



Rotherham Charter Gold

9th June 2021

Dear Caroline, Sue and everyone at Brinsworth Whitehill,

It is with immense pleasure that we are able to confirm that your status as a Charter school remains firmly secure and, once again, we are reaccrediting you with Rotherham Charter Gold. Members of the Rotherham Charter team visited school on 25th May 2021. They met with pupils, parents and staff and were treated to the premiere of a wonderful new film showcasing their best bits, leaving without any trace of doubt of Whitehill's ongoing commitment to the Four Principles or Cornerstones of Coproduction: Welcome and Care, Value and Include, Communication, and Partnership. Pupils gushed with pride about their school and parents were at pains to tell us how staff go above and beyond to care for their children. One parent rang in to tell us how her son's experience had been *"transformative."* *"It's a brilliant place. Everyone cares...they genuinely care."*

From the start of your journey back in October 2015, to being first awarded Charter Gold in June 2016, and now being reaccredited for the second time, Whitehill has made things look easy. Time and time again we hear the refrain from staff, *"It's just what we do"* and yet parents are under no illusion of the effort that goes on behind the scenes. What jumps out more than anything is Whitehill's unerring response to supporting children with special educational or additional needs. There is an absolute acceptance of everyone and, where families have experienced rejection from elsewhere, Whitehill makes a point of not only throwing its doors open, but its arms too. What staff see as no big deal is a massive deal to families and, for many, being part of the Whitehill family has been literally life changing. School takes the worry away from parents and children come to school in the knowledge that they are cared for and loved. No problem appears too big to manage. A parent teared up as she explained, *"They go above and beyond."*

As you go around school you are struck by the lovely, calm atmosphere. Happy smiley children fill the classrooms and corridors and adults are seen as friends and equals, or allies. Families know that they can go to any member of staff for support and, in turn, parents are keen to lend their help, with the Friends of Whitehill continuing to grow and run strong. From the Head Teacher to the caretaker, positivity oozes out from everyone who works at Whitehill, filling school with a warm, welcoming vibe. Staff retention is high which speaks volumes and, although Year 6 children may not want to leave, they move on to their next setting full of confidence, well prepared for their next step. Individuality is embraced. Parents love that, *"Children are just left to be themselves."* Small steps as well as big ones are celebrated, and pupils look forward to Fridays to hear who are the latest 'Whitehill Wonders'. A strong motto running through the veins of the school, which we loved, is 'Work hard, dream big.'





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Staff go to great lengths to build relationships with families, their commitment and skill at doing so evidenced by how quickly we were made to feel as if we were at home with friends. Whilst this seems to come naturally, the power of it cannot be underestimated. It is at the heart of everything and really came to the fore over lockdown when families needed that additional boost to keep them going. Both pupils and parents told us that they found the zoom lessons, and class catch-ups in particular, fun, and felt that they got to know their teachers better as a result - especially when wearing leopard print on a Friday! Certain changes to the running of the school day brought into force post-lockdown have actually been so well received by parents that staff have decided to permanently alter their practice as a result; good coming out of a difficult situation. So, staff intend to continue meeting and greeting on the playground each morning, for example, and the "amazing" DoJo system will remain.

The relationships built are so powerful that one parent carer whose son is due to leave Whitehill soon intends to remain on the governing body so as to retain links with the school he handpicked. As well as formal roles, parents are welcome to join the Friends of Whitehill, a parent group which is raring to get going again with activities ranging from the much loved Christmas shop and recently introduced Brinsworth Bake Off to adult-only ones aimed purely at fostering fun and friendship. Amidst the laughter, there are a couple of really important messages we heard which we feel it important to highlight here. Parents are not only encouraged to share their skills and lend a hand but are actively supported in promoting their own professional development, with the result that several have gone on to secure employment at Whitehill. And, whilst fundraising forms a large part of what the Friends of Whitehill does, there is also a big emphasis on both giving to charity and supporting local business. Brinsworth Whitehill aims to be at the heart of its local community and school is very proud to announce that it is responsible for the training of parents and grandparents and subsequent citing of a defibrillator outside its grounds which recently helped save a life.

We could go on, but to finish we just wanted to mention how impressed we are that staff not only look after their families, but also make time to look after each other. Staff wellbeing features high on the agenda and we firmly believe this helps create the relaxed atmosphere that is so tangible around school. There is a noticeboard in the staffroom devoted to wellbeing and Toucan Tuesday will definitely go down as one of our recommendations to other settings looking for ideas of how to make someone's day. Thank you very much indeed for making us feel so welcome. It was a pleasure to visit your lovely setting, and once again witness first-hand the Four Cornerstones in action. Well done Brinsworth Whitehill Primary School!

Kind regards

Lisa Morris & Eva Ogden - The **Genuine Partnerships/Rotherham Charter Team**

