



## School Mental Health Award Final Assessment Validation Report

**School:** PACE / Launchpad – Alternative Provision

**School Lead:** Rob Vaughan

**Coach:** Lucinda Powell

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Competency	Statements as Assessed by the School
Leadership and Strategy	Excelling
Organisational structure and culture - staff	Excelling
Organisational structure and culture - pupils	Excelling
Support for staff	Excelling
Professional development and learning	Excelling
Support for pupils	Excelling
Working with parents and carers	Excelling
Working with external services	Excelling



PACE/Launchpad – Alternative Provision has presented a detailed profile of evidence that demonstrates they are excelling across all eight competencies of the School Mental Health Award. The school has used the framework and content of the Award to very good effect to develop their mental health and wellbeing strategies, structures, and practices. The lead felt that the framework enabled the provision to identify gaps in their provision and to start conversations around next steps, but also enable the staff to celebrate the amazing work that they do every day.

The provision across the units supports a wide range of incredibly vulnerable young people and to this end the staff know that they need to get it right for every child. It is therefore really important that pupils access support without judgement, that they are fully supported by everyone who works with them and that all plans are uniquely tailored to the individual and their needs. Every child has an individual Education Plan for every subject, staff are knowledgeable about what each child they teach needs and what their triggers might be. They are quick to notice small changes and to follow up with the pupil and with CPOMS so that nothing slips between the gaps. During our conversation the lead gave some stark examples of how these processes can literally save lives.

When pupils enter the unit there is a team around the child meeting so that everyone is on the same page. However, it is also recognised that parents are a vital piece of this and there is an urgent need to build strong positive relationships with parents. The provision works carefully with parents to ensure that they are also supported and not 'told' what to do or not to do. The links with outside agencies such as ADDvanced Solutions (ADHD support service) enable bespoke support to be accessed for parents. In addition, parent support networks have been set up so parents can talk to each other. The website has an excellent signposting page for parents as well.

It is evident that the provision works closely with a wide range of agencies and has excellent links (that are reciprocal) across services such as CAMHS. In addition, some of the units work closely with the police and drugs advice organisation to work on issues such as county lines because the student population is so vulnerable. The work the provision does is shared with the local authority and shared widely across the North West as an example of best practice. The students are also encouraged to get involved with the wider community and have done fundraising events for local charities - most recently a virtual bike ride from Land's End to John O'Groats, though they ended up going all the way to Madrid!

Some of the situations that the staff have to deal with are challenging (both emotionally and physically) and the lead and senior leadership are very mindful of the toll this can take. Staff are very open about their own wellbeing and regular conversations are had about this both formally and informally. The provision has a wide range of support in place such as supervision and counselling that is easily accessible. It is also important that staff have the opportunity to have fun and they have arranged Nerf Battles after school and boxercise, staff are also able to join pupils in the gym for after school clubs.

The staff have a wide variety of training including Mental Health First Aid and Asist Suicide Training. However, it is clear that all staff are dedicated to supporting each pupil to achieve, push them a little out of their comfort zone and prepare them for post-16 life. Though there is academic learning, staff will also help pupils deal with day-to-day challenges they may face like getting on a bus, managing Christmas Shopping etc. with the understanding that it is important to develop the whole child. The statements that former pupils wrote as part of the evidence clearly demonstrate the impact of these small but vital actions made in their development. At the end of term staff are encouraged to write up a 'case study' of a success,



and what they have done to support a pupil, as such every term ends with acknowledging the difference they have made to the young people they work with.

The provision works with a wide range of local agencies, schools, and organisations to share their best practice. They have participated in a number of conferences, webinars and have spoken to schools across the country about how best to support vulnerable young people. Both the lead and head teacher are part of several forums through which they share best practice both locally and nationally. They are also working with Edge Hill University on their PGCE and with students who want to focus on child mental health. Staff across the provision share their work informally on the Mental Health Champions national online forum offering help and advice. It is clear that the external agencies that the provision works with sign post other schools to PACE and Launchpad for advice and support as well.

It is difficult to summarise here the work that the provision does in supporting the young people they work with. It is clear that the mental health of the young people in the provision is at the heart of everything that happens, every hour of every day. The impact that the adults within the provision have on the young people and the difference it makes cannot be understated.

I have no hesitation in concurring with the self-assessment made by the school and recommend that PACE/Launchpad – Alternative Provision is awarded the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools School Mental Health Award at Gold level.

Lucinda Powell  
Coach/Verifier  
School Mental Health Award  
19th October 2021



## Competency profiles provided by the school.

Leadership and Strategy	
The school has a named senior lead for mental health of pupils and staff	Y
The school has a named Governor for mental health of pupils and staff	Y
Governors understand, embrace, and lead the ethos and business case for a comprehensive mental health and wellbeing approach within the school	4
Governors hold school leaders to account for the mental health of staff and pupils	5
Senior Leaders develop and implement the strategies and structures needed to improve mental health in the school	4
Staff have mental health as a core part of their job description and role requirements	5
Leaders' performance management includes a focus relating to mental health	5
The school has a range of robust staff-focussed policies that support mental health which were developed in consultation with all staff groups and leaders and approved by Governors	5
The school has pupil-focussed policies that support good mental health that were developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents and approved by governors.	5
Senior leaders use regular reports and updates including data about the mental health of staff and pupils to implement future actions, channel resources and commissioning external agencies	5

Organisational Structure & Culture - Staff	
The school is a positive working environment where staff feel safe and supported to be and do their best and to share concerns which affect their mental health	5
Leaders regularly consult with a range of employees from across the school to gain informal and formal feedback on stress-related issues and how to improve and support mental health and wellbeing	5
Communication protocols are well established and adhered to e.g., restrictions on unnecessary emailing in evenings, overnight and weekends	5
Workload expectations are made explicit and are well managed, such as marking & assessment, hours in school, working at home	5
Staff self-care is encouraged	5
Senior leaders model the expectations they have of all staff to promote good mental health	5
All staff in school are responsible for the health and wellbeing of themselves and promoting that of others	5
The norms of professional dialogue are developed, and positive language is modelled and used by all staff	5
A culture of tolerance, trust and openness is developed	5
Stigma regarding mental health and support for individuals and groups is challenged	5
Job flexibility is supported where possible within a secure business case	5



<b>Organisational Structure &amp; Culture -Pupils</b>	
The school values, acknowledges and utilises knowledge and expertise of staff, parents and professionals working with the school with regards to mental health and wellbeing	5
Strategies that promote and develop mental health and wellbeing are embedded in the curriculum and is designed to meet the needs of the pupils specific to their social and emotional needs and developmental age	5
The school has clear strategies which are understood by pupils, school staff and parents to support pupils whose mental health is a cause for concern	5
The school has clear strategies on how to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils with special educational needs, disabilities, disadvantaged and vulnerable children	5
The school ensures that pupils expressing concerns are listened to	5
The school has clear pathways and provisions available to discuss mental health concerns, managing student difficulties and create strategies with follow ups	5
Talk about mental health is normalised, any stigma is challenged by creating a culture of empathy and openness through an ongoing forum of discussion and exploration	5
The school promotes of positive and healthy relationships amongst pupils, staff and with parents	5
Pupils are engaged through encouraging pupil voice, authentic involvement in learning, decision making and peer-led approaches.	5

<b>Support for Staff</b>	
A comprehensive staff health and wellbeing offering supports staff mental health	5
The school consistently works towards reducing the stressors that affect staff mental health	5
School has clear pathways to staff support which are understood by all colleagues	5
Access to coaching and counselling is available and encouraged where deemed helpful	5
Staff are encouraged and supported to establish and participate in activities that foster good mental health and wellbeing, based on sound evidence of their impact	5
Successes are regularly acknowledged and celebrated	5



<b>Professional Development &amp; Learning</b>	
The school has a proportion of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid for adults appropriate to the size of the staff cohort	5
The school lead for mental health and other key staff are trained in evidence-based, and preferably professionally accredited mental health and wellbeing training, appropriate to the age group of the pupils in their school	5
The school's named Governor for mental health has training which develops understanding of mental health and wellbeing in schools for pupils and staff and the role of the Governing Body in supporting good mental health	5
All Governors access professional development opportunities to develop their understanding skills in mental health linked to the role of the Governing Body	5
Staff CPD relating to pupil and staff mental health is aligned to clearly defined, expected outcomes which set out the mental health requirements for their role	5
All staff access professional development opportunities to develop their skills in pupil mental health and wellbeing	5
Staff are able to develop their understanding and practice in adult mental health, wellbeing, and self-care through effective CPD opportunities and act as role models for pupils	5
Staff have access to information and have the opportunities to develop their practice in relation to new challenges posed by information technology and social media such as cyber bullying	5
All teaching and associate staff have been trained and have a broad understanding of mental health issues and promoting wellbeing in pupils appropriate to the age of the children in the school	5
NQTs and all new staff complete an induction programme which ensures they have the understanding and skills expected of all staff in the school with regards to mental health	5
All staff mental health CPD is underpinned by evidence and expertise, aligned to DfE CPD standards	5
Staff feel supported to take forward any new learning from training into their practice	5



Support for Pupils	
Mental health and wellbeing are embedded in the curriculum with supporting activities including assemblies, focus days, lessons and other events where mental health, wellbeing, social and emotional skills, attitudes, and values are explicitly taught by well trained and enthusiastic teachers using positive, experiential, and interactive methods and resources. This learning is integrated into the mainstream processes of school life	5
Pupil wellbeing is developed through implicit methods of teaching and learning such as: emotional literacy, character strengths, values, virtues, resilience, and self-awareness	5
Relationships within the school are positive providing a nurturing, safe and supportive environment which creates a sense of belonging for pupils	5
Pupils understand and can express a range of emotions and are able to share their emotions and ask for help to support their emotional awareness	5
Pupils feel able to disclose incidence of bullying and any form of discriminatory behaviours, they feel their worries and concerns are heard, respected, and taken seriously by staff	5
Staff respond wisely to 'challenging' behaviour, both responding actively with clear consequences and also understanding its deeper roots, taking opportunities to model and teach positive alternatives	5
Pupils know how to ask for support, and this is followed up by staff	5
There are clear internal referral procedures, understood by all staff, to ensure timely and appropriate support is sourced and accessed for pupils in need	5
Evidence based mental health support services are provided and accessed which draw on a sound understanding of child and adolescent development, such as: drop ins, mentoring, coaching, counselling, pastoral support, mindfulness, self-awareness, empathy, and resilience building interventions and wellbeing skills workshops group, peer support, mindfulness, self-awareness, empathy, and resilience building interventions and wellbeing skills workshops	5
Where pupils experience mental health difficulties, clear plans and pathways to specialist support exist, using a coherent teamwork approach, including in the involvement of outside agencies such as CAMHS, school nurse or GP. Help is rooted within the school environment	5
Displays and posters provide various information on evidence based mental health support and how to improve wellbeing such as self-help booklets, library books and other media resources	5
Effective early intervention support is provided and evaluated	5
Physical activity and relaxation activities are on offer that improve wellbeing	5
If peer mentoring is used, those who serve as peer mentors have training and a support structure which they can use if needed	4
Pupils are involved in the design of mental health and wellbeing initiatives and are encouraged to give feedback and provide new ideas	5
Achievements and successes of students are recognised and celebrated	5





<b>Working with Parents and Carers</b>	
The school ensures a non-judgemental, warm, and welcoming environment exists for parents/carers	5
Parents have access to school mental health and wellbeing policies	5
Effective relationships with parents/carers are fostered and maintained	5
The school is committed to continuously improving parental communication	5
Parents have access to staff or mental health professional/s if they have concerns about their child's mental health	5
Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school	5
Parents are involved in interventions that supports their children's mental health and wellbeing	5
Any stigma shown by parents about mental health is handled sensitively yet firmly	5
The school provides learning, guidance, and support for parents to help them:	5
The school has effective strategies in working with all parents/carers	5
Systems are in place that ensures parents/carers are regularly updated on their child's progress as well as any concerns that may exist	5
Parents share their views on how to develop the wellbeing of the school	5
Support, signposting, and referrals are made for parents who require support with their own mental health or support in their relationships with their children	5

<b>Working with External Stakeholders</b>	
Staff understand the clear referral procedures to access timely external services appropriate to the needs of pupils with escalating or long-term mental health difficulties	5
The school has developed strong links with CAMHS and other agencies ensuring regular two-way communication, support, and guidance	5
School leaders are shaping local children's mental health policy and services	5
The school is up to date with new legislation and DfE guidance	5
The school is aware of local agencies and organisations which offer mental health support services	5
Specialist organisations work with the school to develop the mental health and wellbeing of staff, children, and parents	5
The school is aware of and builds relationships with local community projects, voluntary organisations, and networks	5
Due diligence is carried out prior to engaging any external agency / professional providing mental health services to pupils. This involves understanding the evidence base for their proposed work, their qualifications, recent training/CPD, obtaining references, knowledge of their professional body, their supervision structure (including the name and qualifications of their supervisor), who you should complain to regarding any concerns. In addition, the school will carry out their usual safeguarding checks	5
Comprehensive Service Level Agreements are in place which clarify roles and responsibilities and reduce risks. Amongst other things, this will make clear the services being provided, the tools and methods used, issues around confidentiality, how outcome data will be recorded and evaluated and how feedback will take place	5
The school ensures robust quality assurance for all external mental health and wellbeing provision taking place, which is reported and evaluated at senior and governor level	5

