

## TIS UK Award Visit Report

<b>School:</b>	Open Box Education Centre
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Alison Dolan
<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
<b>Consultant:</b>	Christine Davies

### Scoring descriptors

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

### 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)

## Protect

	Criteria	Evidence	Score
<b>1</b>	Ensuring children feel psychologically safe in school due to an established culture of warmth and social engagement in staff-pupil interactions	<p>This is a centre for KS4 students only. Prior to being here, students have experienced significant disruption. The focus on psychological safety is outstanding and begins at the referral stage when Open Box endeavours to gather as much knowledge and understanding of the student as possible via previous school information, external agencies and ultimately through the pre-entry meeting with the student and his/her family.</p> <p>At the initial, pre-entry meeting, staff explore with the student what their needs are; what</p>	<b>3</b>

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
		<p>helps them to feel safe; what can be triggering for them and then what helps them to regulate. From this, a bespoke programme of learning and support is developed.</p> <p>Before students arrive each morning, there is a staff briefing at which all staff are updated on anything which may have impacted on a student since leaving school the previous day. This is repeated at lunchtime, when there is a whole staff briefing to reflect on the morning.</p> <p>Students are warmly welcomed on arrival to school each day and the positive and trusting student-staff relationships are highly evident.</p> <p>Each student is offered breakfast and one-to-one time. Staff and students also eat lunch together.</p> <p>All students are accompanied to each lesson and then from lesson to lesson to reinforce a sense of safety. Safe spaces around the school have been identified for staff and students alike and safety is priority for all movement around the school. At the end of each day, after staff have checked in with each student about their day, staff accompany students to the school door for a collective goodbye.</p> <p>A governor representative reiterated that 'the child is at the heart of all we do; the child is the absolute focus' with a fully personalised programme of learning, the child and their needs are at its heart.</p>	
2	Key interventions implemented to support a	The importance of relationship is at the core of the school's values and ethos and	3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
	culture of warmth and social engagement in staff-pupil interactions	<p>relationships (staff-student; staff-staff and school-home) are a real strength.</p> <p>There is a Student Profile for each student which details the students' past experiences, their current needs and their preferences. This is used to create a bespoke curriculum and identifies what helps and hinders if a student moves into a state of dysregulation.</p> <p>Students are offered breakfast and shared lunch with staff. There is a menu of staffed lunch time activities which offer a range of opportunities and also enhance staff-student relationships.</p>	
3	Staff trained in empathic and playful modes of interaction (attending specifically to use of their language and voice)	<p>From the starting point of the recruitment process to staff induction and then regular and ongoing CPD and refresher training for staff, effective interaction and relational connection is of the utmost priority for the school. This emphasis is evidenced through the observed everyday communications between staff and students where staff clearly embody a PACEful approach.</p> <p>Alongside a TMHi practitioner who leads regular top-ups on PACE and KRS, the school staff have accessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TISUK whole staff training</li> <li>• Attachment Aware training (currently undergoing assessment for Gold Award)</li> <li>• Understanding and working with different attachment styles</li> <li>• Choosing Appropriate resources and Interventions</li> </ul>	3
4	Staff using empathic and playful modes of	From the moment students cross the school's threshold, they are greeted with	3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
	interaction (attending specifically to use of their language and voice)	<p>warmth and delight. It is highly evident that staff really <b>know</b> the students and are fully aware of how and when to use humour and playfulness to best effect.</p> <p>This was observed in the morning meet and greet as well as in observed sessions, (one-to-one music session; a maths lesson; a mentoring session) and at morning and lunchtime breaks.</p> <p>In discussions with staff members, all had a high level of awareness of the impact of prosodic intonation and how we convey safety cues.</p> <p>The bespoke curriculum design for each student as well as the daily starter sessions, also serve to optimise opportunities for playful and empathic connection.</p>	
5	Vulnerable children knowing when and where to find at least one specific and emotionally-available adult (EAA)	<p>All students know where they can find a supportive adult at any time within the school day.</p> <p>Staff Link has been set up so that if a student is in need of an EAA and leaves a classroom to seek support, any adults met along the way will be aware of the situation and offer the support needed. The culture and ethos of the school is such that all adults respond to need rather than react to any given situation.</p>	3
6	Vulnerable children having daily, easy access to at least one specific and emotionally-available adult (EAA)	<p>The recruitment process, induction and ongoing training means that every member of staff in the setting is an EAA.</p> <p>All students know how and where they can find their EAA and the school's staffing structures ensure that need is responded to.</p>	3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
7	<p>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>	<p>The principal has described this school as ‘a home for the educationally homeless’. Prior to arrival at this school, most students have experienced multiple moves and exclusions, some having been out of education altogether for a considerable period of time. Inbuilt into the ethos and culture here is the desire to support students to develop a more positive sense of self and to gain a sense of hope and possibility for their future.</p> <p>The school’s curriculum and pastoral structure ensures that the focus of learning and development is holistic and embraces academic, personal, emotional, relational and social development. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for Adulthood curriculum</li> <li>• Mentoring and counselling sessions are of equal value to academic areas of the curriculum</li> <li>• Starter Sessions (at the beginning of each day) focus on the school’s core values and on developing character and community awareness</li> <li>• Formal reports are shared with parents/carers six times per year. Within these reports, personal progress and development is of equal value to academic progress</li> </ul>	3
8	<p>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>	<p>The bespoke curriculum is designed around each student’s interests, aiming to optimise opportunities for engagement, motivation and ultimately, aspiration.</p> <p>Staff also freely share their interests and are ready and willing to share their own skills to develop new and interesting programmes within the Enrichment Curriculum.</p>	3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
		<p>Whilst the physical space within the school itself is relatively small and with limited outside space, this has not been a barrier to providing extensive and wide-ranging experiences for students, with opportunities to spark and broaden their interest and to consider their place in the world. An abundance of invaluable opportunities (both on and off site) are on offer within the enrichment curriculum. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness training (brought in on site since Covid)</li> <li>• Land work</li> <li>• Animal care</li> <li>• Hair and beauty</li> </ul>	
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>That all staff members have a deep knowledge of each student is, clearly, a fundamental principle of the school.</p> <p>All staff have an excellent, in-depth understanding of the needs of each student and how to meet these needs.</p> <p>The twice-daily staff briefings allow for regular sharing of students' wellbeing and needs for the day and the longer, half termly staff meetings offer an opportunity for the staff group to reflect on each student in more detail.</p> <p>An example of adjustment was apparent on the day of the visit. One of the key expectations is that all students hand in their phones at the start of the day. On the day of my visit, it was agreed that one student could keep his phone as he was concerned about the health of a family member. This allowed the student to remain calm and there was no questioning from the other</p>	3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
		students. This was testament to the trust established amongst staff and students.	
10	Interventions and implementations showing that the emotional well-being of staff is high priority/ to carry out duty of care to staff	<p>The staff feel very well supported by the school and have a real sense that their wellbeing is of utmost importance. There was a wide range of evidence to support this including staff social get togethers, a staff buddy system, day-today recognition and very positive staff relationships.</p> <p>The principal has an open-door policy and is very visible within the school. If there has been a difficult situation, the principal always checks in with staff to check their state of wellbeing, encourages the staff member to take some time and there is always a debrief of any incident.</p> <p>Staff Link is again an invaluable tool to ensure that staff are quickly made aware of an incident and can support as necessary.</p> <p>Staff are also offered access to the school counsellor.</p> <p>Staff articulated that they 'feel really looked after'.</p>	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>Outside of the regular appraisal meetings, staff are regularly recognised for the work they do on a daily basis.</p> <p>Staff feel that the principal is open and proud of staff achievements and will seek staff out to tell them so. The principal also regularly shares good news/positive praise from parents/carers.</p> <p>The twice-daily staff briefings not only inform but also affirm for staff the value of the work they do.</p>	3



Relate			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
12	A Relationship Policy (for staff) alongside Behaviour Policy (for pupils)	Relationship and Behaviour sit together.  The importance of relationship is inextricably woven into the ethos and culture of the school.	3
13	Staff trained in interventions that help them get to know children better on an individual basis	There has been a comprehensive training programme for staff along with regular refresher /top-ups from the TMHi practitioner.  Training has included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole Staff TIS training</li> <li>• MAPA</li> <li>• Neuroscience of trauma</li> <li>• Understanding and working with different attachment styles</li> <li>• Nurture Principles</li> <li>• Bespoke training relative to the needs of individual students</li> </ul>	3
14	Staff using interventions that help them get to know children better on an individual basis	The detailed Student Profiles, the structure of the school day, the bespoke curriculum and the twice daily briefings ensure that all staff have a really thorough knowledge and understanding of each and every student.	3
15	A whole-school approach to supporting vulnerable children to see themselves, their relationships and the world more positively	All staff unquestionably embody a PACEful approach with all students and indeed, with each other.  One student told me that in his previous schools, he was always in the bottom set and he was 'a no-one going nowhere'. He said the staff and the school here had changed that to him being 'a someone going somewhere.'	3



		Students have individual mentoring sessions as well as Skills for Success which support the development of a more positive sense of self and the world around them.	
16	Helping vulnerable children shift from 'blocked trust' to trust, and from self-help to help-seeking	<p>The importance of trusting relationships is at the core of the school's values. Relationship-building starts from the point of referral.</p> <p>Through consistent, open, non-judgemental relational approaches embodied by all staff, students know who to go to and how to ask for help.</p> <p>Staff work as a team to ensure the right person is available for the immediate need of a student as those needs arise.</p> <p>Due to the way the school uses restorative approaches, there is an absolute and explicit certainty that if relationships rupture, those raptures will be healed. In some circumstances, the principal conducts a restorative meeting at the student's home with parents and student. The situation is discussed openly and without judgement, The student is asked what the school can do to more effectively support him/her and the student identifies what s/he can do in the future.</p>	3
17	Provision of repeated positive experiences for children with key emotionally-available adults	<p>On a regular, day-to-day basis this is evident on arrival and within the structure of the day.</p> <p>All students know how to access their EAA whenever needed and can have sensory breaks when needed.</p> <p>Students have weekly mentoring and counselling sessions and their weekly, individual Skills for Success sessions are with their identified EAA.</p> <p>On a weekly basis, students have the opportunity for interest-based sessions which might be, for example:</p>	3

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-to-one personal trainer session</li> <li>• Dog walking</li> <li>• Walk and talk</li> <li>• One-to-one reading</li> </ul>	
18	Senior Leads ensuring staff have daily repeated positive relational experiences	<p>The warmth of relational connection in the school is palpable. Staff turnover and sickness rates are low. Staff expressed how much they love working in this school.</p> <p>Staff and pupils share breaks together which is appreciated and recognised by Senior Leadership. Staff feel cared for which in turn, enable them to care for each other and their students.</p>	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	<p>The school uses assessment tools to inform individual plans for students to meet their needs.</p> <p>Staff are trained in active listening, empathic responding and know how to use their voice, face and body posture to convey safety cues. All staff embody PACE.</p> <p>Each student has an individual Skills for Success session. The content of this is designed to offer psychoeducation.</p>	2
20	Evidence-based interventions that may go some way to repair brain damage caused by painful life experience where there was no social buffering	In addition to TIS-informed school-based support and interventions (woven into each individual student's daily programme) and in-school counsellor and mentor availability, where it is recognised that a student needs additional support, the school refers to external partners. Provision from external partners has included:	3

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational Therapy</li> <li>• Specialist therapeutic support</li> <li>• Family therapy</li> <li>• Speech and Language Therapy</li> </ul>	
21	Whole-school training in the evidence-based research on emotional regulation	Professional Development for staff is a high priority. The school has had TIS Whole School Training and the TIS TMHi practitioner delivers regular top-ups for staff in relation to the emotional regulation,	2
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	<p>Due to students' past experiences, the need to establish trusting relationships with parents/carers is recognised as vital. The systems and structures in places from referral to admission are sensitive to this need. From the first connection at the pre-entry meeting, the principal establishes open communication with parents/carers and it is made clear that there is an open line of communication to the principal.</p> <p>Discussions around students' timetabling and around managing students' behavioural responses are consultative and collaborative.</p> <p>When parents/carers prefer text messages rather than phone calls, this is respected.</p> <p>All staff embody a PACEful stance with the students and within their communications with parents and carers.</p>	3
23	Senior Leaders to be aware of high stress states in staff and then to act swiftly and empathically using evidence-based ways to alleviate stress.	<p>Twice-daily briefings provide opportunities for senior leads to be aware of potential stress points. Systems and structures are in places to ensure rapid and supportive response if the need arises.</p> <p>Senior leads are on hand and check in with staff if there has been a highly charged incident.</p> <p>Staff reported that Covid communication and consultation between the principal and staff</p>	3

		was extremely supportive and as recognised in staff feedback questionnaires.	
24	Senior Leaders to <i>provide</i> 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	<p>Senior Leads support staff immediately when a highly charged incident has occurred, and staff have the opportunity to have time in a quiet, restorative space.</p> <p>The staff buddy system enables staff to support each other and in particular, for more experienced staff to support less experienced colleagues.</p> <p>When staff contact the principal with concerns, the response is prompt.</p> <p>Throughout the year, staff are given opportunities to access mindfulness and other activities that support wellbeing.</p> <p>The school currently exploring the provision of regular supervision for staff and senior leads.</p>	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	<p>All staff have had training in active and empathic listening, PACE, WINE and restorative conversations.</p> <p>Each Student Profile has clear information and guidance on what works effectively to support them if they become dysregulated. Responses are developed collaboratively and are trauma-informed and attachment aware.</p>	3
26	Key staff trained in reflective conversations to enable vulnerable children to edit the	The nature of the setting, staff training and the relationships between staff and students mean that reflective conversations happen regularly.	3

	inaccurate narratives they have told themselves	It is clear from the students' interactions with each other and with staff, along with their successful applications to college, that the image of themselves when they arrive is markedly different when they leave.	
27	No child left without help to process, talk through and make sense of major painful life events when they want to, with someone trained to provide empathic response.	<p>The school's knowledge of their students and their life outside school is exceptional. This ensures that on a day-to-day basis, if there have been issues outside of school or if there are family worries or difficulties, provision is made to support the student from the moment they cross the threshold at the start of the day.</p> <p>All students know that their preferred EAA is always available to them when they are in need.</p> <p>Students also have access to counselling and have weekly mentoring and Skills for Success sessions. These sessions are individually tailored and focus on psychoeducation and mental wellness.</p>	3
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 used a range of different arts-based vehicles to support the expression of painful life experiences. These include: drama therapy; therapeutic art activities; sandplay; Big Empathy Drawings.	2
29	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on the neuroscience and psychology of emotion	<p>The comments below cover all PSHE criteria:</p> <p>The school has a rich PSHE curriculum very much informed by current neuroscientific research; mental health and mental ill-health; consent; healthy relationships and parenting.</p>	3
30	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on the neuroscience and psychology of relationships that harm	Students learn how their brains work, what happens in brain and body when alarm states are activated. Key learning points are	2

	and relationships that heal	displayed on neuroscience and de-escalation display boards.	
31	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on mental health and ill-health (causes as well as symptoms)	In line with PSHE Association and DfE Guidance, there are units on healthy lifestyle, wellbeing, RSE (Relationship and Sex Education), personal finances, internet safety, personal.	3
32	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on how to use life well	Certain PSHE topics are taught one-to-one for identified students whose past trauma or painful life experiences could be a barrier to learning within a group.	3
33	Senior Leaders to provide staff with a forum to talk in confidence about their feelings and particular stress triggers from their work	<p>The school principal and senior leads have an open door policy and staff are secure in the knowledge that they can speak openly about their feelings without fear of judgement.</p> <p>The principal has regular learning and wellbeing walks around the school and checks in regularly with staff throughout the day.</p> <p>There are regular coaching and buddy meetings. There is always a thorough debrief after any challenging incident which includes staff members' feelings about the incident, not just the chronology of events.</p> <p>Staff feel really cared for and looked after.</p>	2

### Minimum-maximum scores

Protect	0-33
Relate	0-21
Regulate	0-18
Reflect	0-27
<b>Total</b>	<b>0-99</b>

### School scores

Protect	33
Relate	21
Regulate	16
Reflect	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>

### The following strengths were evident:

- That relationships are at the absolute heart of the school's core values is highly evident and a real strength
- The passion, drive and commitment consistent right across the staff team reflects a highly effective recruitment process. Low levels of staff turnover reflect the healthy ethos and culture of the school
- Students know that staff really care, that they can rely on them and they will advocate for them. Students stated that staff in the school are 'always there' and 'want us to get what we want out of life.'
- Clarity of boundaries and expectations provide a sense of safety and containment and the level of compassion, care and kindness conveys a palpable sense of trust and respect
- The embodiment of a PACEful approach was very highly evident with all staff
- Staff clearly appreciate the students and playful exchanges and moments of shared joy are frequent

### Areas to consider developing:

<b>PROTECT:</b>
<b>RELATE:</b>
<b>REGULATE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school is in the process of developing its sensory provision</li></ul>
<b>REFLECT:</b> (and REGULATE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The principal is exploring the provision of external supervision/reflective practice for all staff (including herself), as a means of ongoing development of practice and importantly given the context of the school, as a means of supporting emotional health and wellbeing for all</li></ul>

### Best practice / case study requests: (if applicable)

Twice-daily briefings Safe Link Morning greeting Embodiment of PACE
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### Further support discussed/required:

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### Overall Assessment:

<p>The school clearly meets the criteria for the TIS award.</p> <p>Open Box doesn't stand still and consistently explores how to broaden and deepen the students' experience. In the consistent embodiment of the school's core values, staff create an environment in which trusting relationships flourish. Every adult is an Emotionally Available Adult and over time, students re-shape and re-frame their sense of self and their belief in what they can achieve.</p> <p>The school has strong and effective partnerships with agencies/support systems beyond school and refers out without hesitation if a need is identified that cannot be met within school.</p> <p>It was a privilege to undertake this Award visit.</p>
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### Trauma Informed School Award:

- Recommended
- Deferred pending further evidence

### Copies sent to:

- Headteacher
- Rachel Toller (TISUK)

Reported completed by:	Christine Davies
Date:	16 <sup>th</sup> May 2021