priority has been done with depth and long-term impact through enabling the staff team to utilise their expertise and skills to support one another and in turn the children. His leadership and enthusiasm to do the award so effectively is to be commended and demonstrates his effective leadership skills so well. The change team have worked so well on this agenda and so many strengths highlighted: wellbeing displays, breakfasts, ambassadors, Wellbeing Wednesdays focussed on interests, informal CPD and workshops, check ins with staff, reading initiatives, 'Wow' vouchers, Sleuths, staff shout out box, safe spaces created, therapy dogs, policy updates, monthly newsletters, allocated tutor time, signposted displays to support staff and children, support with communication between home/school, enrichment curriculum, reviewed PSHE curriculum, assemblies.....to name but a few!

#### Staff

The staff interviewed were so positive about their involvement in the wellbeing agenda as well as the support they have been offered and what this offers to the children, staff and parent community. Valuable examples were shared by the Mental Health First Aider and her role within the school and the impact she has had on ensuring staff feel valued by offering informal catch ups, formal meetings and so many lovely appreciated initiatives. Her passion for the role is infectious and her previous skill set supports this role so well in school for all stakeholders. The Lead Clinician gave so many examples of effective dialogue that she has facilitated on as well as effective CPD; she spoke about the introduction and impact of Pupil Focus Meetings to support both staff and children. Both cited so positively by the team as effective impact on wellbeing: *'Just an outstanding session, thank you'*, *'Such a noticeable change in how the staff team interact with, talk and think about this child'*, *'Gives me an understanding of why relationships can be painful for the kids we work with and how I can start to make them less painful'*.

Staff cited the importance of Mental Health Awareness Week and the theme of *'Know yourself to grow yourself'*. They gave extensive examples of how this has been embedded and how it was communicated with all stakeholders.

Staff reported that protected time enabled all staff to attend Wellbeing Wednesdays if they wish.

One member of staff said she hadn't missed one session! The communication to find out what ideas

need to be developed each term by the lead is appreciated as well as the informal dialogue on how you are doing/feeling. Some staff comments which demonstrate the positive impact of the WAS agenda were: *'This boosts moral, feels like a team and you become closer'*. *'The SLT/Pastoral staff are around for support'*. *'Wellbeing but they really do care'*. *'Don't think I want to leave – feel appreciated and looked after here'*. The staff team overwhelmingly reported that they enjoyed working at Parkside House School, feel appreciated and are an active part of the school improvement and wellbeing agenda.

### **Pupils**

All pupils acknowledge the respect they receive from the staff and all reported that they feel happy and safe in this school. One of the pupils said they thought the staff do a lot behind the scenes to enable pupils to succeed and he gave the case study of how he is now maturing and seeing what the staff do beyond their normal job was apparent eg giving him 1:1 to support GCSE early and he said they are supporting him 100% to get into college to study his passion for football and sport. Another pupil stated that she was so proud last week at parents evening as no-one had said anything positive about her until she came to this school. Another pupil commented on the extensive enrichment curriculum which enables them to enjoy and be happy whilst learning and gave examples of going to soft play, seeing and feeding the horses as well as going to places like the beach, Beamish Museum and Kielder. The pupils all expressed their view that they are happy here and are looked after well. Their wellbeing is at the core of what the school does well. The school councillors and wellbeing ambassadors ensure the voice of the child is given the high priority it deserves. The children were great ambassadors for their school.

### **Parents**

On a first visit to the website it is obvious that parents/carers are viewed as an active partner in the wellbeing of their child and within the school; it is well developed with relevant quotes added. Recent parent/carer surveys state that *'I would a million percent recommend Parkside House as it is the most amazing school for my child's needs and support'*. This is supported by evaluations from parents evident at different points of the Wellbeing Award and was echoed in dialogue with parent/cares on the day too.

One parent/carer interviewed stated that since September they have a 'different child' at home! They reported that from transition meetings, staff listened to children and parents and this enabled their child to be calmer in herself. Parents evening was such a positive experience with staff who appeared to listen and know their daughter/granddaughter well. *'We felt really proud and heard so many positive things, this doesn't normally happen'*. *'They talk about drugs and challenging subjects which help with wellbeing'*. Enrichment visits have supported their child to feel part of the school as she wasn't allowed to be involved in previous school because of her behaviour. *'Overall the school has supported the wellbeing of all of us so well and life at home is so much better.'*

Another parent who recently moved their child to the school commented positively on all aspects of the phased transition which was so smooth and really supported with wellbeing and they reported that they are so happy that this will be somewhere for their son to be until 18 and therefore less transitions for him and them. *'Best thing we have done. He wants to go into school, shower and be independent; all markers of improved wellbeing. Being greeted with a smile from Mr Sampson and staff who look out for my son and follow through on expectations has helped me so much; the stress has gone and worry gone, huge anxiety gone for our family and better wellbeing for all of us'*.

### Impact:

The school and the WAS verifier agreed that the WAS has had the following impact:

**Enhanced Staff Morale:** Teachers and staff reported feeling more supported, valued and better equipped to manage their own well being as well as support others.

**Stronger Community Engagement:** Parents/Carers became more involved in wellbeing initiatives, strengthening home-school partnerships.

**Reduced Stigma around Mental Health:** Open conversations about mental health have become more common, fostering a culture of acceptance and support.

**Sustainable Wellbeing Practices:** The school has embedded wellbeing into its ethos, ensuring long term benefits for future cohorts.

Parkside House School believes that through the Wellbeing Award for School they have raised the profile of wellbeing and mental health across the school community. The WAS coordinator has been highly effective in his role and has been so well supported by the Headteacher and the SLT. All stakeholders' evaluations show a positive impact of this school improvement priority.

Communication is a strength- parents/carers are supported both within and out of the school and the staff feel the same too. There is a significant priority given to the wellbeing of staff. The 4-day working week, quality CPD, free lunches and the one moment in time systems are the foundation for the other wellbeing projects and initiatives undertaken to support staff; the sickness and absence levels demonstrate the positive impact all are having. The engagement of the wellbeing team to support the staff is acknowledged by all and really appreciated and the work they do cannot be under estimated on the positive impact on staff wellbeing. The priority to offer quality CPD ensures staff feel empowered to do their job to the best of their ability and the staff team work effectively with this.

### Areas for development:

The school and the WAS verifier agreed that the WAS could be developed further by the following:  
Sustaining/maintaining implementation of the positive outcomes.

Consider how to continue to support CPD of staff and ambassadors to continue to raise awareness across all stakeholders.

Continue to prioritise the reflective approach that the SLT implements for effective use of time, being active listeners and acting upon feedback.

Consider how to disseminate this exemplary piece of school improvement work to a wider workforce.

### Verifier recommendation:

I am delighted to award Parkside House School the Wellbeing Award for Schools for a period of three years.



Wellbeing Award  
for Schools

**Head teacher comments:**

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