

BREAKING NEWS

HOSPITAL School Strikes Gold!

National recognition celebrates River Tees Hospital School's outstanding commitment to pupil wellbeing and high-quality education in specialist setting.

A HOSPITAL school has struck gold for fostering excellent mental health and wellbeing among pupils who face a range of complex medical challenges in their lives.



River Tees Hospital School has achieved the gold standard in the School Mental Health Awards, run by the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University.

Accreditation for Mental Health Centre of Excellence assesses performance in eight key areas including leadership and strategy, staff and pupil organisational structure and culture, support for staff and pupils, professional development and learning and working with parents, carers and external services. The school was said to be 'excelling' in all areas.

Part of the River Tees Multi-Academy Trust, Hospital School has a 40-strong staff and currently supports around 100 pupils from across the region whose complex physical and mental health conditions prevent them from learning in a traditional education setting.

It operates onsite provision in Sandringham House, Park End, Middlesbrough, and also delivers education at James Cook University Hospital and at Acklam Road Hospital, a specialist inpatient adolescent mental health service.

Head Teacher Adam Burns was thrilled with the accolade. He said: "This prestigious recognition is a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering mental health and wellbeing among our pupils and it's a proud moment for our community.

"This is more than just an award, it's a recognition of the care, dedication and deep compassion shown by our incredible team every single day. In our unique environment, where pupils are often facing some of the most difficult times in their lives, mental health and wellbeing aren't just important, they are essential."



He said mental health was foundational to academic success and personal development. "Our approach is holistic, ensuring that each pupil receives tailored support that meets their unique emotional and educational needs," he added. "This Gold Status accreditation reinforces our belief that when pupils feel safe, valued, and understood, they are more likely to thrive."

The school implements comprehensive mental health strategies weaving them into the curriculum and daily practices. This includes regular mental health assessments and personalised development plans. Staff undergo continuous professional



development in mental health awareness and support strategies to ensure they are equipped to recognise and address mental health.

The school has also fostered strong relationships with mental health professionals, parents, and external organisations, both locally and nationally, which enhance its ability to provide a wrap-around care approach, ensuring support in and out of school.

Pupil engagement is high empowering them to share their experiences and contribute to the development of mental health initiatives. Commitment to wellbeing extends beyond the classroom.

Adam said: "While we celebrate this significant achievement, we recognise that our journey does not end here. We are committed to continuously improving our mental health provision."

Amy Pillar, SEMH Practitioner said "I am immensely proud

to have been a part of showcasing the caring and inclusive environment Hospital School strives for every day. To see this give rise to Hospital School achieving Gold Status in the Mental Health Award is incredible. It is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our entire team and the exceptional support we provide to both students and staff. The unique 1:1 work delivered by our SIT Team is a cornerstone of our approach, allowing us to tailor support to each individual and make a direct, positive impact on students' lives. Being part of a school community that puts mental health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do is truly inspiring."

One parent said: "Not only have they given my daughter the best possible chance in life, but they have also supported our whole family during such a difficult time."

Another parent added: "Hospital School made it possible for my son to achieve his GCSEs in a safe and friendly environment. For this we as a family will be forever grateful."

One student said: "I honestly felt like I was hopeless, that I would have been constantly in a traumatic cycle I put myself through. Hospital School changed all that for me. I have learnt patience, control and that anyone is capable of change with the right support."

School Mental Health Award lead coach/verifier Sue Webb said she had no hesitation in awarding the school gold status.

She added: "The school prides itself on striving to ensure that every student thrives both academically and emotionally. Their approach seeks to create an inclusive, collaborative and responsive environment that prioritises both educational outcomes and mental health and wellbeing for students."

