

# TIS UK Award Visit Report

<b>School/Organisation</b>	The Court Special School
<b>Headteacher/CEO</b>	Jamyn Beesley
<b>Date:</b>	18.10.22
<b>Consultant:</b>	Lindsay Winterbourne

## Documents received prior to the visit included:

- ☒ Exclusions data
- ☒ Newsletters/website links
- ☒ Estyn 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

<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

## 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	The children that attend The Court Special School can join at different stages of their education; they have had a range of previous educational experiences many of which have not been positive ones. Staff understand the importance of being able to create environments that promote psychological safety as soon as possible to ensure children feel safe, cared for and valued as individuals. Every day starts with the same protect meet and greet strategy where every child is met from their taxi by at least one adult. This adult is often one of the children's key adults and on the visit day, it was clear how warm and supportive each adult was towards their 'charge' - lots of smiles, delightful chatter and appropriate positive touch. Individual's needs are known, understood and catered for – an example observed during the visit was a child who finds arriving at school to an 'audience' difficult so he is dropped off at a slightly different point and met by his adult.	3
<b>2</b>	Key interventions implemented to support a culture of warmth and social engagement in staff-pupil interactions		3
<b>3</b>	Staff trained in empathic and playful modes of interaction (attending specifically to use of their language and voice)		3
<b>4</b>	Staff using empathic and playful modes of interaction (attending specifically to use of their language and voice)		3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
5	Vulnerable children knowing when and where to find at least one specific and emotionally-available adult	<p>Children are happy to come to school and engage with their adults – the welcome is playful and reciprocated by many of the children.</p> <p>Any child who it is known will struggle at a particular point in the day will have support and interventions in place to support them. It was very evident on the visit that the children have access to their key emotionally available adults when they need them, they are made to feel special and held in mind.</p> <p>Once in class children follow familiar daily routines which are vital for their psychological safety and overall well-being. The atmosphere in the classes is one of calm productivity – children were engaged and being supported by trusted adults. Staff are aware of how to use their language and voice appropriately.</p> <p>All children have access to emotionally available adults. The staff are skilled at recognising when a child may need someone, for example, those children who are non-verbal or have speech and language difficulties have adults in their classroom who know them well and can support them and recognise potential triggers. The high adult to child ratios and positive relationships that exist between staff and the children ensure every child is supported and has access to emotionally available adults. Positive relationships are a particular strength of the school and senior leaders know how important it is to have adults in school that have the appropriate skills to respond to children calmly and with compassion and, recruitment procedures and induction reflect this.</p> <p>All staff have had Whole School TIS training, with the aim of incorporating it into all interactions and interventions across the school. Staff have recently had Dan Hughes PACE training via the TIS webinar – observations of interactions between adults and children throughout the visit day could be described as PACEful. The knowledge of children's individual life experiences is used by the staff team to identify appropriate interventions and support. Any 1:1 interventions are planned and used to suit an individual's needs and may include sessions with the school's psychotherapist.</p> <p>As a special school, TCS staff have appropriate expectations and practices around the children to correspond with their developmental capabilities and experiences. The school ensures all pupils have access to a range of experiences and opportunities that will help to foster a love of learning and finding out and, importantly, ensure that they are empowered and supported to become the best they can be. The current school building and grounds (which are listed)</p>	3
6	Vulnerable children having daily, easy access to at least one specific and emotionally-available adult		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>		3
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		2
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		3
10	Interventions and implementations showing that the emotional well-being of staff is high priority/ to carry out duty of care to staff		2
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.		3

Protect			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
		<p>could be considered as restrictive particularly when trying to use the outside spaces however, changes and additions to the environment have enhanced this provision and staff are creative in their use of it. Some children were taken off site to enjoy a bike ride, staff joined in to play games outside at playtimes, the popular nest swings are regularly used by children to support regulation.</p> <p>The senior leadership team place significant importance on the well-being of their staff and recognise the particular difficulties and stresses that can come about from working in such an SEMH environment. Adults have access to an adult only staffroom; leaders have an open-door policy and are visible in the school throughout the day; they provide regular and positive feedback to staff which can take a range of forms. Information gathered from the school's staff questionnaire feedback was very positive and staff indicated that they feel well supported and valued. The positive and supportive working relationships between staff were clearly evident during the visit. It was also noted that the evening before had been one of the school's half-termly staff wellbeing sessions where much fun and delight had been shared! These sessions are arranged by one of the practitioners and are varied to support all tastes – there is no expectation on staff for them to take part – they can use their well-being time as they wish.</p>	

Relate			
	Criteria	Evidence	Score
12	A Relationship Policy (for staff) alongside Behaviour Policy (for pupils)	<p>The school has a Relationships and Behaviour Policy in place with the aim of supporting both staff and pupils; it is reviewed on an annual basis and appears to be well-embedded across the school.</p> <p>One of the school's strengths is its commitment to ensuring all staff have access to a range of TIS training and this is encapsulated in the rolling programme on offer to staff to complete the diploma training. All staff have had a range of TIS training including sessions from the TIS practitioners in school, the psychotherapist and other sources such as TIS webinars and as a result, they use a range of appropriate interventions that help to get to know each child. The staff are skilled at getting to know the pupils</p>	3
13	Staff trained in interventions that help them get to know children better on an individual basis		3
14	Staff using interventions that help them get to know children better on an individual basis		3
15	A whole-school approach to supporting vulnerable children to see themselves, their		3

	relationships and the world more positively	<p>quickly and have strategies in place to support this process; this is particularly pertinent as the pupils will join the school at varying times throughout in their school career. The use of sand-trays for example, have proved to be very effective and at times have also been used by parents in sessions with the psychotherapist. Staff also support children at non-teaching times such as during playtimes and lunch times. During the visit one child told me he liked coming to school because the adults 'know me and I can talk to them'.</p> <p>The school structure is such that adults are always available for the children – all adults are considered to be EAAs and some children will also have additional key adults who they can access when they need or want to – this is done in such a way as to ensure each child receives the support needed. Pupils often seek out their key adults. Interventions observed during the visit day showed how well the children and adults relate to one another, leading to meaningful interactions that support positive experiences and support improved self-esteem and well-being. Shared case study examples illustrate how the school have worked over time to support the children and their families, and how the strong relationships have supported individuals when facing difficult life challenges.</p> <p>The senior leads are very visible to both children and staff during the school day and they work hard to ensure all staff have repeated positive relational experiences. There are clear routines and structures in place and communication is clear; for example, staff meet at the beginning of each day - this happens in a relaxed and supportive way. The staff team is supportive of one another and look out for each other and those spoken to relayed positive relational experiences.</p>	
16	Helping vulnerable children shift from 'blocked trust' to trust, and from self-help to help-seeking		3
17	Provision of repeated positive experiences for children with key emotionally-available adults		3
18	Senior Leads ensuring staff have daily repeated positive relational experiences		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>Across the school, staff employ a range of appropriate and evidence-based interventions to bring down stress levels. These include using WINE and other TIS strategies, provision of safe spaces including outside space, and emotionally available adults, recognition and availability of key adults and use of change of face. One child was observed using the head teacher's office space very appropriately – he was being supported by emotionally available adults to regulate; they were calm, knowledgeable, PACEful and clearly had the skills to support this pupil in an effective way.</p> <p>The use of sand-play and big empathy drawings are also key tools used and a range of shared case studies demonstrate how effective these have been with the children. The value and understanding of using animals to support regulation was also noted – with the new guinea pig appearing to be a popular addition to school!</p> <p>Other support mechanisms include use of Lego, a dolls house, the use of sensory spaces, music, art as well as the use of activities that are known to support specific individuals – for example going outside to kick a football around with a trusted adult or painting models. Something the staff are very good at, is identifying what currently helps or works for an individual. During the visit, one child was observed being supported by an adult in a new, but ongoing, doctor roleplay – other staff know they may be called upon to be 'treated' and a range of learning was taking place through this activity.</p> <p>The school work hard to be accessible and available to all parents and carers and feedback from parents is very supportive of the school and its approach. The school's psychotherapist works closely with families. During the visit I was able to meet and speak with a parent governor who explained how the school's use of trauma informed approaches and work with the family had ensured her son was supported and had a positive school experience following some previously extremely difficult times in mainstream. The relationships built with parents and carers help them feel valued and supported – they have access to the psychotherapist as an individual or as a family and she has run very successful 'coffee mornings' where parents have been able to share their experiences, feeling heard and supported.</p> <p>The school's TIS practitioners offer support to colleagues and are available to help with ideas and advice. They model good practice which has helped to support the culture across the school – they are well-</p>	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		3
21	Whole-school training in the evidence-based research on emotional regulation		3
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		2
23	Senior Leaders to be aware of high stress states in staff		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		2

		<p>respected and their skills and knowledge are recognised and utilised well by the senior lead team. The head teacher offers an open-door policy to staff and recognises that members of staff may need space and time for reflection and restoration. The use of 'change of face' is recognised and used across the school as a supportive mechanism. The high adult to child ratios also allows for a good level of mutual support.</p> <p>Whilst the staff have access to an adult-only staffroom, this is an area that it is hoped will be improved as part of the school's new-build. Staff, amongst other stakeholders, have been consulted on the plans and this is an area they have been able to provide some reflective and insightful feedback.</p>	
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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 were observed responding to pupils positively and taking time to listen to them. The school have received Trauma Informed Schools' Whole Staff Training along with other training which focussed on listening skills.	3
26	Key staff trained in reflective conversations to enable vulnerable children to edit the inaccurate narratives they have told themselves	Shared case-studies and conversations with staff demonstrated how staff have used reflective conversations to support and enable vulnerable children to edit their inaccurate narratives. Children spoken to during the visit were able to clearly reflect upon how, with the help of the adults in school, they had positively changed over time and describe how these changes have affected and helped them. They were happy to talk openly, with maturity and honesty and had clearly been supported to make sense of some very painful life events.	3
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.	School staff have been trained to support children through a range of creative medium to symbolise their painful life experiences and understand the need to provide a range of supportive structures including art and music, role-play and sand-play.	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	PHSE is covered daily; discreetly, incidentally, and as needed. The school's PHSE curriculum is tailored to suit the particular needs and understanding of their pupils, at appropriate levels which will provide supportive development opportunities and allow for progress. PHSE is taught and experienced both inside the classroom and outside and is the responsibility of every adult.	3
29	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on the neuroscience and psychology	The school have recognised areas of PHSE that need specific tailoring and additional input due to the nature of the children – an example of this has been identified	3
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	as the poor sleep habits that many of the children have. Having been identified, this is an area the school is keen to target and involve the wider school community as well as parents and carers. The school work hard to encapsulate the best opportunities for each individual and this includes supporting them to become the best they can be and prepare them for their secondary education. The school offer some staff regular supervision and the senior lead team, understanding the stresses working in such an environment can bring about, offer an open-door policy for staff. The school are also fortunate to have a psychologist as part of their team and she can offer support to staff also. The head teacher absolutely recognises the benefit of supervision, particularly for staff working in the special sector, and is keen to provide this for his team.	
31	PSHE (Personal, social, and health education) informed by the latest research on mental health and ill-health (causes as well as symptoms)		3
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		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	31
Relate	21
Regulate	16
Reflect	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>

#### The following strengths were evident:

<p>The Court School is led by a passionate, caring and knowledgeable head teacher who has ensured that all staff have been equipped and continue to be equipped with the knowledge and understanding needed to support the pupils in a trauma informed way to best effect. All staff have completed Whole School Training and some have completed the SLT and diploma training. There is currently a waiting list for the diploma such is the enthusiasm amongst staff! The school's TIS practitioners are excellent role models and they support other staff with their practice.</p> <p>Protective factors are securely embedded, for example, the meet and greet on arrival at school each day; each pupil is supported by a member of the staff team on arrival. Pupils are happy and enjoy school due to the positive relationships that exist between them and the adults; these relationships are consistent and PACEful.</p> <p>The adults in school have a sound knowledge of pupils' individuality and personal stories and this is positively exploited to create opportunities to bolster their self-esteem and give each one positive experiences that support their emotional development and wellbeing.</p> <p>The caring nature of the staff team is an obvious asset to the enhancement of relationships across the school. The school strives to secure the best possible realistic outcomes for its pupils with their individual well-being at the centre of decisions. The pupils are safe in school; they are treated equally and have access to emotionally available adults throughout the day.</p>
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### Areas to consider developing:

<b>Protect</b>
<b>Relate:</b>
<b>Regulate:</b> Is there potential to have a school dog /other pets as part of the plans with the new school build?
<b>Reflect:</b> Whilst TIS practitioners are required to access supervision to maintain their practitioner status, other staff do not yet have access to regular supervision. It would be beneficial for staff to have access to regular timetabled supervision – possibly as teams. We discussed the importance of the Head teacher having access to regular independent supervision in order that he can support his own wellbeing – this is crucial and something for the governors to support.

### Evidence of Impact (e.g., attendance/exclusions/learner engagement/learner outcomes/staff absence/retention etc)

The rate of exclusions over the past five years has significantly decreased. Pupil's wellbeing is monitored and evidence suggests it has improved and continues to overtime. Ongoing TIS training for staff to ensure sustainability especially considering the pending new builds for the school.
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### Best practise / case study requests: (if applicable)

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### Further support discussed/required:

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### Overall Assessment:

The Court Special School provides a supportive, caring and nurturing environment in which the children are supported by every member of staff from the minute they arrive at school to when they leave. The school's TIS practitioners are excellent role models and they continually support other staff with their practice; the school are committed to upskilling staff and place high value on ensuring they have a sustainable ongoing training programme in place. The children are happy and enjoy school because the relationships between them and the adults are consistent and PACEful. The school is led by a passionate, caring and knowledgeable head teacher whose values are child-centred and support an ethos of supporting the children as individuals in order that they can learn and achieve their full potential. The willingness and supportive nature of the staff team and governors to implement trauma informed approaches to support the direction of the school is clearly evident.

### Trauma Informed School Award:

- ☒ Recommended
- ☐ Deferred pending further evidence

### Copies sent to:

- ☒ Headteacher
- ☒ Rachel Toller (TISUK)

Reported completed by:	Lindsay Winterbourne
Date:	18.10.22