



National SMSC Quality Mark Verification Report

Name of School: South Devon University Technical College
Principal: Claire Plumb
SMSC Leads: Alison Hannah and Harry Golding

Verification visits:

11/02/2020

13/03/2020

Dear Ms Plumb,

I am delighted to inform you that as a result of the recent verification visits, South Devon UTC has been awarded **Gold** level of the National SMSC Quality Mark, and this has been confirmed by the Quality Assurance Panel.

The College clearly demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting its students through their SMSC provision. At all levels, staff are proactive and reflect the values and ethos of the College. Many students spoke strongly about the support that they have received in particular, the way that staff listen and respond to their concerns, aspirations and ideas with sensitivity, support and encouragement. I was impressed at the mature attitude shown by students throughout my visit, from casual encounters in the corridor through to the organised discussions held with students. It is clear that the College is enabling most of the students to live through the values. In particular: commitment, resilience and professionalism, as well as politeness, courtesy, respect and tolerance of others. These are values that will stand them well in the workplace and as valued citizens within society.

I would like to thank the students for their warm welcome and their openness and frankness in discussing their views about SMSC at the College. Overall, students were very positive about their experiences, and could recognise ways in which the ethos and values were being practiced in a real and tangible manner. Those students that I spoke with could all give examples of ways in which they had individually felt supported, inspired and motivated by staff and by the wider offer made within the curriculum, links with employers and also with other agencies.

One student spoke passionately, and with pride, about the Mental Health Ambassadors initiative, the training that the students have received and how this had really enabled them to have a presence within the College that is recognised by other students. Another student spoke about the positive manner in which a concern of his (regarding bullying about sexuality) was addressed through a whole College approach to raise awareness, alongside providing individual support.

Students who have been at the College for a long period of time, spoke about how the culture and atmosphere has improved over time; 'Unrecognisable' commented one student, 'The environment is really nice, staff know students very well, they are relaxed with us and give us time. There are places where we can go to be quiet or to get support'.

I would also like to thank the parents and governors who took the time to meet with me. I was particularly struck by the enthusiasm of the parents. One parent commented on how her child had 'Transformed' since attending the College.' Another spoke about the ethos in which 'Everybody is listened to, everybody is done right by'. This parent then went on to describe how her child had grown in confidence, was now keen to volunteer for things and to get involved in a wide range of activities and groups, something which had never happened before. I was also told that there is an onus on the students to take responsibility.

The governor spoke about the very relevant curriculum and how this had been developed to provide the students with the essential skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to be successful in making positive contributions within the world of work. It was clear that the governors value the student voice and make sure that there are regular opportunities for the governing body to consider and respond to the views and wishes of students.

Finally, thanks go to Alison and Harry, for their thorough preparation and detailed information that was given to me throughout my visits. In particular, Alison's commitment to ensuring there is a comprehensive approach to SMSC within the College. She is also supported by the Assistant Principal and together they demonstrate a strong understanding of the value and importance of SMSC.

I congratulate South Devon UTC School on the **Gold** standard of SMSC development that is afforded their students. Young Citizens will be in touch to discuss which aspects of your provision can be shared with other schools.

Strengths of the school's SMSC development:

Through your self-evaluation and our discussions, it is evident that there are numerous SMSC related strengths at South Devon University Technical College; the following are a few key examples:

- The College is ambitious for all of its students. They are well supported both academically and pastorally to develop resilience, ambition and respect for others. Links with the real world through a very wide and comprehensive programme of employer engagement provides students with the confidence they need to be able to make good decisions about their future and to recognise the value and importance of their studies.
- Students are encouraged to develop leadership and to recognise that they can be active citizens that can make a positive impact on the lives of others. Not only does this prepare them well as citizens able to contribute in society as they grow and move into adulthood, it also helps them to recognise the importance of working together collaboratively, to take initiative and to be proactive and responsible – vital employability skills. Examples of these activities are the Mental Health Ambassadors programme, the Eco-Ambassador group and the Royal Navy Field-Gun Challenge.
- School leaders and staff throughout the College make time to get to know students as individuals. Students could easily speak about how individual members of staff had supported or encouraged them. They also spoke about ways in which staff would address any concerns that they had proactively- sometimes looking to address this through a whole-school approach if required. For example, in seeking to support the minority of girls within the College (there is a very high ratio of male to female), staff promoted the '#MeToo' campaign, and engaged a group of boys in looking at their own behaviours towards girls.

- The College seeks to ensure that it is firmly placed within its community and that this, in turn, supports and benefits the students. The College is increasingly being recognised as the 'cultural hub' within the community. Space is provided for other groups and organisations to use, as well as regular activities that link students with other members of the local community as was seen in the work of the Eco-Ambassadors. Local employers are invited to regular 'business breakfasts', another positive way to support students to connect with local employers and for local employers to understand the work that is taking place within the College.
- Links with an organisation that works with refugees, challenges students' perceptions about why people are displaced and seek asylum within the UK. This, along with other work including a regular visit from a member of the Muslim community and visits to places of worship from a variety of faiths, helps students to broaden their understanding of diversity within modern Britain.

Areas for development:

- The College is proactive in supporting students who identify as LGBTQ+. This was clearly testified to by one student. This work could be further extended by ensuring that students have easy signposting to local agencies who can provide support for young people, and to ensure that information and advice is accessible in ways that can be picked up discretely by those students who may not wish to be seen doing so or may not feel able to ask.
- The College recognises that it is located in an area within the UK with little cultural and ethnic diversity. There are elements within the SMSC programme to help students understand and to develop respect for people from diverse backgrounds. Given that many students may move away from the immediate area, and may in fact work within a globally facing company, with colleagues from many countries and cultures, the College should explore ways to enable the students to better understand in a practical and 'lived way' the implications of living in a multicultural, diverse society. There are potentially some valuable opportunities that could be explored within this area with employer partnerships that already exist, in particular, the Royal Navy.
- There are many examples of how the College develops leadership in its students. With its focus on employability and the workplace, the College could take the opportunity to further develop this important aspect and celebrate the potential of its students as the future leaders in engineering, science and technology. These students could be the 'changemakers' who help to tackle some of the significant issues facing our global society in the years to come. It is recognised that industry needs leaders who can motivate, inspire and innovate. Further developing an explicit focus on leadership within the delivery of SMSC could provide a significant enhancement to students and to the overall work that the College is doing in preparing them for the world of work, perhaps not just as 'employees' but as the people who could be leaders within their field.

Verifier: Arnet Donkin

SMSC Quality Mark Manager: Victoria Quijada

Please note that this award is recognised for 3 years and that re-verification should be sought by March 2023