# Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

# Verification Report

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| **School name:** | Frederick Gent School |
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| **School address and postcode:** | Mansfield Road, South Normanton, Derbyshire, DE55 2ER |
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| **School telephone:** |  |
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| **School website:** | <http://www.fgs.derbyshire.sch.uk/> |
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| **Head teacher:** | Mr Chris Woollard |
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| **WAS coordinator:** | Rachael Skelton |
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| **Award verifier:** | John Rees |
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| **Award adviser (if applicable):** | N/A |
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| **Date of verification:** | January 28th 2020 |

**Commentary on the evidence provided:**

There is a range of positive evidence that Frederick Gent School has fully met the Key Performance Indicators for the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

A range of very positive information has been uploaded to Award Place, which has been further endorsed by additional evidence, observations in school and the verbal testimony of students, staff, Governors, parents and the wider community. Representatives from across the School provided evidence with energy, enthusiasm and insight which demonstrates that the Wellbeing Award has not only been introduced, but has become adapted and embedded, and is becoming an integral component of the school ethos.

The Final Verification visit provided evidence of strong and rapidly improving policy, practice and curriculum and extra-curricular provision that supports the wellbeing of staff and students and is now being further extended. Wellbeing is now an integral aspect of school improvement, there is a strong recognition at all levels through the school, of how student attainment, curriculum enhancement and staff improvement are mutually supportive and inter-related.

Throughout the school, from senior leaders (including governors), through middle leaders, teaching and support staff and members of the student body, there is a shared agenda around the importance of wellbeing. There is a strong consensus that things have improved ‘even more’ over the last couple of years as a result of engaging with the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

Parents/carers are enormously supportive of the school, and the care and opportunities that are provided to enable young people to achieve academically, but also flourish socially, culturally and emotionally.

Governors, especially the Chair, make a strong contribution to the school’s commitment to a range of initiatives, both within and beyond the curriculum, to promote and further enhance the emotional health and wellbeing of students and staff alike.

Overall, it is clear that promoting the wellbeing of pupils and all members of staff, and the wider school community is an important focus at Frederick Gent School. It is embedded in the ethos, curriculum, daily practices and routines. There is also a resolute sense of moral purpose and commitment to continue to improve things still further.

**Strengths identified during verification:**

Promoting wellbeing in all its forms, is an integral component of the school ethos and curriculum. A number of different initiatives have become prevalent in the culture and ethos of the school that it is hard to identify specific ‘stand out’ factors.

There is a strong sense of vision and moral purpose from the Senior Leadership Team. They provide strategic vision and effective planning to promote the emotional health and wellbeing of students, but also staff and members of the schools’ wider community. This has been adopted and enhanced still further by members of staff and students throughout the school.

Links have been made throughout the curriculum, a devolved leadership of, and responsibility for, well-being is prevalent throughout the school. This has developed from staff expressing concerns about students, to students expressing concerns about staff well-being.

Student voice has become increasingly strong and student ambassadors for anti-stigma and anti-bullying have become an increasingly effective component to promote well-being. The students also recognise and appreciate the range of different staff that they feel confident to approach which is now generating a virtuous spiral of emotional support for all members of the school community.

The external CAMHS advisor was effusive in her praise for the school in the range of support that they offer students. She also acknowledged that colleagues from Frederick Gent school will contact her describing the steps that have been taken to support an individual and then asking for advice or additional guidance. She contrasted this with other schools who either simply do not contact her or expect an emergency service.

Students from across the school were aware of the developing ‘Wall of Wonder’ in a number of Departments. Provision for students of all levels of attainment is strong and parents have been especially grateful for the excellent on-going support of young people in distress.

Staff well-being has also been enhanced through training on Mental Health and a proactive approach that *“Let’s us all fit in as individuals, just as we let the kids fit in as individuals”* and has responded to staff requests to ease workload by changing ‘Parent’s Evenings’ and a range of support that include end of term treats, the ‘coffee man’ and access to personal counselling and the support of professional supervision.

**Impact:**

Frederick Gent School provides a happy, caring and supportive environment where students’ attainment and personal development are inextricably linked. The school is clearly committed to enabling students to achieve their potential in terms of academic attainment, but also provides strong opportunities to promote wellbeing.

The stable and nurturing and supportive environment also provides challenge and opportunities for all, to enable them to achieve academically but also to develop essential life skills.

The sense of challenge and opportunity, supported by compassionate commitment to enhance the wellbeing of all members of the school community means staff, students and their families, work together to have a positive impact the learning and life chances of young people, and the adults who work with, and for them.

The students spoke with passion, empathy and maturity about how they feel supported. As noted above, the students noted that *‘things have got better over the last couple of years.’* Students and staff are encouraged to recognise the impact that their emotional and physical well-being can have on their colleagues and classmates.

Undertaking the Wellbeing Award for Schools has also had positive impacts on staff, who have appreciated the efforts that senior leaders have made to enable them to plan and facilitate student learning and wellbeing, by reducing staff workload.

**Areas for development:**

Although there is a range of positive initiatives that have become part of school practice, School Leaders, supported by staff and students seek to do even more to enable all members of the school community to flourish.

Finding more ways to reduce staff workload remains a priority, especially when reviewing the schools’ policy on marking and feedback.

Consideration should be given to the timing and planning of the forthcoming statutory expectations for relationships education, sex education and health education. The current off timetable days may not provide sufficient coverage; there are challenges around the teaching of ‘Basic First Aid’ and ensuring support for students who are ‘feeling low’.

School leaders now seek to consolidate the work that the school is doing to support the emotional wellbeing of all members of the school community. They also recognise that although much good work has already been done, there are opportunities to further extend the provision of ‘Early Help’ initiatives.

There is no doubt that the School has the vision, capacity and strong sense of moral purpose to address these areas for development.

**Verifier recommendation:**

I strongly recommend that Frederick Gent School receive the Well-being in Schools Award. The school provides a number of aspects of good practice that provides opportunities for academic learning but also supports emotional wellbeing.

There is an energy, passion and enthusiasm for wellbeing that pervades the school which is as rare as it is special. The physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing of all are prioritised, which helps all members of the school community enhance their learning and life chances.

**Head teacher comments:**

From the moment I arrived in the school last academic year a key element of my vision has been the importance of ‘team’. I have been very clear that, for the school to flourish, the staff, pupils, parents and wider community must be unified in their support of each other and the wider school aims.

One obvious element of this approach is that we are ‘in it together’ and that, as a result, no-one is alone and everyone is supported. This is the underlying ethos which I feel drives our success when it comes to wellbeing.

All of that said, fine words and few actions achieve very little in my view. Based on this there have also been a number of actions undertaken to specifically deliver on improving wellbeing of staff and pupils.

I personally, and those around me, remain committed to a continuous review of practice to ensure that the good work that has been done is continued and improved.

I thank you for your visit and for the report that you have written, which I feel accurately captures our very happy school community.

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