

Benton Park School  
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 West Yorkshire,  
 LS19 6LX

Health and Wellbeing Services  
 Early Help  
 Children and Families Dept  
 Leeds City Council  
 Technorth  
 Leeds

### **Benton Park School Healthy Schools Status re-assessment visit**

Dear Mrs Howard and Mr Skilton,

Thank you for inviting me to re-assess Healthy Schools Status at your school on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025. I had a valuable morning in school talking to parents, governors, student and staff and was thoroughly impressed with all that I saw and heard. Please convey my thanks to everyone who made the visit so enjoyable.

I can confirm that the re-assessment was successful and am therefore pleased to inform you that Benton Park School continues to maintain Healthy Schools Status.

I am also pleased to confirm that your school's investment in Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) means that you have also achieved MindMate Friendly Status. As a result of the Good and Outstanding submissions for both PSHE and Physical Activity, as part of your school health check, you have also achieved PSHE and Active Schools Friendly.

The outcome was based on information and evidence from a variety of sources, including the school's self-validation using the School Health Check, pre-assessment paperwork, a tour of the school, secondary sources and meeting, and a timetable of interviews for the 2 health themes: PSHE and SEMH. Interviews took place with a range of stakeholders including senior leadership team, governors/parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and students.

#### **General comments**

- Relationships across the school are clearly a significant strength. Both staff and students consistently described feeling well-supported, confident, and comfortable in seeking help when needed. This reflects a deeply embedded, whole-school approach to wellbeing, underpinned by a culture that is safe, inclusive, and nurturing.
- The physical environment of the school is exceptional. It effectively reinforces the school's wellbeing ethos through clear, consistent messaging and responsive signposting throughout the site. Students described the school as "safe and supportive," and this was evident in the way they interacted with one another and with staff.
- The students I met were outstanding ambassadors for the school. They were cheerful, articulate, respectful, and demonstrated a mature understanding of health, wellbeing, and the importance of inclusion.
- Student voice is clearly a strength. Every student I spoke with felt their opinions were valued and acted upon. The School Council and MindMate Ambassadors provide structured platforms for students to help shape both the curriculum and wider school life. There is a genuine sense that student input has real impact.
- Students are encouraged to embody the Benton Park values of Inspiration, Resilience, Endeavour, Compassion, and Collaboration. These values are prominently displayed around

the school and regularly reinforced, particularly during morning meetings, which provide daily structure, connection, and reflection.

- There is a strong culture of inclusion. Both staff and students feel safe to be themselves, and there is a sense of mutual respect and. The school's commitment to equity and diversity is recognised through its RED Award status, and inclusivity is further supported by having a SEND Champion in every department, ensuring all students are represented and supported.
- The school offers an impressive range of enrichment opportunities, both at lunchtime and after school. Students are actively consulted on the activities provided, and they speak very positively about the opportunities available to them.
- The breadth of extra-curricular provision, including clubs, events, and competitions, reflects the school's commitment to holistic education. There is a clear passion across the staff to provide enriching experiences that extend learning beyond the classroom.

### **Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE)**

- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Personal Development (PD) provision at Benton Park is a model of best practice. With strong leadership, an inclusive and impactful curriculum, and effective partnerships with external agencies, the school ensures that students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to thrive in school and beyond.
- PSHE is a cornerstone of the school's personal development and wellbeing strategy. It is highly visible within the school and fully supported by the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The programme plays a critical role in ensuring students' emotional, social, and academic development.
- PSHE is exceptionally well led by Allana and Richard, whose dedication and hard work have resulted in the development of an outstanding and comprehensive curriculum. The curriculum is broad, inclusive, and tailored to meet the needs of all year groups, with a clear focus on promoting wellbeing, safeguarding, and lifelong learning.
- Under the strong and strategic leadership of Allana and Richard, staff feel confident and well-supported in delivering high-quality PSHE lessons. The PSHE leads maintain a forward-thinking and dynamic approach to PSHE and personal development. There is a clear culture of reflection, monitoring, and innovation to ensure they meet students' needs in an ever-changing world. The PSHE/PD teaching team is well-regarded by students, who consistently comment on their teachers' enthusiasm, approachability, and commitment to the subject.
- PSHE teaching is robust, consistent, and prioritised across the school. The subject has grown significantly in profile, with all stakeholders—staff, students, and parents—recognising its importance and positive impact. Students can share real-life examples of how PSHE has equipped them with practical knowledge and skills, made possible through lessons that are well-structured and contextually relevant.
- Teachers have access to high-quality resources, including detailed individual booklets and lesson plans that include pre- and post-assessments to measure progress and inform future teaching. PSHE delivery is consistent across all classes, ensuring continuity and coherence.
- Morning meetings and assemblies also reinforce key themes, with structured weekly content including a Wellbeing Wednesday session, a Monday "check-in" and a Friday "check-out," providing regular space for reflection and discussion.
- The PSHE curriculum is both proactive and reactive, making effective use of data from the My Health, My School (MHMS) survey, student voice, local data, and contextual safeguarding insights. Curriculum content is adapted in response to emerging trends and concerns. For example, Pol-Ed crime data is used to inform planning and ensure relevance to students' lived experiences.
- The school is committed to promoting a healthy and respectful school culture through theme weeks such as Anti-Bullying Week and Culture Day. A wide range of external agencies support the school's work in PSHE, enriching the curriculum with expertise and real-world experience.
- Notable examples include:

The 90-Minute Project: Targeted intervention for selected students in collaboration with the Safer Schools Officer

Leeds United Foundation: Work with Year 10 students on resilience-building.

Talk Consent: Delivering workshops on sexual harassment and healthy relationships. The school has been recognised with a Gold Award from UK Feminista, one of only 2 schools in the country to achieve gold standard.

Anne Frank Trust: Anti-discrimination workshops across the school. Year 9 students take an active role in shaping school culture and three students have become national Anne Frank Ambassadors.

Enterprise Event: End-of-year challenge where student groups fundraise for the school's chosen charity, Zarach, promoting entrepreneurship and social responsibility.

### **Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)**

- The school is committed to promoting and supporting the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) of all students through a whole-school approach and has made considerable progress in embedding a strong and supportive SEMH culture. A well-embedded culture of care, early intervention, and positive relationships ensures that students feel safe, valued, and supported.
- Through the leadership of trained staff, student ambassadors, and inclusive practices, the school ensures that students are well-supported both emotionally and socially. Plans to expand emotional regulation strategies further strengthen this provision, reflecting the school's commitment to continuous improvement and student wellbeing.
- A team of trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) is available within the school, and students are aware of who these staff members are. In addition to the MHFAs, students report feeling well-supported by both the Safeguarding Team, Pastoral Team and the Personal Development (PD) staff. This strong pastoral network plays a vital role in identifying needs early and providing timely support.
- Staff, parents and students reported noticeable improvements in behaviour, underpinned by clear expectations and consistent routines. Positive behaviour is actively recognised through a well-established rewards system, with achievements celebrated. This contributes to a respectful and motivated school culture.
- A zero-tolerance approach to bullying is in place, supported by proactive interventions and student-led initiatives. A highlight of the school's SEMH work is the outstanding contribution of the School MindMate Ambassadors (SMMA). These students have had a significant impact on promoting positive mental health and peer support across the school.
- The SMMA team run a weekly drop-in session every Wednesday, which is well-attended and valued by students. They play a crucial role in supporting new students, particularly during transition, helping Year 6 pupils feel part of the community even before they officially join the school. These activities include; Visiting Year 6 students in their primary schools and involving them in school-based projects such as diversity-themed artwork, first day support in September, playing an active role in welcoming the new Year 7 cohort on their first day and from next academic year, SMMA will introduce emotional regulation strategies for Year 7 students, following recent training.
- There is a strong and intentional link between Personal Development, Safeguarding, and Mental Health and Wellbeing policies and practices. Key staff collaborate closely to ensure a cohesive and effective approach, allowing for consistency and responsiveness in student support.
- There is a strong culture of inclusion. Both staff and students feel safe to be themselves, and there is a sense of mutual respect which contributes to a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to the school. The school's commitment to equity and diversity is recognised through its RED Award status, and inclusivity is further supported by having a SEND Champion in every department, ensuring all students are represented and supported

## Quotes from the visit

### Parents

"Staff always have my son's back and have always supported us. The Hub has been a great place for him but also alternatives have been put in place, when need. He has been allowed to be with teachers he knows and trusts, he has a reduced curriculum and key worker. When he struggled to attend the school introduced a flexible, reduced timetable, anything to keep him attending. We would have had a much more difficult time had we not had the support from the school."

"I can't fault the school. You want to know that your child is safe and cared for, and they are here. It's really improved."

"Where my child has had some medical issues, staff have been open and talked about their own personal experiences which has been amazing as she feels that she can speak to people."

"At the odd times I have needed things for my daughter staff have gone out of their way to support. If she is struggling to get into school, they have done some gentle grounding in the morning to get her ready for the day."

"My daughter took an active role in the MindMate buddy system to support students. The programme is amazing. All the students have loved it. They work so hard to have inclusivity."

"There is so much that the kids can get involved in and it gives a real community feel."

"There is extra support at key times, there have been lots of assemblies focused on exam stress and how to look after yourself in the exam period."

"Parents have seen a huge improvement in the quality of work and support for students in the last few years. The number of behaviour panels have decreased as the attitude of the students has improved."

"I'm very proud that my daughter goes to Benton as it's such a good school for support."

"I love the work that the school are doing around wellbeing and mental health and the work to support year 11 over exams has been so important for my daughter. I couldn't fault the support she has been given."

"This year my daughter has had health concerns and school have been so supportive. They did everything they could to ensure that my daughter could go on a trip. School have gone out of their way to ensure she could be included in everything that she wanted to be included in."

### Staff

"The SMMA have blown me away this year. They have led on so much. They've helped with transition; the Year 6 pupils will really benefit."

"We have worked really hard to make the whole personal development and PSHE curriculum is consistent. Every child needs to have the same experience, it has to be consistent across the school. Anyone can come in and teach PSHE because we have lessons, planning and resources and training on hand."

"There is training offered to support teach more sensitive subjects if needed or if you don't feel comfortable."

"Students are educated about the right and acceptable vocabulary. Things which are not acceptable are addressed immediately, and with the whole class, so that everyone knows what is acceptable and not. Allana (Howard) is very supportive with this. It's really important."

"We do a lot to support staff wellbeing, both as a school and in our departments. In the PE department for example, there are no extracurricular clubs on a Friday to both reduce workload but also allow us to engage in staff sports clubs."

"Whole class feedback to reduce marking has really helped with workload and staff wellbeing, as has being given time to mark assessments. Staff also benefit from a free lunch if we do an extra curricular activity at lunchtime."

"There is a real sense of community. Students from each department link in together. Photography students take photos at sports day, trips, prom, Art students do face painting at sports events, Sports Leaders and School MindMate Ambassadors support during transition. School is a team effort."

### Students

"Everyone's really respectful here. It's like one big family, the community is so welcoming."

"I like PD. I like that we do the important things like bullying, mental health and finance. They are the things you need to know to get through your life. They are really useful lessons which you can carry with you."

"The support you get from staff is amazing. They have never once failed me. I wouldn't be getting through what I'm going through now if I didn't have support. They treat us like adults as much as they possible can. A lot of kids go from being shy to being confident purely because of the staff."

“If you do well, staff are really proud. Staff tell us they are proud of us, proud of each little step you take.”

“I’ve never had a moment where staff have made me upset. It feels like they are more focused on you as a person rather than exams.”

“They validate every emotion that you feel. They make it known that it’s normal and it’s ok to feel how you feel. I wouldn’t think twice about telling pastoral staff in I needed to speak to them. I’ve always felt that I can say anything, and I won’t be judged or be felt that I am overreacting.”

“If you have a problem, it gets dealt with in the moment. They let you know what will happen if you report something. Everyone knows what will go on.”

“Wellbeing Wednesday is really helpful. In the morning meetings we are constantly reminded about what support is in school and about the school values and what is expected. Check in and check out helps you settle in for the day and your check in teacher is always at the morning meeting.”

“The staff give you respect, and you automatically give it back. Staff model behaviour, they don’t shout, they stay calm and professional.”

“The school councillors do make a difference, it’s a very active school council. We do listen to students, and we do change things, like lunch timings and uniform rules.”

“Ms Howard has trained us as MindMate Ambassadors. We’ve learnt a lot about mental health and about things like breathing techniques to help our own mental health so we can help others. The Ambassadors do a Wednesday drop in for all students and we have met all the new students coming in Year 7.”

Thank you once again to all concerned who took part in the re-assessment process and for making me feel so welcome on the day. I wish you every future success and look forward to supporting you as you continue to embed whole school health processes and move onto the Health Champion Model.

Yours sincerely,  
Gill Mullens

Healthy Schools Advisor