



National SMSC Quality Mark Verification Report

Name of School: Dorothy Barley Junior Academy

Headteacher: Ms. C Leicester

SMSC Lead: Ms. P. Rose

Verification visit: 8th December 2020

Dear Ms. Leicester,

I am delighted to inform you that as a result of the recent verification visit, Dorothy Barley Junior Academy has been awarded Gold level of the National SMSC Quality Mark and this has been confirmed by the Quality Assurance Panel.

It was lovely to 'revisit' the school, despite not being able to visit in person at the moment, the passion for SMSC and for creating the best opportunities for the pupils really shone through the screen and I hope I will be able to come and see all the exciting learning you do in the new year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the children; Titus, Gia, Faryat, Karsten, Kacey, Milena, Fharise and Lily. They all did so well to convey their thoughts and feelings about their school and learning through the screen to me. When asked to describe their school, they replied with words like; 'Colourful, amazing, fun and perfect'.

My thanks go to both governors Brenda and Carole for taking the time to talk to me. Their continued and longstanding commitment and care for the school is clear. When asked how they would describe the school in one word, they replied; 'Outstanding' and 'Amazing'. Brenda went on to say how, 'It's not possible to put into words how much they have achieved over the past couple of years. It's so much, and they are still striving achieving more goals'. Carole commented on how attendance has improved and celebrated. In the videos shared with me, I saw the attendance display board and heard how excellent attendance is rewarded with a special trip like bowling. Hopefully it will be possible to award those with high attendance for this academic year. Brenda went on to say how, 'Kids are learning more. Their voices are heard and they take pride in what they do'.

Praise must also go to the children and staff in the ARP class (Additionally Resourced Provision). Following some staff changes, it was commented that the children have adapted well and I could see how happy and excited the children were about their learning in the clip that was shared with me.

It was lovely to speak to Merilin, Jhancy and Sarah on the phone- please thank them for taking the time to speak to me. All three mothers spoke positively about the school. One mum explained how prior to lockdown, she would take 3 buses to get her child to Dorothy Barley, as it's 'such a good school and my child is so happy there!' Another mum commented on the impact the feature of her child in the Barley Bulletin had had. She reflected on the positive and excited attitude of her child and how she feels that the staff really try to 'showcase children's talents and make learning fun!'

Parents and Governors were in full agreement that the school went, 'above and beyond' during the school closure and lockdown period. Both groups listed the different ways in which the teachers ensured that pupils were contacted either fortnightly or weekly, depending on their needs. Pupils were mailed paper packs to relieve the pressure of trying to access a laptop. Staff also shared video lessons with the children. The staff did their best to ensure that things were, 'as constant as possible'. When asked about morale within the school and among the children especially, Brenda explained how this has been raised

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recently in a governor's meeting and how the feedback was that morale was good. 'Due to the consistency and care, children understand the expectations right now. They feel safe, happy and the new rituals are normal'. Both governors also commented on the fact that now there are two new parent governors on the board, parents will feel even more encouraged to get involved. The importance of this award was felt throughout the visit, I would like to share one response that was filled with emotion, 'It would be an honor to get the gold. It would feel like the staff and childrens' work has been noticed and rewarded - in these times and even in normal times, they have excelled'.

I would also like to thank Ms Rose, who with a quiet, but resolute, commitment and professionalism, is working hard to continue introducing the new and refined chosen values in preparation for applying for the Values Based Education award. Some of these values had been introduced to the children prior to lockdown and already the benefits could be seen in the children and parent responses. Ms. Rose reflected on her commitment to teaching at Dorothy Barley by saying, 'It's a positive and happy place and we all strive for the children'.

Strengths of the school's SMSC development:

Through your self-evaluation and our discussions, it is evident that there is an even greater variety of SMSC-related activity at Dorothy Barley Junior Academy, including, but not restricted to:

- At the last review it was clear that a lot of excellent work had been started and the journey that Dorothy Barley had come on was reported on. During this verification, we referred to the previous visit as seeing the work 'in transition' and this verification for gold; as a time of 'consolidation', which you described as the 'fine tuning of the right things for your pupils'. Covid-19 may have forced the school to put pause on some of this fine tuning, however the school has much to celebrate since my last visit from the Eco bronze award, to the Inclusion Quality Mark to the gold Healthy School's Award and perhaps the most important thing; ensuring the children were happy and their learning provided for during lockdown and since their return to school.
- As referred to in my last report, displays continue to be a strength of the school. The children were not only able to talk about so many of the displays during the recorded tour, but were also able to reflect on the impact of some of these displays during our meeting. One child described them as 'eye-catching'. Another commented on how colourful the displays are and I would have to agree with him. In the videos shared with me, I saw so many wonderfully interactive, 3D and colourful displays that bring the corridors to life and identify these spaces as belonging to the children.
- Love of learning. All children were able to tell me about a fun or interesting lesson, and maths really shone out as the winning subject!
- The school is working towards achieving the Values Based Education award and as mentioned above, work had begun on the introduction of the new values however, due to the pandemic, was forced to stop. During my conversations with the children, when asked to explain the value of respect, one child said, 'He is a human and you are a human, so you should be respectful - it doesn't matter if you're different'.

Areas for development:

- The temptation to continue rapid change is, quite rightly now being resisted, partly in the interests of staff well-being during the pandemic, but also to allow time for further consolidating and embedding a wide range of initiatives, which have been developed over the last 18-24 months. This will allow staff and pupils to reflect and then move forward again when the time is right.
- As a culturally diverse school, it is noted how the school is always looking for ways to celebrate diversity in all its forms. We spoke about using contacts such as Diversity Role Models to support the staff in encouraging the pupils and school community in embracing diversity and allowing it to thrive even more.
- We spoke about perhaps using this opportunity of virtual platforms to give the children the opportunity to 'go' on virtual trips to places of interest and worship, where they might not be able to visit in normal circumstances.
- During our examination of the self-review and through your comments, we reflected on the where the school stands currently with British values. Although some elements regarding democracy and rule of law have seen the introduction of initiatives such as Votes for Schools and holding your own 'General Election', it is agreed that British values could have an even stronger presence in the current curriculum. I feel with the ongoing on Values Based Education this will be achieved.

Although there is already so much excellent SMSC work in school, there remains potential for even greater development as a result of excellent leadership, a clear vision and strong sense of purpose. I know that receiving this gold award is not the end of the Dorothy Barley journey to excellent SMSC provision; it's merely a pit stop to reflect, celebrate and continue to strive for children.

Verifier: Victoria Quijada

SMSC Chair of Panel: Yvonne Richards

Please note: This award is recognised for 3 years and re-verification should be sought by December 2023