

# Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at Springwell Learning Community

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## 1. Pupils' spiritual development:

Pupils who form the Springwell Learning Community come with little experience of different beliefs, values and experiences beyond their home community. Therefore the curriculum at Springwell is designed in order to raise awareness and understanding of different beliefs, religions, feelings and values in order to develop pupils' empathy, tolerance and acceptance. This principle is embedded in the approach to planning and delivering the Elements curriculum themes in key stages one to three. Opportunities to immerse pupils in learning and bring the out there into the here and now, enable pupils to have new genuine learning experiences and widen their perspectives. Our Opening Minds mornings further enhance the coverage of SMSC by focusing on specific areas that are identified through feedback or through health surveys as being areas of need for more coverage. This year the themes are; understanding the plight of asylum seekers, challenging homophobic language, challenging racist language, healthy bodies healthy minds, awe and wonder (raising aspirations) and community involvement through community day

Examples of how this has been achieved include:

- Professional theatre company performance around homelessness for key stage 4, 'Hidden Depths'
- Theatre company of actors with disabilities 'Life Act' performing 'Friendship is a Challenge' to challenge prejudice around special needs and disability
- Immersive role play workshop around an asylum seeker's story with before and after reflections with pupils

## **Pupils' sense of enjoyment and fascination learning about themselves, others and the world around them is developed through:**

- Immersive learning in the classroom and immersive space
- Engaging ways of teaching to generate curiosity and motivation
- Opportunities for visits and visitors coming into the school
- Work with Open Minds Theatre Company working collaboratively with classes in both the school and Alternative Academy over four years creating unique drama for learning experiences

## **The use of imagination and creativity in pupils' learning:**

This is developed through all the examples above. Music is an outstanding feature of the school and is a strong spiritual feature of the curriculum. The school comes together for a singing assembly every week. Children choose to play instruments as their choice of activity to settle them to learn at the start of the day and as a music intervention if they feel unsettled at any point. Children also practise together at lunchtimes and after school, achieving fulfilment through regular practise and working together. Music is also played in key stage areas and classrooms in order to create the right climate for learning. . Every classroom has a keyboard to enable pupils to access music for calming or for enrichment. Pupils' creative expression is also developed through art taught across key stage 1 to 3 linked to Elements and as an option at key stage 4 both for school and alternative academy children. Art work has a high profile across the school as it is aesthetically and spiritually enriching and re-inforces a culture of original, creative expression.

## **Pupils' willingness to reflect on their experiences -**

Being reflective about experiences can be a challenge for some of our pupils who have experienced trauma and shame. The incorporation of reflection times throughout the day, from using the mood board at the start of the day, to reflections with key workers on how the day is going and in discrete SEAL sessions pupils gently develop the ability to be reflective about themselves, their own actions and those of others. Weekly assemblies also provide an opportunity for reflection on an aspect of SMSC, as well as on the achievements of the week. The incorporation of a 'Growth Mindset' approach to learning has further supported pupils' ability to become more reflective and resilient.

### **2. Pupils' moral development:**

Pupils develop an ability to reflect on their actions and understand about the consequences of them and understanding their responsibility to make the right choice, over time. This development is integral to the work across the learning community and is achieved through restorative practice. This can only be learned in an environment where pupils are given unconditional positive regard and where staff continually model positive moral behaviour.

Moral and ethical issues are also explored in key stage 1 to 3 in the Elements curriculum, PHSEE, Citizenship, SEAL and in Citizenship in Key stage 4. For example in Elements, pupils have explored such issues as animal cruelty, the ethics of fast food, modern child labour, Fair Trade, feet binding and cultural perceptions of beauty.

### **3. Pupils' social development**

Children come to Springwell Learning Community with underdeveloped social skills and have historically struggled to communicate positively in pro-social ways. The curriculum has therefore been constructed in order to address fundamental gaps in social skills development. This is achieved through planned, structured social interaction time rather than 'breaks'. Lunchtime involves staff modelling positive behaviours, expectations and conversation around social eating to support children in learning the appropriate behaviours.

Children struggle with any change or new faces because of their high levels of anxiety. Staff prepare children to welcome new people through preparing them in advance and through SEAL circle time exploring feelings and how to make people feel accepted.

Empathy is also taught to pupils in order to support pupils to develop positive social behaviours. As some children feel little empathy when they come to Springwell, as they haven't experienced much, they are all shown empathy in order for them to begin to develop empathy for others.

By putting all these aspects in place, children can then begin to show kindness to others, be accepting and welcoming rather than mistrusting and fearful. They can then begin to work co-operatively with each other and Kagan structures have been introduced to support this process. Staff use restorative approaches with pupils, so they understand how important it is to resolve any conflicts and are always willing to do so.

## **Pupils interest in, and understanding of, the way communities and societies function at a variety of levels:**

Many children may have little awareness of different cultures or societies when they start at Springwell. The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for

pupils to find out about different communities and societies. For example, in the Elements theme of Caring, children began by looking at 'Where Children Sleep' to find out about children from around the world. In 'Feast and Famine' pupils chose to investigate the food and culture from different countries and compared it to a unhealthy junk food.

Pupils are involved in projects in the local community to extend their awareness of different social groups, such as helping with the renovation of a local Emmanuel church. We have an annual 'Community Day' where pupils are involved in helping in the community. Last year pupils were involved in Conservation at Worsbrough Mill, the Exodus project gardening for the elderly and singing for senior citizens at a residential home. In GCSE Citizenship, pupils are involved in charity and volunteering work. Pupils from Shafton Alternative Academy have campaigned and raised money for a local animal rescue charity and year 11s in school created a Zombie run to raise money for Barnsley Hospital Children's Ward.

4. **Pupils' cultural development is shown by their** appreciation of a range of different cultures is experienced particularly in music where pupils have explored Indian music, jazz improvisation and African drumming. In art pupils also continually develop their cultural awareness through learning about artists from different countries and their styles. Children recently participated in the making of the Springwell Band Aid film, in order to raise awareness of the plight of people in West Africa suffering from Ebola, in an active way. Pupils learn about the local area and heritage through for example, when looking at World War 1, focusing on the story of the 'Barnsley Pals'. They have also learned about the history of mining and local pit disasters in the Elements topic 'Working Children'.

The school provides a range of opportunities to enrich the pupils culturally. These include two music concerts a year, an annual Film Festival, visits to museums and the involvement of Open Minds Theatre Company in the work of the school. There are a range of sporting opportunities such as extra-curricular football clubs for both primary and secondary, swimming club and opportunities to play sport first thing in the morning and every lunchtime. Pupils enjoy enrichment opportunities in technology, current projects include building a chicken coop and renovating a bus!

Developing respect for other religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups locally, nationally and globally is developed through continual awareness raising, such as making the Springwell Band Aid film.