

Wellbeing Quality Mark Validation Visit Report
Potten End CE school
Theme: Diversity and inclusion – ‘Wellbeing for all’

Karin Hutchinson, WQM link adviser, visited Potten End CE Primary School on 4th November 2022. As a result of the school’s focused work on Wellbeing across 2021-2022, we are pleased to congratulate everyone in the school on achieving the HFL Wellbeing Quality Mark with a specialisation in ‘**Diversity and Inclusion**’, to strive to deliver wellbeing for all. This focus was selected for their second year in the WQM, as an opportunity to receive structured support to look more deeply into how inclusion could be improved for all groups in the school. The following account supplements the school’s review paperwork and provides a summary of some of the work that was evident during the validation visit.

Diversity and Inclusion

The school has increasing but low levels of ethnic diversity, including pupils who are Afghanistan refugees, African Caribbean, Hong Kong arrivals, Romanian, and Travellers. The headteacher has networked with other schools to access recommendations on developing EAL teaching strategies across the staff, and this is ongoing. 24% of pupils are eligible for PPG funding. Approximately 22% of pupils have SEND and the SENCO is pursuing several EHCPs. Neurodiversity is a key area the school wishes to represent and be inclusive of in the curriculum.

During Covid disruptions the school’s RE visits to places of worship had to be cancelled. The school supplemented the curriculum with Jewish and Muslim speakers and activities including a celebration of Eid. Delivery of diverse cultural experiences such as henna hand painting and foods for diverse celebrations, flowed on from this with the support of parents/carers.

Normalising or ‘usualising’ diversity is important to help pupils understand their peers and to prepare them for their future in an increasingly diverse Britain. Diversifying the school’s resources to ensure wide representation, particularly of the protected characteristics, is an important ongoing area of development. The school’s new library has an inclusive range of books that are currently very prominently displayed; incorporating different families, ethnicities, human rights, and much more. Across the school, the books shared in classrooms at the end of the day are also exploring diverse characters and writers. The RSHE ‘Jigsaw’ resources have diversity integrated through-out, but through the last year the school has begun developing a more flexible and inclusive approach to the wider curriculum. This includes introducing greater representation of diversity, for example, in representing the diversity of British soldiers in World War 2, in displaying a prominent image of a Black African Roman, from the legion who first arrived in Britain, and in diversifying the inputs to collective worship. The PSHE lead also talked about visitors to the school who bring this extended diversity to life, for example a pianist with a severe disability and an Indian dance group that worked with each year group.

Quotes about diversity, uniqueness and being your self are displayed across the school. “We may all be different kinds of fish, but we all swim.” “We are each unique and beautiful but together we are a masterpiece.” Interviewed children understood the word ‘diversity’. They talked with confidence about how people are not all the same and that is okay, and it is not a reason to be unkind to someone. Alongside this staff have had focused training on modelling appropriate language with pupils.

The senior leadership team see this as an important and ongoing developmental journey and has clear plans to continue the development of wider inclusion and equity going forward, with the full support of the governing body.

Wider wellbeing

The school's motto is "Rooted in faith, we nurture, grow and flourish," and across the school it is visibly evident that the school provides a strong, supportive community where faith is at the heart. Staff wellbeing has been supported through restructured communication systems and an investment in relationships. Governors also check-in on the headteacher's wellbeing regularly. Interviewed pupils feel that they belong in their school and that it is a happy place where learning is enjoyable. They can explain that there is a need for different provision for different children, because that is what they need. The school encourages children to say clearly if they are "not okay".

Relationships with parents/carers have a high priority and the school's ethos and vision is well understood and supported by them. During lockdown, many vulnerable families were not allowed in school, but staff maintained close contact with them throughout. This has been built on through improved communication processes between school and parents/carers. Regular parent/carer workshops are now delivered in themed weeks. The headteacher spoke of an intention to "wrap our arms around the whole school community."

The deep focus on wellbeing through covid disruptions is being maintained and developed. Wellbeing is supported by the adoption of the Herts Steps therapeutic approach to behaviour. The headteacher and governors feel that it has been transformative, and it was viewed as a strength in the school's Ofsted report. The school has invested in three SEN trained support staff who run interventions for pupils that, for example have ASD or who are post-lockdown school refusers. They provide 'Time to Talk' sessions, circle therapy and they support children with attachment and trauma issues. Across the school, the use of Jigsaw has brought greater understanding among staff of the need for simple techniques that support the wellbeing and learning of all children, such as having some calm reflection time after lunch.

Growth Mindset has been introduced and is continuing to be developed so that it becomes fully embedded. Some pupils talk with confidence about having resilience in their learning, for example explaining that failure is part of the learning process, that the learning pit can be difficult to get out of and that they can choose their challenge level in the task options they are given in class. Parents/carers have been supported on how to support growth mindset in homework processes, while allowing children to fail in homework tasks, if need be, so the school will know where the gaps in learning are. Most interviewed pupils were enthusiastic about their learning, saying that their teachers make the lessons interesting and enjoyable. Two pupils referred to liking having some autonomy in the tasks they choose to do.

The joint focus on wellbeing and growth mindset has required the school to adjust its values, away from an emphasis on driving achievement at all costs, and instead promoting children to be the best version of themselves they can be and providing individualised approaches that are in the best interest of each child. In tune with this, pupils in the school are supportive of each other

and adopt nurturing roles and behaviours. There is investment in developing pupils' self-efficacy, by encouraging good citizenship and everyone is encouraged to adopt roles of responsibility, for example as an eco councillor, a school councillor, a spiritual leader, a school captain or adopting responsibilities within their class. Every half term there is a house event run by pupil house leaders, that provides vertical mixing to develop relationships further across year groups. There are also plans to develop a playground buddy system.

May I express my sincere thanks to all involved in giving their time to make my visit so memorable and enjoyable. Potten End school clearly has wellbeing for all at its heart and the ongoing work on inclusion and diversity is pushing this to a deeper level. Congratulations on your successful accreditation. The HFL Wellbeing Team wish you every success for your future plans.

Karin Hutchinson
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