

# Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

## Verification Report

School name:	St Margaret's Church of England Primary School
School address and postcode:	Bolton Lane, Ipswich IP4 2BT
School telephone:	01473 251613
School website:	<a href="https://www.stmargaretsipswich.org">https://www.stmargaretsipswich.org</a>
Head teacher:	Miss Joanna Kidby
Head teacher's email:	<a href="mailto:head@stmargaretsipswich.org">head@stmargaretsipswich.org</a>
WAS coordinator:	Debbie Richards
WAS coordinator's email:	<a href="mailto:hslo@stmargaretsipswich.org">hslo@stmargaretsipswich.org</a>
Award verifier:	Jackie Lamb
Award adviser (if applicable):	N/A
Date of verification:	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2020

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic this verification was carried out 'virtually'.

### Commentary on the evidence provided:

St Margaret's Church of England School obviously sees emotional wellbeing and mental health (EWMH) as central to the school and its ethos. The current head teacher took over the headship of the school in 2017 and immediately realised that EWMH was crucial to planning the way forward for the school. A new strategy was planned and the journey to improve the school and EWMH of all the stakeholders began.

The evidence provided for the verification was abundant, clear and accessible and reflected the excellent work being done at this school in terms of EWMH. It was clear that staff, pupils, governors and families all value the school's focus on the EWMH of the whole community. The head teacher commented that despite 40 different languages being spoken in the school and a third of the pupils speaking English as a second language, the school is higher than the national average for academic attainment, this is due, at least in part, to the pupils and families feeling safe, listened to, welcome and supported within the school.

SLT, staff, governors and the pupils, who provided evidence for the verification, demonstrated an impressive understanding of the EWMH needs of all their peers, colleagues and families. There is evidence throughout the school and in the portfolio that EWMH is about the *whole* person as well as the school and wider community, enabling empowerment and supporting resilience.

### Strengths identified during verification:

The school's vision and value statement, describes fully what the school believes in and it is evident that this is put into action every day. EWMH permeates everything they do at St Margaret's school. The approach to EWMH is proactive and embedded in all areas of the school and curriculum.

The school demonstrated a detailed understanding of the risk factors relating to EWMH and have a strategic, planned response in place. The school have clear key roles and responsibilities outlined, which are linked to the school policies. EWMH is not an 'add on' at this school, it is part of school life and learning. There have been and continue to be a huge range of awareness raising initiatives and activities, reducing stigma and encouraging open conversations about EWMH.

Staff, parents, governors and pupils, all praised the school and the ways in which it supports the positive EWMH of everyone and has systems in place when individuals need help. The whole school community is regularly consulted on their views and are encouraged to share them and also seek help when required.

Parents talked of how all the staff are available, in a literal way but also psychologically, making their children feel emotionally safe within school. Parents felt supported by the school and also well informed. There is excellent signposting for parents on the school's website. Parents could not praise the school highly enough; one parent talked of how she will be forever grateful for the non-judgemental (emotional and practical) support given by the school to the whole family, during a time of crisis.

The pupils are well informed about EWMH and actively involved with all areas of school life. From the pupil questionnaires it is evident that they feel empowered and feel their voice is heard.

Staff are very positive about the school and supportive of each other. They appreciate the wide range of support they receive with regard to their own EWMH by SLT and their colleagues. It appeared evident that the head teacher and inclusion manager work closely and all staff have been included in the WAS journey. SLT are very reflective, they are aware of and use current staff skills, as well as a comprehensive CPD programme to ensure the school has the EWMH competencies required.

There is evidence of joint working with a wide range of external agencies and other schools as well as involvement in wider initiatives in Ipswich. Strategically, within the school, the work and initiatives already in place are continually being scrutinized and analyzed, ensuring continued progression in all areas of EWMH.

#### Areas for development:

#### The School have identified the following in terms of future development:

Training for midday assistants to improve the children's experiences at lunchtime.

**The following publication may be useful. The focus is to reduce stress and increase positive experiences at playtime/lunchtime:**

<https://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/sites/default/files/Playleaders%20-%20improving%20primary%20school%20playtimes%20through%20peer%20support.pdf>

Develop the role of wellbeing champions, particularly the pupils'.

**As part of this development, it might be appropriate to develop the pupil wellbeing champions' mediation skills, to enable them to help support their peers.**

Develop the role of the school to become a beacon school with regard to EWMH, with particular regard to helping other church schools across Ipswich.

#### Verifier recommendation:

I am delighted to recommend that this school be awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools for a period of three years.

#### Head teacher comments:

The school has found this award process extremely useful and assisted in reflecting upon good practice and progress, as well as how we can continue to offer pupils and staff the best MHWB provision and resources.

We look forward to building on our strengths and sharing our practice with others.

This is a very worthwhile experience for the whole school community to 'take stock' of mental health of all stakeholders and I would encourage all schools to consider it.

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