

TIS UK Award Visit Report

School:	Connor Downs
Headteacher:	Janice Eddy
Date:	27/06/19
Consultant:	Suzie Franklin

Documents received prior to the visit included:

- Exclusions data
- Newsletters/website links
- Ofsted report
- Behaviour policy
- Completed implementation checklist (self-assessment)
- School agreed timetable for the day
- Evidence and self/assessment implementation checklist for Protect, Relate, Regulate, Reflect (Used by the consultants during the visit)

Scoring descriptors

0	Not yet in place/ School has no awareness
1	School has an awareness of this, but practice is not yet secure
2	Securely in place
3	Embedded/good or outstanding practice evident

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
1	Ensuring children feel psychologically safe in school due to an established culture of warmth and social engagement in staff-pupil interactions	Throughout the school there are very clear warm relationships with children and between the adults. All children are open about the way in which the adults support them and describe them as warm, caring and available. They talked about the way in which the school protects them and keeps them safe physically and this clearly supports their emotional safety. The sympathetic use of natural resources and colour schemes across the school promote a sense of calm and peace. Outdoor space is used highly effectively to support sensory development, relationships and to encourage positive mental health.	3
2	Key interventions implemented to support a culture of warmth and social engagement in staff-pupil interactions	All adults have been well trained in understanding how to support positive mental health and the importance of warm social engagement between children and adults. Meet and greet is used by all staff in the morning as children arrive and also after lunch. Specific interventions have been planned for to support some children as required. Early morning fit club helps	3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
		<p>some children to settle and regulate as well as developing physical skills.</p> <p>The school outdoor learning space with garden and animals that adults and children enjoy together is particularly supportive in developing emotional wellbeing. It is notable how the children have outstanding relationships with the outdoor learning teacher who is passionate, calm and engaging.</p>	
3	Staff trained in empathic and playful modes of interaction (attending specifically to use of their language and voice)	<p>All staff have had pace training and understand what this means.</p> <p>Staff have been trained to use WINE in their interactions with children and there is a clear policy of speaking in calm and regulated tones to the children.</p>	3
4	Staff using empathic and playful modes of interaction (attending specifically to use of their language and voice)	<p>Staff skills are in evidence in pupil interactions during meet and greet, at break times and when working with individual children.</p> <p>The school is very calm and there is no shouting. Staff are using WINE regularly and this is almost a first language in school. All staff know the children well and there is very real sense of family in the school. The kitchen staff know the children well and were engaging calmly and positively with them.</p>	3
5	Vulnerable children knowing when and where to find at least one specific and emotionally-available adult	<p>All children that were spoken to were able to talk about where to find an emotionally available adult. Some children have hands on their desk naming the adults that know them best. This serves to remind the children and they are very pleased to have these. Emotionally available adults wear tags that indicate they are there for the children again this is understood by the children and they like this.</p>	3
6	Vulnerable children having daily, easy access to at least one specific and emotionally-available adult	<p>The school has identified named adults that know the children best to support vulnerable children.</p> <p>Children have access to time in with emotionally available adults as required and during tricky times such as break times. Vulnerable children have 1-1 sessions with a TIS trained practitioner. Adults check in with children regularly throughout the day.</p>	3
7	Promote and value the development of the whole child to ensure that children understand that their self-worth and the self-worth of others cannot be measured simply by tests/exams. <i>'Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all' Aristotle</i>	<p>The ethos of the whole school is predicated on ensuring that children develop as fully rounded individuals. The school has developed an environment that enables children to demonstrate their skills and talents in a range of ways not just academically. The school encourages children to play sports, garden, look after the animals and thrive through their engagement with the outdoor environment. The cultivating futures programme is excellent.</p> <p>Children are clear about the fact that adults in the school have a keen interest in them developing into happy, kind and caring individuals.</p>	3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
		The school understands that not all children are in a place to learn and makes provision for these children.	
8	Continually provide experiences for the children that promote and foster a child's love of learning, protect their innate joie de vivre and desire to explore the world around them and engender a sense of purpose in life	<p>The school ensures that children have a wide range of experiences during their time there. They encourage children to experience different opportunities through a range of visits , activities, play and hands on experiences. Children all have a book in which they record pictorially 100 things to do before you leave Connor Downs.</p> <p>The Cultivating Futures curriculum provides children with the chance to explore the world around them through forest school activities, gardening , animal care and playing.</p> <p>There are opportunities for children to engage in sporting activities and group games.</p>	3
9	School staff adjusting expectations and practices around vulnerable children to correspond with those children's developmental capabilities and experience of traumatic stress and loss	<p>Staff have been trained to understand the impact of trauma and the way in which it can impact on children. The school ensures that there are no raised voices used and staff are given prompt sheets with simple scripts for them to use to help them when dealing with children that are vulnerable or deregulated.</p> <p>Time out is used effectively alongside an emotionally available adult. Some children benefit from sensory breaks if required.</p> <p>Vulnerable children have adapted breaks /lunches or may go to nurture club.</p> <p>There is a very real recognition among all adults of the fact that that children cannot learn until they are emotionally resilient.</p>	3
10	Interventions and implementations showing that the emotional well-being of staff is high priority/ to carry out duty of care to staff	The Trust has a package of support in place, including annual health checks and a counselling service Staff spoke about the support they get and are unequivocal in stating it is amazing. There is always Free tea , coffee and lunch is free if staff eat with the children. Staff celebrate together key events such as birthdays. The school has provided adult training in mindfulness and better sleeping. Work life balance is reviewed regularly, and the marking policy has just been adapted to support this.	3
11	Ensuring that school staff feel valued and highly respected by Senior Leads, with frequent feedback from Senior Leads on what they are doing well with specific reference to how they are enhancing the children's wellbeing.	<p>Staff get specific feedback about how well they are doing. Feedback is given about the way staff relate to children as well as for teaching etc.</p> <p>All staff feel that SLT are open and available to them at all times, and that they can talk to them about anything they need to.</p>	3

Relate			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
12	A Relationship Policy (for staff) alongside Behaviour Policy (for pupils)	The school behaviour policy makes clear reference to the expectations and importance of positive relationships and engagement at all levels. The school are continually reviewing their practice in light of the policy and are currently anticipating a Trust relationships policy that will inform any future policy.	2
13	Staff trained in interventions that help them get to know children better on an individual basis	Staff have been training in PACE, PRRR and WINE to support children. In addition other training such as Bereavement training has been made available for some staff. There is on going training for staff and TIS practitioners are regularly updating staff and providing them with prompts and scripts to use. All staff understand the importance of positive engagement with students and take time to know the children.	3
14	Staff using interventions that help them get to know children better on an individual basis	WINE was seen being used very effectively with children and there was clear evidence of bespoke interventions for some children based on their individual needs. The school makes effective use of sensory breaks. There is an effective way of children sharing information with adults using I wish my teacher knew. Children spoke about this and value this. Children spoke about the ways in which the adults are interested in them and help them.	3
15	A whole-school approach to supporting vulnerable children to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively	This is very much the ethos of the school. They have very successfully integrated vulnerable children from other schools, one boy who was at risk of permanent exclusion from his previous school is now settled and working well in school at Connor Downs. The use of cultivating futures enables children to work through anxieties and develop positive self-esteem and views within the natural environment and through engaging with nature	3
16	Helping vulnerable children shift from 'blocked trust' to trust, and from self-help to help-seeking	Adults and children talked positively about the help that is available to vulnerable children and talked unequivocally about never not being able to get help. Adults have been very well training to support children and in allowing children to be cross /sad/anxious and not hurrying them out of their feelings. Adults are clear about the importance of consistency for children and are honest with children about what is happening in school (e.g. during a staff absence due to bereavement that staff member came in to school to touch base with a child she was working with so that they knew she would be back) Children have named trusted adults they can seek out when they need to.	3

		Children are taught about the way in which their bodies are reacting during times of anxiety , fear and anger. They are taught about flipping their lid.	
17	Provision of repeated positive experiences for children with key emotionally-available adults	Regular TIS sessions take place for some children as needed. Children have time out with trusted adults when required. Motional assessments are used to set programmes for children. All adults are aware of the importance of the strategies to support children. Children have a key worker but other trusted adults they can turn to in times of crisis and know who they are. Children are supported through clear routines and structures, nurture time, adapted lunch and break times etc.	3
18	Senior Leads ensuring staff have daily repeated positive relational experiences	SLT check in with all staff, welcoming staff every morning. There is an evident open-door culture for staff and the Headteacher is readily available for staff when needed. All adults commented on how working at Connor Downs was a joy and not like a job, more like being part of a big family.	3

Regulate

	Criteria	Evidence	Score
19	A variety of evidence based interventions designed to bring down stress levels in vulnerable children from toxic to tolerable	TIS sessions take place weekly for children utilising games and strategies from the training. One session observed made highly effective use of puppets, drawing and talking. Use of Margot Sunderlands therapeutic stories along with strategies from Motional support vulnerable children well. Mindfulness and the use of outdoor experiences and animals are also effective in reducing stress levels in children.	3
20	Evidence-based interventions that may go some way to repair brain damage caused by painful life experience where there was no social buffering	Adults well trained in using interventions and there are carefully planned strategies and sequences of support for children in place. Parents are supported and encouraged to engage in work alongside the school. Where the scope of difficulties falls outside the school they will engage with other agencies wherever possible, for example Pennhaligan Friends.	3
21	Whole-school training in the evidence-based research on emotional regulation	All staff have been training in effective ways to regulate emotional wellbeing. These include PACE/PRRR and Mindfulness. Across the school everyone is able to feel valued and heard. New staff have been rapidly inducted to ensure that they continue with the best practice and the school now actively recruits staff that	3

		will be able to support and foster positive relationships, emotional regulation and who have a TIS mindset.	
22	Whole school approach to using PACE (play acceptance curiosity and empathy) with distressed/ stressed parents so they feel calmed, heard, connected with and valued	This was very evident in the observed interactions across the school. TIS practitioners model this exceptionally and have also used this effectively with parents to engage them in more positive relationships with the school.	3
23	Senior Leaders to be aware of high stress states in staff	It is very evident that SLT have a good understanding of the needs of the staff; their vulnerabilities and strengths. There are break out spaces staff can use if needed and staff are encouraged to make full use of the Trust health plans. Staff know that they can take time out and will be supported by the leadership of the school. There is no shame in admitting you feel stressed at the school, although adults were also keen to explain that this does not happen often because the working environment and relationships are so positive.	3
24	Senior Leaders to provide stressed staff with sufficient emotional regulation e.g. 'Reflect and Restore' staff-only spaces and evidence based stress reducing interventions, e.g. clinical supervision, timetabled time in a protected calm environment e.g. sensory zone, or for mindfulness	A variety of strategies are in place. Time out is available as needed and the use of fresh face during times of crisis with children ensures that adults are always effective and do not become stressed themselves. The school has provided adults with mindfulness and sleep training. Supervision for TIS practitioners is encouraged. There are wellbeing champions and mental health first aiders in school . Staff only space is calm and pleasant.	3

Reflect

	Criteria	Evidence	Score
25	All staff trained in the art of good listening and 'the words to say it' for empathic response to pupils, staff and parents	Staff have had training in good listening, and this is a regular agenda item for staff training. Staff are very clear about the difference between sympathy and empathy. Staff use language across the school of I am wondering , I imagine. At the beginning of the day a child arrived looking nervous, his teacher was immediately reassuring , "I am noticing you are looking a bit nervous this morning come with me and let me help you inside"	3
26	Key staff trained in reflective conversations to enable vulnerable children to edit the inaccurate narratives they have told themselves	There are a number of TIS trained practitioners in the school who have been carefully trained to have reflective conversations with children. The importance of helping the children edit inaccurate narratives is understood by all staff and modelled very well by the TIS practitioners.	3
27	No child left without help to process, talk through and make sense of major painful	All staff understand the impact of painful life events and are quick to support children by allowing them to talk about these. Children commented that they are not	3

	life events when they want to, with someone trained to provide empathic response.	left to wait if they are upset and that they know who to talk to if they need to. Children will access support and help for as long as necessary and the school is very aware that for some children this could be almost indefinitely.	
28	Children provided with the means (e.g. through poetry/music/art/sandplay/drama) to symbolise painful life experiences through images not just words	The school has a range of provision for children to work through difficult experiences. These include sand tray, outdoor activities, animal therapy, drama, drawing and talking, puppets and more. All staff have an understanding of the ways in which these activities support children in dealing with stress and trauma.	
29	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on the neuroscience and psychology of emotion 28	The school is developing it's PSHE policy with the support of the wider trust to reflect the most recent research and neuroscience. They are being supported by Julie Harmieson in the development of this. Children are already taught about the neuroscience of emotions and are able to describe flipping their lid and the way in which the brain responds during stress.	2
30	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on the neuroscience and psychology of relationships that harm and relationships that heal		2
31	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on mental health and ill-health (causes as well as symptoms)		2
32	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on how to use life well		2
33	Senior Leaders to provide staff with a forum to talk in confidence about their feelings and particular stress triggers from their work	Counselling services are provided through ASPIRE (the Trust) The school has nominated mental health champions and mental health first aiders. They provide confidential support and signposting for staff at times of need. Staff feedback is important and acted upon.	3

Minimum-maximum scores

Protect	0-33
Relate	0-21
Regulate	0-18
Reflect	0-27
Total	0-99

School scores

Protect	33
Relate	20
Regulate	18
Reflect	23
Total	95

The following strengths were evident:

- The importance the school places on adult /child relationships and the subsequent nurturing and caring culture is the core of the school. Time after time adults and children talked about the 'family' of the school and how the school is a loving, caring community to be part of.
- Behaviour in the school is excellent because children's needs are met and they are treated with kindness , fairness and respect as well as individuals where one size does not fit all!
- The use of the natural environment for encouraging and promoting positive mental health as well as for outdoor learning and play is outstanding.

Areas to consider developing:

Protect: To consider how the school can influence and encourage feeder schools to adopt similar practice for vulnerable students to support transition.

Relate: To continue to review practice and to work with the Aspire Trust on the development of a Trust Relationships Policy.

Regulate:

Reflect: To continue to develop the PSHE teaching in school to ensure that this reflects the most recent research and neuroscience.

Best practise / case study requests: (if applicable)

Use of the outdoor environment - The Cultivating Futures Curriculum
100 things to do before you leave Connor Downs

Further support discussed/required:

None

Overall Assessment:

Connor Downs is an inspirational school where children are cared for and nurtured by a team of highly trained and supportive adults. It is a school that enables children to develop within an environment that is sensorially rich, and carefully planned to support emotional wellbeing. The value placed on the natural environment and the opportunities provided is excellent enabling children to explore the world through horticulture, animal husbandry and engaging in outdoor play. The school is calm and purposeful. Children talked with enthusiasm about the school and clearly enjoy being part of the Connor Downs family. Staff also love being part of this team and enjoy their work. The school richly deserves the Trauma Informed School Award.

Trauma Informed School Award:

- Recommended
- Deferred pending further evidence

Copies sent to:

- Headteacher
- Rachel Toller (TISUK)

Reported completed by:	Suzie Franklin
Date:	01/07/2019