

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Reassessment Report

School name:	Riverside Special School
School address and postcode:	Main Road, St. Paul's Cray, BR5 3HS
School telephone:	01689870519
School website:	www.riversideschool.org.uk
Head teacher:	Steve Solomons
Award coordinator:	Naomi Walters
Award verifier:	Julia Seymore
Date of reassessment:	24/03/25

Commentary on the mini-portfolio of evidence:

All KPI were met. Evidence was provided in a timely manner.

Documents provided were highly relevant and showed diligent adherence to the principles of the award.

The school and particularly the Award Coordinator are to be congratulated on their exemplary practice in gathering and presenting evidence.

Commentary on the tour of the school:

The school environment is well-presented and welcoming, with engaging displays and valuable information for parents and staff. The school has given careful thought to the environment and the school values are present throughout. It is a vibrant and purposeful place to be.

There are a wealth of opportunities and activities available to pupils at the school. The school ensures that there is parity across sites and that the environment suits the particular child. Parents told me that if children are not settling into classes or on a particular site, staff are quick to address the situation and work with parents to find a more suitable environment.

Staff room spaces across all four sites have been redecorated to create calm, relaxing spaces for staff.

Commentary on discussions with stakeholders:

Stakeholder interviews:

Governors are highly skilled and fully involved in the life of the school. There was clear evidence of partnership working and strong understanding of the principles of the Award. Both Governors reflected on the positive impact that their role had on their own well-being and mental health.

I spoke with three parents, all of whom use the word 'amazing' in reference to the school. All parents referred to how the school had improved their child's well-being and also encouraged them to develop as independent individuals.

Parents also reflected that staff were supportive and approachable. They gave examples of how staff had given them tools to use at home with their child and describe partnership working with staff.

Parents reflected the impact the school had had on their own mental health, knowing that their child was safe and well looked after, but also that staff had time for them and their worries beyond school.

'The school is fantastic. I know that my child is thriving rather than being babysat. I am very happy'.

'Once I looked around Riverside, I knew my child was going there and nowhere else. They have the dream facilities for my child'.

'I have a really nice relationship with staff. We have a good chat on the school run when they share things with me. It is always with a positive spin. They understand my child's behaviour is them trying to communicate'.

'I feel safe watching my child go into that school because of the relationship she has with the staff'.

All the staff that I met on the day were extremely happy at work and experience high levels of job satisfaction. This is also reflected in stakeholder evaluations.

Staff explained that they feel like they are part of a family and that everybody looks out for each other. They felt that well-being had become part of every-day discussions and felt well looked after by Senior Leaders. There was also a sense that staff were aware of their own responsibilities in looking after themselves and their colleagues.

Staff enjoy coming to work. There is a high level of ethical motivation and pride in achieving and maintaining high standards and the very best outcomes for children.

I met with three pupils who told me about their life at Riverside. All students felt that they had somebody to talk to. They enjoyed coming to school and felt that they had friends.

All students enjoyed the outdoor spaces and the activities on offer.

Older students were able to tell me about their future aspirations, BTECs and jobs after school and also the impact of the impressive Expressive Arts curriculum at the school.

Strengths identified during reassessment:

Thoughtful and considered leadership and strong role modelling evident.

Extremely engaged, highly skilled and motivated staff.

Staff are encouraged to be curious and to further their learning. The school values a research-based approach, using the drivers of happiness, contributing to society and belonging to a community to foster well-being and positive mental health

Talent and interest are encouraged, with good opportunities for staff development.

Pupil development is prioritised and significant consideration is given to the best way to develop individual pupils. The school has developed a number of effective systems to monitor this on an ongoing basis for each people. Students receive bespoke attention.

Relationships at the school are good and the retention of staff is high. There is extensive evidence of partnership working amongst stakeholders. There is a culture of transparency, with clear and honest communication valued and modelled. Although the school has expanded onto four sites since the first verification, it is clear that the Riverside ethos is shared throughout those sites and that there is parity across the whole school.

The school actively fosters positive relationships with external partners in order to secure the best outcomes for all stakeholders.

There is a large well-being offering for staff and internal and external HR support. The school is highly responsive to staff needs. The school has embarked on extensive renovation of staff rooms across all four sites. Staff are also able to take part in weekly activities, access the staff food bank, item swap, large staff library and receive the well-being newsletter.

Impact:

Since the last verification in 2020 the school has expanded from two locations into four with significant increase in pupil and staffing numbers. The school now has 40 classes of children and nearly 300 staff members

The new school business manager has taken on the management of the Wellbeing Award continuing exemplary practice.

Zones of regulation is in place across the school.

The school has developed work on consciousness of language ensuring that all communication is dignified, respectful and powerful.

All children have their own bespoke and comprehensive Happiness Passport.

The school has reviewed and enhanced the curriculum offer.

The school has developed close links with Bromley Healthcare. Pupil health reviews now happen within school so that pupils and families feel comfortable and teachers and TAs are able to attend and support.

The school also offers regular bowel and bladder clinics on site.

Communication with parents has been enhanced with the use of the contact book daily, weekly welfare calls to parents as required and regular contact in a way that suits the family.

The school now holds Pathways Coffee Mornings.

The school has fostered a strong working relationship with CAMHS, benefiting pupils and their families.

The school now has 14 Mental Health First Aiders for staff.

The school uses Pulse Surveys to track and respond to staff well-being concerns.

The school has a Wellbeing Policy in place.

The school has employed an internal HR manager.

The school has purchased further support from Educational Mutual. Casual staff are also able to access wellbeing support.

Areas for development:

The school welcome the opportunity to further develop the use of happiness passports for the children. Would the staff like a happiness passport too?

Explore trauma informed practice and consider how this would benefit the Riverside community.

Explore using an app for communication with parents. Ideally, this would include a translation option for EAL families.

Consider how to share good practice locally and nationally. Your work on happiness in school may be of particular interest. This could easily be shared via something as simple as a podcast.

Verifier recommendation:

I very much enjoyed my time with the 'Riversiders' today. Practice at the school is exemplary and I am very happy to verify this award. Congratulations to all on this significant achievement.

Head teacher comments:

We are delighted to have received the Wellbeing Award for the second time and appreciate the time that the assessor took to dig deep and collate all our evidence. The feedback is a testament to the focus that the school places on wellbeing for the whole school community and we are grateful for it. We are never complacent and will continue to prioritise wellbeing, fulfilment and belonging in all aspects of our work. We look forward to innovating further and supporting others embarking on a similar journey.

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