



## National SMSC Quality Mark Verification Report

**Name of School:** Oakfield School

**Headteacher:** Mrs. R. Davies

**SMSC Lead:** Mr N. Riggs

**Verification visit:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Mrs Davies,

We are delighted to inform you that as a result of the recent verification visit, Oakfield School has been awarded Silver level of the National SMSC Quality Mark, and this has been confirmed by the Quality Assurance Panel.

Mr. Rees was delighted to visit the school again, and see some of the things that you have developed and are now firmly embedded in the school's culture and ethos, which provide even greater opportunities for pupils. We appreciate that COVID restrictions have interrupted some of the developments that you, and your colleagues, had planned, but the number of things that you have been able to sustain is testimony to the excellent support that you provide for your pupils.

We would particularly like to congratulate Jake for being such a great guide and showing Mr Rees around the school, and also to thank the other students who communicated so positively and appropriately. They were a credit to themselves, their families and the school. It was also lovely to meet a variety of staff who work with such professional dedication, and the Chair of Governors, who all give so much to the school.

It is clear from the relationships and the ethos observed throughout the school, that collectively you work very hard to create a culture of warmth and care, with high but realistic expectations that allows pupils to flourish. This view was endorsed by the parent who described their appreciation that every child is treated as an individual: *"He loves it, [the school] has really helped him in everything he does"* – a view that will undoubtedly be shared by so many parents and carers.

We would especially like to congratulate Mr Riggs, who has taken on responsibility for the development of SMSC with commitment, a determined professionalism and vision for sustained future improvement.

Together, you have enabled staff to develop an increasingly positive ethos for learning, and developing life skills, which enables pupils to flourish and supports staff wellbeing to provide such opportunities.

### **Strengths of the school's SMSC development:**

SMSC development is clearly included throughout most, if not all, aspects of the curriculum, although there remain some developments that we know you will continue to work on. Through your self-evaluation and our discussions, there are already a number of SMSC-related strengths at Oakfield School, including, but not restricted to:

- The excellent way that the needs of individual pupils are recognised and that curriculum opportunities, support and some sanctions, are adapted to meet those bespoke needs. As we discussed during our preliminary phone conversation, the response to a student who had been climbing inappropriately on the school premises was to take them climbing. The notion that this will not punish but guide and engage them with a sporting activity, in which he can flourish, is excellent. This is further supported with learning in taught topics such as bush craft, and through the Duke of Edinburgh award and ideas such as the themed nights and 'Come Dine With Me' in the residential provision.

All of these activities and opportunities develop pupils' skills and self-confidence and are designed not just to be fun but also to lead to college courses and employment opportunities.


- The emphasis on developing strong interpersonal skills and relationships and encouraging this with, and for, pupils is super. The active and consistent role-modelling by adults, is very positive. This is further enhanced when it is facilitated by senior pupils, which helps to enhance the positive ethos of the school. This also helps to develop individual social and personal resilience which will enable pupils to continue to persevere despite setbacks. All of which is highly commendable.
- The carefully organised system of reward points clearly engages and motivates pupils and also provides them with a language and framework which enables them to understand and articulate pro-social attitudes, and behaviours.
- The development of student voice, giving young people responsibility, whether that is for their own possessions in the residential setting and/or contribution to discussions with staff, or the international virtual conference, is also commendable, and will no doubt be built on still further.

#### **Areas for development:**

Although you have created a number of ways that young people take responsibility for their academic learning and SMSC development, opportunities remain for further development:

- Increasing still further pupils' awareness of, and engagement with other people from different cultures, faith groups and ethnicities. This can include recreational and virtual opportunities but may also be develop through the curriculum.
- Even greater learning and understanding about healthy lifestyles. This could include a focus emphasis on food and cooking on a budget but also reducing the consumption of energy drinks and developing pupils' (and parent/carer) understanding of the importance of routines, including, for example, around sleep. Good work is already being done around physical activity including the availability of bicycles to ride, but, as you have identified, even more could be done.
- Enhancing still further a sense of community and developing links with the local community. You have some excellent ideas that were, unfortunately, disrupted by Covid, but events such as the community day will not only improve relationships with local residents, but also help students to develop interpersonal skills and attributes.

Verifier:



SMSC Quality Mark Manager: Victoria Quijada

Please note that the Award is recognised for 3 years, and that re-verification should be sought by December 2024.