

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Reassessment Report

School name:	Blackrod Primary School
School address and postcode:	Bolton BL6 5SY
School telephone:	01204333488
School website:	https://www.blackrodprimary.co.uk/
Head teacher:	Katherine Mead
Award coordinator:	Vicky Wilson
Award verifier:	Emma Symonds
Date of reassessment:	21/12/23

Commentary on the mini-portfolio of evidence:

The Wellbeing Award reassessment for Blackrod Primary School was marked by a comprehensive presentation of evidence by the Award coordinator, Vicky. An extensive portfolio was provided, encompassing action plans, a Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) on Wellbeing, relevant school policies, and records of meeting minutes. The evidence meticulously compiled and presented online as well as in-person traces the school's progressive journey over the past three years.

Blackrod Primary School has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing the emotional wellbeing and mental health of its community by pursuing the Wellbeing Award for schools. This pursuit began four years ago with an initiative to elevate the importance of mental health and wellbeing within the school's culture.

Commentary on the tour of the school:

At Blackrod Primary School, the mission is to foster a happy, safe, stimulating, and meaningful setting that nurtures everyone's ability to achieve their utmost potential and cultivate a lifelong love for learning and living.

At Blackrod Primary School, the team have developed an environment meticulously crafted to promote mental health and wellbeing for their community. The dedicated Forest School serves as a natural oasis for exploration and learning, complementing the nurturing experience with the recent go-ahead for the development of a sensory garden. These green spaces are designed to engage the senses and provide a serene backdrop for both education and relaxation.

The staff room has been thoughtfully designed to be an amazing retreat for the team, fostering a sense of relaxation.

For individual needs and private discussions, the school is equipped with withdrawal areas for pupils and welcoming spaces for parents, alongside well-appointed meeting rooms that cater to collaborative and professional needs.

Blackrod Primary School understand the importance of personalised support, which is why they invest heavily in resources that enable them to offer tailored assistance to each child and their family. Their commitment extends beyond traditional learning spaces, embracing the principles of Opal play to enhance the outdoor provision. The holistic approach ensures all students have the right equipment to fully engage with our extensive outdoor facilities, fostering inclusivity and wellbeing through play and learning in the fresh air. At Blackrod Primary School, every space is designed for opportunities for wellbeing to flourish.

Commentary on discussions with stakeholders:

Parents at Blackrod Primary School have expressed a strong belief in the importance of their children's wellbeing and happiness for effective learning and overall thriving. They recognise that a happy child is more engaged and successful in all areas of school life. Many parents appreciate the school's efforts in promoting mental health and wellbeing, highlighting the role of a designated member of staff and the implementation of wellbeing sessions. Additionally, parent workshops have been beneficial in raising awareness and providing information on these topics.

Several parents have noticed and appreciated the positive impact of teachers who balance professionalism with emotional awareness. They value teachers who take the time to understand and cater to the interests of their students, creating a feeling of being noticed and valued. The school's surveys, parent-teacher meetings, and open-door policy are also seen as effective in supporting this approach.

Specifically, some parents have mentioned the accessibility of teachers in addressing concerns and finding solutions, with Mrs. Wilson being highlighted for her compassionate and professional approach. Lastly, the presence of a designated wellbeing officer is seen as a positive step in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students.

Strengths identified during reassessment:

The leadership team at the school acknowledges that wellbeing is integral to the fabric of their community, forming the foundation upon which effective teaching and learning are built. They recognise that without a sense of safety, value, and nurture, it's challenging for children, parents, and staff to flourish and reach their full potential.

The school consistently implements strategies to foster a calm and receptive learning environment. These techniques include morning greetings and check-ins, movement and stretching exercises, yoga sessions, breathing practices, mindful moments, visualisation, and the use of positive affirmations, all designed to support the students' wellbeing.

Blackrod Primary School has instituted a comprehensive strategy to elevate the importance of mental health and wellbeing among its pupils, staff, and the wider parent community. The school's ethos and educational practices are underpinned by a commitment to ensuring that mental health and wellbeing remain at the heart of the school community.

Professional development for teachers, staff, and governors is regularly updated to include the latest information on mental health and wellbeing. The school has appointed a Senior Mental Health Lead to spearhead these efforts. Additionally, Blackrod Primary School has integrated resources such as Calma Class, Relax Kids, Kapow Primary and Go Noodle to support the mental health and wellbeing of its pupils.

The school has introduced innovative ways to educate children about mental health by linking it to animals like the meerkat, elephant, and owl, which help them understand the brain's and body's responses to stress. This inventive approach extends to parents and guardians, who are kept informed about mental health and wellbeing through various initiatives.

Wellbeing sessions for children, staff, and parents are a staple of the school's support system, complementing the collaborative work with partner schools for shared CPD and ideas. The promotion of staff wellbeing is a priority, ensuring a positive working environment for all team members.

Vicky Wilson, the school's Wellbeing and Pastoral Lead, as well as the Senior Mental Health Lead, is a well-known figure within the school, providing a recognisable point of contact for wellbeing concerns.

Blackrod Primary School fosters a culture that emphasises the collective responsibility for emotional health, wellbeing, and mental health. This positive approach is embraced by the entire school community, which is committed to understanding and promoting mental health and wellbeing through continuous education.

Staff members regularly receive training and updates to stay informed about mental health practices. The school also offers workshops for parents and establishes clubs for children that focus on wellbeing, highlighting its all-encompassing strategy. These efforts are complemented by regular communications via the school newsletter, a dedicated website section, and safeguarding newsletters, ensuring the whole community is kept up-to-date.

Impact:

The pastoral lead at the school applied for and received a grant from 'Awards for All', which enabled the successful implementation of several initiatives. They established 'The Sunflower Club', a nurture group designed to support the emotional development of students. The grant also funded blocks of yoga sessions for Key Stage 1 and 2 children, contributing to their physical and mental wellbeing.

Furthermore, the pastoral lead introduced yoga and relaxation sessions into staff meetings, promoting staff wellbeing. They pursued training with Relax Kids to further their skills in supporting child relaxation and emotional management. The lead also implemented Calm a Class teacher training, equipping educators with strategies to foster a calm and focused classroom environment. These initiatives culminated in the school embarking on and successfully achieving the 'Wellbeing Award', reflecting their comprehensive approach to fostering wellbeing throughout the school community.

Blackrod Primary School places a significant emphasis on the emotional health and wellbeing of its staff, implementing proactive measures to ensure a supportive work environment. Vicky Wilson conducts regular half-termly Wellbeing Check-ins with staff members, underpinning the school's dedication to staff welfare. This has had a positive impact on the staff feeling listened to and valued.

The school has established policies specifically addressing workplace stress and managing absences, demonstrating an understanding of the challenges faced by staff. In addition, staff benefit from insurance through The Education Broker, providing additional support during stressful periods. Blackrod Primary School also focuses on the everyday aspects of staff wellbeing. This includes allowing for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time to be taken from home, offering resources for Key Stage planning to ease workload, organising staff yoga sessions, and fostering a culture of recognition through staff shout-outs. Wellbeing afternoons, along with a staff room designed to enhance wellbeing and regular social events, contribute to a positive work atmosphere. These practices showcase the school's commitment to maintaining a nurturing and enjoyable workplace for all staff members.

Blackrod Primary School is committed to engaging the entire school community in its efforts to enhance emotional health and wellbeing. This holistic approach involves gathering feedback from pupils, parents, and staff through evaluations conducted throughout the year to inform and refine wellbeing practices.

The school has introduced initiatives like the Worry Monster and School Council representatives, dedicated to championing wellbeing among their peers. Additionally, the Pastoral Pop-in and designated quiet spaces provide pupils with a supportive environment to voice concerns and find solace.

Areas for development:

To continue to gather regular evaluations to monitor the views of students, staff and parents at the school.

Verifier recommendation:

It is the recommendation that Blackrod Primary School receive the Reassessment accreditation for The Wellbeing Award.

Head teacher comments:

We are incredibly please with the comments made about our school and are proud to be a NCB Wellbeing School. We will continue to strive to for excellent practice in supporting our children, families and the School team with strategies and opportunities which promote mental health and wellbeing.