



December 2023

A Burton-on-Trent school has won a pioneering award for its outstanding mental health and wellbeing provision.

Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Voluntary Academy has been awarded Gold standard by the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools.

The school provides a wide range of activities to boost the wellbeing of pupils and staff. These include rolling out a universal program of mental health support which means that every pupil has a 1:1 conversation about wellbeing each term.

Form time takes place at the start and end of the day to allow for pastoral support to be given during both sessions.

The school also leads wellbeing discussions and training both in the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust, and nationally, and has developed a culture in which leaders ask themselves 'are staff, pupils and parents getting the best deal' – including around their wellbeing.

Laura Wilson, Blessed Robert Sutton's Assistant Headteacher and Senior Mental Health Leader, said: "I am extremely proud of the holistic approach we've embraced towards the well-being and mental health of our students. Our carefully crafted practices not only nurture their academic growth but also ensure a supportive and flourishing environment, embodying our commitment to their overall well-being.

"The impact of working towards this award has allow us the opportunity to review our current practice and enhance it further, ensuring that we support all pupils with their mental health and wellbeing".

Blessed Robert Sutton is sharing its excellent practice both regionally and nationally. A national session at We Are Beta 2023 shared the development of wellbeing outside of the classroom so that learning can be developed inside. A further highlight has been sharing how to embed culture of with leaders from the Football Association.

Laura O’Leary, Headteacher, said: ‘We are delighted to be recognised for the work we have been doing to support our pupils. We are committed to ensuring pupils receive an excellent education and part of that is making certain that students are supported with knowledge of how they can look after their mental health.’

The award was established in 2017 by the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools – part of Leeds Beckett University – and social enterprise Minds Ahead.

The Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools aims to strengthen pupils’ mental health by supporting schools to make a positive change at all levels of the UK’s education system, improving students’ outcomes and life chances.

Rachel C. Boyle, Dean of Leeds Beckett’s Carnegie School of Education, said: “The achievement of the Mental Health award is a demonstration of the school’s significant commitment to improving children’s and staff’s mental health and wellbeing. It is also a commitment to developing practices in school that seek to improve awareness and expertise in creating safe and secure learning environments in which all children can truly fulfil their potential. This award is one that all staff can be truly proud of”.

Nationally, more than 1,300 schools have signed up to take part in the mental health award.

Dean Johnstone, founder and CEO of Minds Ahead said: “This award shines a light on the excellent work schools are doing to promote mental health for their community of children and adults.

“It is thrilling and humbling to learn about Blessed Robert Sutton and the many other schools engaged in the quality award process. I’d like to offer my congratulations on this deserved recognition.”

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