

Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)

Verification Report

School name:	Isebrook SEN and Congnition and Learning College (Special)
School address and postcode:	Isebrook SEN College Eastleigh Road Kettering NN15 6PT
School telephone:	015365000030
School website:	https://isebrooksen.co.uk
Head teacher:	Mr Kevin Latham (Executive Headteacher – academy)
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WAS coordinator:	Tracy Hall
WAS coordinator's email:	tracy.hall@isebrook.co.uk (Head of School)
Award verifier:	Jayne Wright
Award adviser (if applicable):	Grace Kew
Date of verification:	18 th July 2019

Commentary on the evidence provided:

Isebrook College have used the Award effectively to reflect on their existing practice, to think about what works and why it's effective and to ensure that it is embedded in whole school culture, ensuring consistency across all parts of the school. The verifier would like to thank the staff, parents and pupils that made time to meet and share their thoughts with her. It is always a privilege to hear the views of all stakeholders.

Isebrook College is a special school for students between the ages of 11 and 19 with a statement or Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) of special educational needs. Their students have a wide range of needs including autism, Down syndrome, speech, language and communication needs and other conditions associated with learning difficulties. They have a very strong shared vision that was

developed after discussions with staff, governors, students and parents. They believe this vision encapsulates all that they endeavour to do for their students in order for them to thrive and to take their place in the world when they leave school.

Parents in the stakeholder evaluations and in the meeting say that the school focusses on developing life skills and independence in their sons/daughters. The school's shared vision and all that flows from that reflects that approach. Some parents would have liked a longer opportunity to share their views. The school aims to facilitate this in due course.

There is really strong evidence that they have evaluated risk factors, areas of strength and those in need of further development. Both this and their analysis of stakeholder feedback has informed their strategy. It has been a pleasure to meet stakeholders and explore the detailed portfolio of evidence provided ultimately confirming verification. Congratulations to the whole school community and a huge thanks to the coordinator, Tracey, the change team members, the parents, staff, governors and of course, to the wonderful pupils that I had the pleasure of meeting on the day.

Strengths identified during verification:

The School has a clear, detailed vision statement with emotional wellbeing and mental health at its core.

The words spoken by key stakeholders reveal a school that is trying hard to put wellbeing at the heart of what it does:

“Students really like coming here”

“Staff are committed.”

“Communication is really good.”

“The school goes out of its way to support me. They are really open and share all concerns they have with families.”

“I’ve been blown away by the innovations.”

From students:

“It’s been really good.”

“Best school I’ve been to.”

“Different to other schools. Different lessons.”

“The new build is way better!”

“Teachers are really, really good and they help with your problems and with friendships!”

The School works hard to build trust between pupils and staff. Students appreciate the staff's support and say that ‘you can talk to anyone – even if you don't know them’. They report that staff understand ‘what causes our behaviour’. They also report liking the range of sports and trips that the school provides.

The school is on a journey to make parental engagement a priority. They have reviewed their curriculum and redesigned it, identifying risk factors and feel that they are better able to now recognise early signs of disengagement and to intervene to provide tailored support to improve pupil wellbeing.

Staff are looked after with support from a counsellor (Dan). There is evidence of supportive staff morale with improved attendance and decreased sick leave and grievances, but the school is committed to continued support in this area, recognising that happy staff work smarter and with more energy to support the students' many and varied needs. The counselling available in times of need are all signs of a school caring for its staff. Many staff shared their personal stories and struggles praising the school's absolute unwavering support in their time of greatest need.

The school has made better multi-agency links and works closely with the Local Authority and their support structures including good and well-established links with CAMHS.

Governors commented on the real change in school culture that puts wellbeing at the core of the school's work and thinking.

Staff work hard to build self-esteem and resilience. They are very aware of the need to develop confidence for when students leave the provision. Parents confirm that the school works hard to prepare children for future life.

The college has strong strategic links with a range of outside agencies, services and forums. In addition to the usual mainstream services, they are represented on groups linked to Local Authority services.

There are wellbeing notice boards and mindfulness messages, helplines and other key info to support wellbeing around the school and messages promoting positivity and empathy in classrooms. The environment around the school felt calm during the tour and relationships between students and staff appeared trusting and respectful.

There is a clear system for sharing information about pupils. Any member of staff reports concerns which are then referred to relevant colleagues. Actions are recorded and monitored for effectiveness. Information is also shared at meetings.

Governors appreciate the importance of a whole school approach to EWMH, are ambitious for the students ("they have so much to offer") and appreciate the challenges they face. They work tirelessly to promote wellbeing and are a robust critical friend to the school.

Areas for development:

Continue to develop support for staff – perhaps 'formalising' this more by including staff support in job descriptions. Wherever possible do keep consulting with staff, listening and acting where appropriate...it is much valued!

Consider opportunities to develop more support for parents – for example around supporting their own and their children's wellbeing – as well as signposting to wider issues and perhaps providing workshops on issues such as online safety, how to talk about sex and relationships to your child, mental health support, mindfulness, drug/alcohol county lines information if you haven't done so already.

I realise that there are plans to develop the website to include such support. Keep up the good work!

Verifier recommendation:

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