

East Sussex School Health Service

East Sussex Healthy Schools Programme

External Validation Visit Report



Ditchling (ST. Margaret's) Church of England Primary School & Nursery

Friday 14th June 2024



**East Sussex
School Health Service**

The East Sussex Healthy Schools Programme supports schools across East Sussex to develop whole school approaches to health and wellbeing that are sustainable, evidence-based and address each of the four key themes:

- Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE)
- Healthy Eating
- Physical Activity
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

In order to achieve this, schools have access to The School Health Check, an online audit tool which asks schools to self-review a range of statements under the ten whole school approach strands relating to each theme:

- Leadership
- Policy
- Curriculum
- Teaching & Learning
- Assessment
- Pupil Voice
- Support Services
- Professional Development
- Partnerships
- School Ethos

Schools then grade each theme using the four levels:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires Improvement
- Inadequate

In doing so schools can identify their strengths and areas for improvement. An action plan is created in order to move practice towards Good and Outstanding practice. Where sufficient themes and strands are judged to be good or outstanding, schools can gain **East Sussex Healthy Schools Status** by engaging with this process of self-review.

The purpose of the External Validation Visit is for an external assessment of the evidence that the school has made an accurate judgement using the School Health Check. The process is designed to be supportive and takes the form of a positive conversation about what the school does well and where practice could be even further developed. Assuming the validation visit concurs with the school's own judgement, schools can be awarded the **East Sussex Healthy Schools Excellence Award**.

Ditchling (St. Margaret's) Church of England Primary School & Nursery was visited on **Friday 14th June 2024** by three members of the East Sussex School Health Service:

- *Chris Sculthorpe, Health Improvement Specialist*
- *Megan Bradley, Health Improvement Practitioner*
- *Caroline Hollamby, Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN), Team Coordinator*

The visit lasted between **08:15 and 15:00** and included:

- *Conversations with parents/carers*
- *Conversations with the Headteacher*
- *Conversations with Pupils*
- *Conversations with School Health Check theme leaders*
- *Scrutiny of Schemes of Work, Action Plans, children's work*
- *Lesson observations*
- *Conversations with governors*
- *Observations of breaktimes and lunchtimes*
- *Sampling of the food and drink provided by the school*

A summary of the findings of the External Validation Visit is set out below but the outcome of the visit is that Ditchling Primary School is awarded the East Sussex Healthy Schools Award, which lasts for three years and will expire June 2027.



*East Sussex Healthy Schools External Validation Visit to **Ditchling (St. Margaret's) Church of England Primary School & Nursery** on **Friday 14th June 2024***

Key Findings

PSHE:	Healthy Eating:
• PSHE is delivered at Ditchling as a key area of the curriculum and is called their Life Skills curriculum. The school uses the Jigsaw PSHE programme as the basis of this curriculum but revises these resources to ensure that they meet the needs of the particular children attending the school. • Beyond the taught curriculum, PSHE is evident in all aspects of the school day. All members of the school community are treated equally, with respect and kindness. Children talked with real warmth about the ways in which school staff help them meet their individual needs. • There is an emphasis on prevention and the curriculum is progressive and spiral in nature and is carefully mapped against British Values and safeguarding issues. • PSHE is well led at the school. The subject is led by a teacher who is new to this role, but who is really well supported by senior leaders. The subject clearly has a very high status across the school, teachers receive regular CPD, are supported in the development of the curriculum and allowed freedom to adapt lessons where appropriate. • The curriculum has been created by carefully considering the needs of the pupils in the school using data and pupil voice, including good use of the My Health My School Survey. • Books show clear progression both within the year and across years. • Life Skills lessons include the practical teaching of strategies for grounding and calming children, such as breathing exercises and mindfulness activities. • The curriculum fully supports pupils for life, with a particularly impressive	• The external validation visit occurred during the school's Healthy Eating week, which meant that there were lots of additional opportunities for children to enjoy healthy eating activities and try new foods. • A qualified nutritionist is used at the school to support strong messages about the importance of a healthy balanced diet and during the visit, children were offered an exciting range of new fruit and vegetables to try at breaktime, as well as a great healthy eating assembly. • Aspects of healthy eating are taught through the Design Technology and Life Skills curriculum, but good links are made in other areas of teaching and learning. • Children showed a very well developed understanding of why it is important to eat a healthy balanced diet. • School meals are prepared and served by staff who know the children well and who are skilled and sensitive at raising any issues relating to what children are or are not eating. School Leaders understand the importance of the relationship between the school and their caterers. • Parents/carers are well supported in preparing nutritious packed lunches.

element of widening aspirations and careers education. The school makes really good use of external providers, for example around their anti-bullying work and in healthy eating.	
Physical Activity:	Social, Emotional & Mental Health:
- Physical Activity (PA) at Ditchling is very important and a core aspect to children's school day, with enjoyment and fulfilment of the pupils at the heart of it. This is excellently demonstrated through the incorporation of PA in other areas of the curriculum and not only Physical Education (PE). Such as, Geography with active travel and challenges around the local village to support the current teaching topic. Furthermore, active sessions are planned into the school day in between classes for children to be active with walking, running and dancing games and activities. These activities will go on to instil the enjoyment and importance of PA as a key component of every child's daily life. - The whole school approach with the use of PA to support mental health at Ditchling is outstanding. As part of the school's development plan they have worked extremely hard to develop the importance and understanding for their children that PA plays. This is excellently demonstrated with the implementation of block yoga sessions where children learn relaxation and calming techniques to support their everyday life. Which was reflected in pupil voice exceptionally where children repeated these techniques 'when they feel fizzy'. - The school provide excellent additional opportunities to support and increase all children's PA and therefore ensuring a wide variety is provided including; Forrest school, netball, football, Zumba, yoga and Paralympic day. This is reinforced by the schools My Health, My School survey results (2022/23) and (2023/24) respectively showing that 92% and 78.4% of children have	- Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is a particular strength at Ditchling. The school has worked exceptionally hard to develop and to achieve a calm, supportive and safe environment for all children. The range of interventions that are provided are outstanding. For example, wellbeing before school club to provide a soft launch and positive transition into the start of school, the squishy room, and the introduction of the zones of regulation which was observed in practice in classrooms. - It is clear to see that all staff go above and beyond for pupil's wellbeing at Ditchling, which was raised by pupils who stated that; teachers provided nurture groups to improve pupils' friendships and relationships, that selecting two trusted staff made them feel safe at school and that they feel staff can support their wellbeing if needed. Furthermore, an exceptional example of going the extra mile was highlighted by a teacher providing support outside of structured school hours to ensure a child felt safe, comfortable and able to be successful at school. Additionally, it is clear to see that children's individual SEMH needs are met with all school staff working together and with the family to identify who may need targeted support, such as the wellbeing lunchtime club. - SEMH is well developed through the curriculum with a main delivery through Life Skills, with children offered a programme of learning appropriate to their age and level of development. There is a strong focus for children to develop, learn and understand the appropriate language and behaviours to articulate their feelings and

attended a club and 72% and 70.6% of children have represented the school at a sporting event. • The school makes excellent use of external support to further enrich their pupil's PE learning, with the use of high-level sports coaches and facilities provided by their supporting trust. This is also very well used to support teachers CPD to further develop their knowledge and delivery of PE. • The importance of physical activity is not only present in school but also reflected excellently in the school's nursery supported by the HALO programme. This is led by a very passionate and very hard-working team who have developed excellent tools to support children to not only be active during their time at nursery but also at home. The introduction of the PE bag for children to take home and use and include the whole family is fantastic. • Lastly, it was highlighted that through review and the School Health Check that an area for further development in PE was to review the method of assessment and children's progression. Therefore, the school are currently transitioning to a new PE scheme 'Get set for PE'. This is another example of the school's dedication to always be striving for further improvements in order to support the learning and development of their young people.	emotions. This was observed during a group activity for children to provide a range of feelings and emotions they may experience at different times, which was exceptionally supported and validated by staff. • The school also works hard to provide whole family SEMH support by offering coffee mornings, a family support worker and providing enrichment opportunities to family who may be in need. Observation on the school gate and discussions with parents showed that parents felt support the school was approachable, willing to help and supportive to the wellbeing needs to the whole family. This was also reinforced by staff who stated their wellbeing is prioritised and stated Ditchling is a 'supportive happy place to work'.
Further observations:	
All the Healthy Schools work observed during the External Validation Visit was of a very high standard and the following threads seemed to run throughout: • There is a huge emphasis on Wellbeing throughout everything that happens at Ditchling Primary School – every member of the school community is valued and respected, children feel that no effort is spared to make sure they feel happy and confident in their learning. • The leadership of the school is strong, enthusiastic and dedicated. Based on sound Christian values, the school has a wonderful ethos and is full of good relationships. The support of the Diocese is used productively and strengthens what the school is doing around developing active, healthy and happy young people, ready to move on to be successful in their futures.	

It is recommended that:

- The school revisits their use of the Outdoor Play and Learning Programme to ensure that they are making best use of the principles of play for children at playtimes and lunchtime.