

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	Low Hill
School address and postcode:	Low Hill, Wolverhampton, WV10 9JN
School telephone:	01902 558124
School website:	https://www.lowhillnursery.co.uk/
Head teacher:	Natalie Showell
Head teacher's email:	nshowell@lowhillnursery.co.uk
WAS coordinator:	Natalie Showell
WAS coordinator's email:	nshowell@lowhillnursery.co.uk
Award verifier:	Liz Bates
Award adviser (if applicable):	Janice Graham
Date of verification:	20 th September 2019

Commentary on the evidence provided:

Most of the evidence had been provided at Interim and all outstanding evidence was available for me to see. It was clearly presented and labelled.

Stakeholders were present for all of the interviews although only one governor was available. There are some areas for development which I shall comment on later in this report.

The school managed the visit extremely well and I was made to feel most welcome.

The headteacher's presentation was descriptive and emotional identifying mental health issues, domestic abuse, substance abuse and trauma as being factors in the lives of many of the families.

The school was doing much towards wellbeing before starting the award but the award has helped to crystallise the importance of what they are doing.

The school has low sickness rates for staff and low staff turnover; many staff are from the community; raising the aspirations of parents has led to some becoming staff members.

Natalie Showell is presently Acting Head Teacher having taken over from Gill Owen.

Strengths identified during verification:

I spent an inspirational morning at Low Hill Nursery.

Wellbeing does not take second place to anything at this school. There is a clear and constant shared understanding that the children's wellbeing is the most critical foundation for learning. On top of this is the importance of parental wellbeing to provide safe, nurturing parenting in a highly deprived area of Wolverhampton. It is recognised that many of the children come from chaotic and sometimes unsafe homes and the school staff strive to counter that with a calm and caring environment.

Add to this the value placed on staff wellbeing and what is experienced is a truly supportive environment.

Both staff and parents repeatedly spoke, unprompted, about the school being a family.

During my tour, I saw plenty of evidence to support this.

There is a true commitment to improving the lives of the children and their families.

Minimalist rooms not to overwhelm the children

Open-ended play to enable creativity

Home communication cards with photographs and detailed information

Well-equipped outdoor spaces

Attachment and trauma issues managed in spaces with fewer children

Excellent home links

Home books – which have encouraged parents to join the library

Impact:

Parents

The difference this school has made to some parents' lives is outstanding.

The 'Charge Up' programme run by a 'Relax Kids' coach has had the most profound effect on parents – those who were almost 'frogmarched' (in the nicest way) into the sessions are now encouraging others to attend. Parents who had low self-esteem, low self-worth and little engagement are now ambassadors for the programme and working in the school. A hugely vulnerable parent had been helped to improve the management of her life. Another had been encouraged to take her Level 1 and Level 2 Childcare qualifications. All the parents spoke about the school being a family; that any member of staff will take the time to check how they are; the head teacher is always available. The guidance and support available is outstanding with staff attending Social Care meetings to support parents and plenty of home visits. Holiday club is not for parents to drop their children off, but to stay and take part in all of the activities.

They also said that school listens to them – a suggestion had been made for a foodbank, parents feeling no shame at school – and school is responding to that.

Staff

Staff saw the award as an opportunity.

They have had training in attachment, trauma and wellbeing.

Staff have group and 1to1 sessions with the head.

Staff share strategies they have learned to improve their wellbeing.

Staff described being more mindful, recognising triggers, knowing the theory & putting into practice.

They also talked about knowing families as individuals – and not treating them the same as well as increasing their self-confidence with children – learning about emotions.

Staff support for each other is good with high levels of emotional intelligence – it is ok not to be ok; it is ok to cry.

Staff can access support through Young Minds and counselling through HR.

Staff could identify progression in the future – more staff training, more parent / child sessions.

Pupils

The very young age of the children meant that feedback from them was very limited. However I did meet and see happy, calm children who knew who they would talk to if they felt sad at school. They clearly feel safe with the staff in the school and the time taken by staff is really noticeable – I heard no-one hurrying children along, everything was done calmly and at a pace to suit some very vulnerable children.

Governors

Unfortunately only one governor was available.

She felt that helping staff to see the ‘why’ behind the ‘what’ had been an important development.

Governors are kept well informed about the award with a report at every governor meeting.

The chair of governors is well known to both staff and parents with her attending some parents’ sessions.

The governors are very proactive with regard to managing funding cuts and the school is in the process of setting up a charity arm to qualify them to apply for additional funding.

The governors monitor the impact of wellbeing by looking at base line measures and comparing them to what the children achieve.

The governor saw her role as being key in maintaining connections outside of school and being a voice that is heard both in other schools and within the authority.

The impact throughout the school is authentic and real.

Areas for development:

A short and long term CPD programme available to staff

Get some wellbeing champions from the parent body – there are some amazing voices there

Governor training

The website is being worked on – room for a greater focus on wellbeing here

Make the award much more visible to parents – use this success to ‘shout’ about what you do to bring even more parents on board

Celebrate the success – let the authority and other schools know what you do and what you have achieved

There are plans to improve the staffroom environment

Verifier recommendation:

I have no hesitation in recommending Low Hill Nursery to be awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

Head teacher comments:

I am extremely proud that Low Hill Nursery School has been awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

Wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do at Low Hill Nursery School. The process we have gone through has allowed us to consider what we were already doing well and take action to further improve our investment in wellbeing for all.

Low Hill Nursery school is a family and we believe that everyone has something to offer regardless of their starting point.

I look forward to sharing and celebrating what we have achieved so far.

May we use your comment for website/marketing purposes? **Yes**