

Discovery Multi Academy Trust
Beechwood Primary Academy,
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Chief Executive Officer: Mrs Alison Nettleship
Chair of the Board: Mrs Julia Guy



14th February 2020

Dear parents and carers,

We are really proud as a Trust to be the first organisation in the UK to be awarded a 'Mentally Healthy Organisation Award'. Please see the press release below, the local and national media have been covering this and we are due to feature on ITV teatime news at some point next week.

Discovery Multi Academy Trust in Plymouth is first in UK to win 'Mentally Healthy Organisation Award'

Discovery Multi Academy Trust – comprised of Oakwood Primary Academy, Weston Mill Community Primary Academy and Beechwood Primary Academy, together with the Edison Centre – in Plymouth, Devon, is celebrating being named the first group in the UK to win a 'Mentally Healthy Organisation Award' for its commitment to pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing. The award was presented by not-for-profit The Centre for Child Mental Health and Trauma Informed Schools UK, providers of trauma and mental health training for teachers and education staff across the country.

Formed in 2016, the Trust provides education for nearly 1100 children aged from 3-11 across the Plymouth area. Additionally, the Trust has developed the Edison Centre which supports children with their social, emotional and mental health from schools across the city. All of the Academies have a higher than national percentage of children who are eligible for free school meals and children with special educational needs. At Weston Mill Community Primary Academy, over 41% of children are eligible for free school meals – significantly above the national average of 13.6%. All three schools in the Trust received 'Good' ratings by Ofsted in 2019.

Discovery Multi Academy Trust's change of methodology in supporting its children and families has resulted in significant improvements in behaviour, academic attainment and the wellbeing of both staff and pupils across all three schools. In order to address their specific needs, Discovery Multi Academy Trust implemented a relational approach to supporting behaviour in order to develop a whole school cultural change to boost feelings of belonging and ensure psychological and physical safety for all. All staff members across the Trust are trained in empathic modes of interaction to help support the strategy.

Environments across the schools have been carefully developed to be calm, inviting and safe, with designated places for pupils to go if they are feeling lonely, anxious or need an emotionally available adult. Outdoor spaces and animal therapy are also used across the Trust as ways to promote alternative methods of learning and tackling difficult feelings.

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Director of Education and Training at CCMH and Co-Director of TIS UK, Dr Margot Sunderland, said the Trust had met the key 'Mentally Healthy Organisation' criteria evidencing key interventions to support the very best staff–pupil relationships known to markedly improve learning and academic attainment.

“You can really feel the sense of emotional well being as you walk around the school and the calm caring yet playful relationships that adults engage in at all levels promotes emotional regulation across the whole school culture,” says Suzie Franklin, Education Consultant and TIS UK Awards Assessor. “The school’s ethos is focused around learning as the foundation for life, rather than league tables or exam results. Underpinning this is a comprehensive vision for students’ social, moral and cultural development. “There is Relationship Policy (for staff to ensure that interactions with pupils are reflective regulating and warm) and the school really understands the evidence-based role that relationships play in shaping daily experiences.

Commenting on the Mentally Healthy Organisation Award, Alison Nettleship Leader of the Trust, said: “We are absolutely delighted to receive a Mentally Healthy Organisation Award for our ongoing care for the emotional wellbeing of our Trust, “The approach has transformed our school’s culture and is a result of the hard work of our dedicated team. As a result we have seen an improvement in the well-being of staff and children and this has been a key strategy for facilitating school improvement. As a Trust we believe in the importance of recognising the emotional health of our school communities and we look forward to this ongoing development in the future. Receiving this award continues to validate our approach and we are extremely proud to be recognised as a Mentally Healthy Organisation.”

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alison", written over a white rectangular background.

Alison Nettleship
Chief Executive Officer
Discovery Multi Academy Trust