



Work being carried out by St. Mary's School and Bambisanani Partnership, above and below

National honour for work in Africa

By Claire Lomax

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ST Marys School at Menston and the Bambisanani Partnership have been recognised at the Youth Sport Trust 25th anniversary awards dinner held at the Ricoh Stadium in Coventry.

At the prestigious event the school and partnership gained a commendation in the 'Outstanding Contribution to Community Award'.

Catherine Chattoe, Bambisanani co-ordinator at St Mary's, and Barbara Pounder, trustee of the Bambisanani Partnership charity, attended the event on behalf of the school and partnership.

St Mary's started the partnership in 2006 with Mnyakanya High School which is based in one of South Africa's most deprived rural areas.

The partnership uses sport as a catalyst to promote education, health, global citizenship and leadership.

The independent nomination for the award said: "Not only has the partnership between the two schools grown, but St Mary's has reached out to its community of schools in Leeds, involving students and

staff from the School Sport Partnership and two local universities - Leeds Trinity University and the University of Leeds - while Mnyakanya involves children and young people from multiple schools across the region.

"The partnership's work is now vast and constantly developing. It includes sports leadership, sports festivals, cycling initiatives and sports coaching but it has also used sport as a catalyst for so much more: literacy and numeracy projects, curriculum development, support for orphans, further education support and promoting employability.

"The impact on everyone involved - adults and young people - is immeasurable but includes improved health and wellbeing, educational achievement and exemplary citizenship. Above all, St Mary's has demonstrated the power of sport to build communities - locally and globally - in which young people, whatever their background, can contribute and thrive."

Over the past 14 years over 10,000 UK and South African students have participated in Bambisanani activities. Over 280 students from the UK have travelled to South Africa



as volunteers to deliver the various Bambisanani programmes, over 775 South African students have gained the Bambisanani Leadership Award and over 2,750 South African students have taken part in Bambisanani Sports Festivals.

Darren Beardsley, Headteacher at St Mary's, said: "I am extremely proud of the work of St Mary's and The

Bambisanani Partnership.

"The teams involved have worked incredibly hard over the last 14 years and enabled such a transformation in our local community and globally. The impact has been immense. They are thoroughly deserving of this national recognition."

David Geldart, founder of the partnership, said: "This really is a fantastic achieve-

ment and thanks must go to our small army of volunteers and supporters who make all these things happen.

"It was fitting that Catherine and Barbara represented us at the prestigious event; their contribution to this valuable work over the years has simply been immense.

"We have worked closely with the Youth Trust and

without their initial input, as part of the 'Dreams and Teams' programme, this work would not even have begun.

"It was therefore a great honour indeed to be included in the very special 25th Anniversary Awards.

"St Mary's deserves the highest praise for being prepared to put its values into action."