



National SMSC Quality Mark Verification Report

Name of School: Ormiston Venture Academy

Verification visit: 11/05//2022

Headteacher: Mr Simon Gilbert-Barnham

SMSC Lead: Mr Spencer Doggett

Dear Mr Gilbert-Barnham,

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

I was impressed with the way that the visit was prepared and ran so smoothly considering the number of people with whom I spoke to, and that it was a virtual and not face-to-face visit. My thanks goes to SMSC Lead, Mr Spencer Doggett as I very much appreciated the wealth of video and documented evidence provided to support your submission. Having spoken to Mr Doggett on a few occasions prior to the visit, I learnt that Ormiston Venture Academy is a happy hub of activities and opportunities for the students and this really shone through the verification.

I would like to give a special mention to the different groups of students who met with me. It is clear how much they value the opportunities given to them at Ormiston Venture Academy. When asked to describe their school in one word, the following words were shared; 'Encouraging, incredible, fun, inspiring, supportive, unique, outstanding, rewarding, creative, achieving, respectful, communal and world class.' One student went on to say, 'It's a school filled with opportunities and the facilities are excellent!' When asked about how the school promotes and educates on British values, one student referred to the displays in every classroom and how she feels, 'it permeates through so much of the teaching.' Every student was filled with positivity and confidence and really made me admire their genuine appreciation for their school. Included in the groups were former Head Students, Alex and Mollie. When asked what advice would you give the current Head Students, the reply was, 'Listen and let every voice be heard!'

The conversation I had with your longstanding Chair of Governors, Mrs. Lesley King, was also really helpful in understanding how SMSC permeates through school. She explained the journey the school has come on and how parents who attended the former high school are surprised and delighted at the incredible changes that have taken place over the years. 'Everyone at Venture is an ideal role model from the Caretaker to the Headteacher, and they are all valued and appreciated. I feel very proud to play my small role at Ormiston Venture Academy.' She went on to explain how the young people have 'ownership of the school and that the school is set on success for all.'

Thank you also to Mr Joe Parrot for taking the time to talk to me. He explained how the Governing Body looks 'beyond the curriculum at the enrichment and supports the school in preparing the students for the big wide world.' He described the school as ambitious – saying, 'Staff really understand the potential of each student.'

I also had the opportunity to speak to Mr Ian McNally and Mr Joe Waters, who were able to share with me further information on both the career's programme and The Union of Venture Students. Please pass on my thanks. What was apparent in this conversation was the change in mindset of the students of Ormiston Venture Academy from the days prior to Academy status through to the present day. Students have grown in confidence in themselves and their

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abilities and, most of all, in understanding their potential! It is firmly believed and felt that, as Joe said, 'The students are the power that drives us and they have the passion to seek out opportunities. Student voice most certainly is not a 'bolt-on' at Ormiston Venture Academy, rather it is the way of life.' With initiatives like, 'Ready to Learn' and 'You said, we did' the students are the driving force.

Thanks also to the parents, Mrs W and Miss W with whom I spoke, and to the other parents, Mrs B and Mrs S who were both on standby to speak to me. Both mothers were so heartwarmingly honest and positive about Venture Academy and used words such as 'fantastic' and 'helpful' when describing the school. One mum said, 'The Venture Way is the happy way - it's part of their nature now!' It was mentioned that this embedding of the Venture Way carried a lot of students through the pandemic lockdowns. Both mums feel, 'very lucky to have their children at a school where they are 'treated like young adults from the moment they arrive - not just children continuing their education'. It was also said that, 'Ormiston Venture Academy is a school where, 'Students are noticed, pushed and encouraged to do well and succeed. It's a community school where they promote what they have to offer and take a true interest in students.'

A great deal of thanks must also go to Mr Doggett. His insightful enthusiasm and determination to ensure Ormiston Venture's SMSC provision was presented in all its glory shone through the consultation and verification calls.

I congratulate Ormiston Venture Academy on the excellent 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:

- The strength, confidence and true belief in student voice. It really is impressive and it bounced through the screen. Every student that I had the pleasure to speak to had a very personal reaction to the knowledge of the power of their own voice.
- The Venture Way and the reaction and appreciation shown by the students when considering the learning and opportunities they receive at Venture Academy. One student commented, 'If you follow the Venture Way, you are going to get where you want to be!'
- The abundance of opportunities, activities and treats on offer for students. They are thought out to not only support the students or build on their learning, but to give them an opportunity to try new things, explore hidden talents and genuinely enjoy each day at school.
- The parental link is strong and celebrated. Parents are considered an 'essential element' (taken from your self-review reflections) at Venture and this felt confirmed by the parents I spoke to. The opportunity for parent involvement has a lovely angle at Venture, and this is the link between parents and praise for the students. Praise is delivered in many different formats for example; Amazing Postcards posted home, to positive Friday phone calls, which as was mentioned, can make a family's weekend very special!

Verifier: Victoria Quijada

Chair of QA Panel Yvonne Richards

Please note that his award is recognised for 3 years and that re-verification should be sought by May 2025.