



Dear Parents / Carers,  
**Welcome to this month's edition of the  
Springwell Leeds Newsletter!**

Dear Parents and carers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Springwell Leeds Newsletter. I hope that you enjoy reading about all the fabulous things that have been happening in our sites across Leeds this half term.

It's been a busy half term since we returned at Christmas and unfortunately one which has continued to be disrupted by the effects of the COVID pandemic. I would sincerely like to thank all of you for your continued support throughout this difficult period where the rapid spread of Omicron throughout the country meant that our staffing levels were affected more significantly than at any point since the start of the pandemic. Thankfully, the vast majority of staff and pupils have recovered quickly, but along with many schools in the area and further afield, we have not always been able to secure appropriate cover for staff. This is due to the high demand caused by all schools trying to find cover staff at the same time.

Where we were not able to bring in sufficient, properly qualified people to support pupils safely, we have sometimes had to take the difficult decision to close some classes. Closing classes is always a last resort and is done only when there is insufficient staff available to ensure the safety of our pupils. This is something I hope we will have to do much less frequently as the pandemic eases.

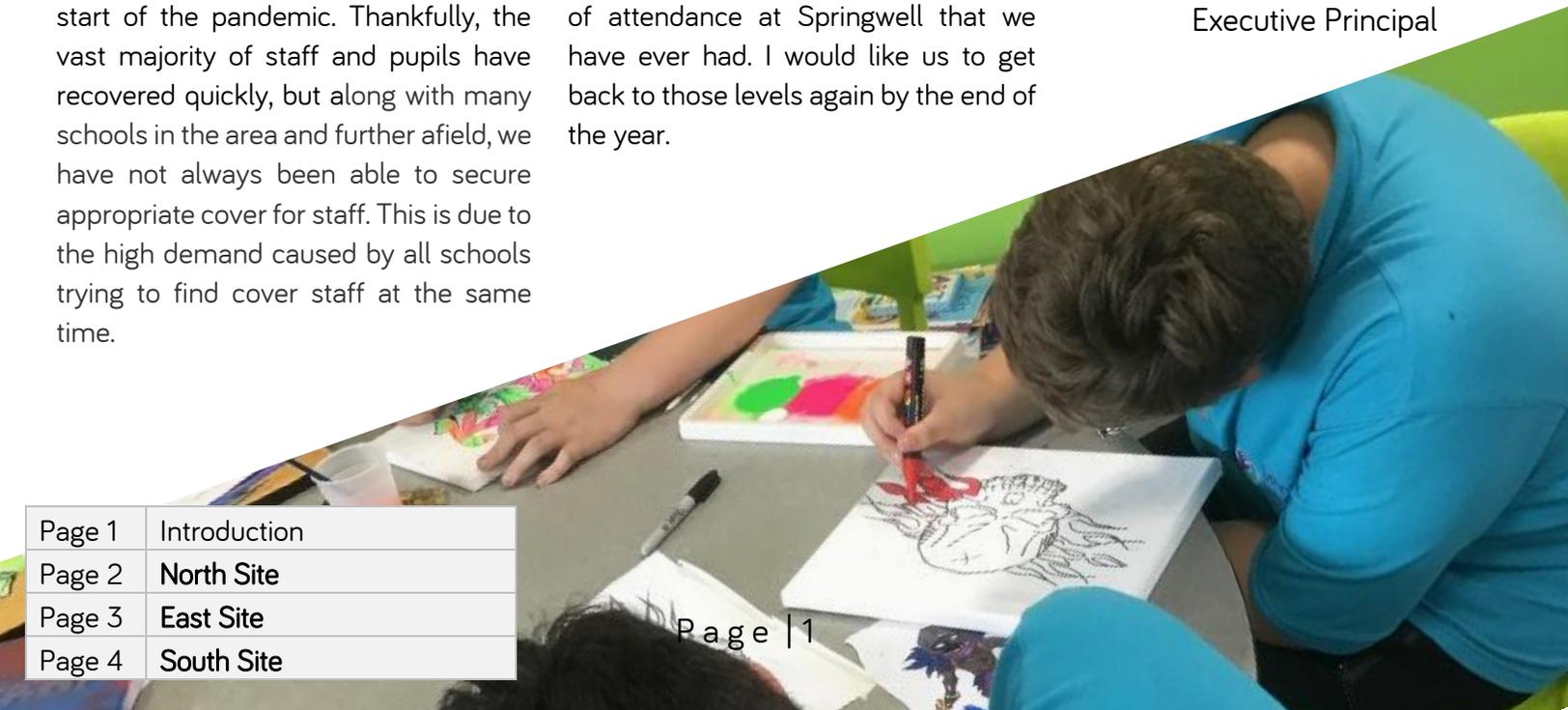
As things return to normal again, it is important that we make sure our attendance also returns to normal levels. At the start of the year, before COVID returned, we had the best levels of attendance at Springwell that we have ever had. I would like us to get back to those levels again by the end of the year.

Now more than ever, it is clear that every day of education counts and every day your child attends will help gain ground on those days lost over the last couple of years. I know that you will agree with us and that you will support your child to attend every day.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy and peaceful half term break and remind you that school opens again at the usual time on Monday 28th February.

*Scott Jacques*  
Executive Principal

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# North Site

## THERAPEUTIC VISUAL ART

Miriam Laville has been working at Springwell Leeds Academy since Spring 2018, as an artist educator and therapeutic visual artist. She is currently based at Springwell Leeds Academy North and Springwell Harrogate.

Miriam is passionate about making a difference for those that she teaches, whether it be individual therapeutic art interventions or facilitating class art workshops. She aspires to instill a belief in each pupil to enable them to achieve at any level in arts and crafts.

Her interventions are used as a safe space for the pupils to settle, regulate and explore their emotions by engaging with appropriate art and crafts activities. The sessions provide quality 1:1 time with an attentive adult whilst learning something new and giving them a sense of pride and achievement. Miriam has over time, built some firm foundations with many of the pupils, so they trust her enough to engage in these interventions.

A year ago, Miriam started to work more collaboratively with pupils and some staff in class workshops, to create some group work which is now on the walls of Springwell Leeds Academy North. The aim for the collaborative art installations is to support transition and inclusivity within the school, by working on the feeling of pride and achievement of pupils by creating visual artworks. Some examples of the fantastic displays and artwork are below. Well done Miriam and all the pupils of Springwell Leeds North.



This term Yellow One have packed their bags, unrolled their maps and made friends across the world.

We started by preparing our 'survival kit'. Pupils worked together to decide what resources they would need to survive two weeks of exploration. They had to weigh up the pros and cons of each item and used their imaginations to describe how they might use each item. Whilst almost everyone agreed we needed to pack matches only Alex felt it necessary to pack a wok!

We then moved on to researching where we might go. Each pupil chose a continent and found out key facts and then shared them with the class. Tia tried hard to convince the class to choose Asia as she loved the sound of the foods on offer there. Sienna, enthralled by the idea of befriending a koala, wanted us to pack our bags and head to Australia. In the end, Oscar convinced us that South America was the dream destination as it is full of amazing plants and insects and home to some incredible geographical features.

We filled out passport applications and started to research the rainforest. We learnt about Julien Koepeke and her amazing story of survival and watched snippets from David Attenborough's The Green Planet. We all agreed to avoid the corpse flower at all costs. We then received a video message from Holly and Alex, friends of Miss Meyrick, who are currently travelling around South America. They shared some of their incredible experiences and inspired us to learn more. Each pupil wrote a letter full of questions about animals, the local people and food. The response we got taught us about coffee farms, rainy afternoons and a lovely dog called Lassie.

Finally, it was time to embark on our adventure. Pupils engaged in imaginative role play about their first afternoon in the rainforest. Pupils were able to recall that in order to find water you had to head downhill and set off in pursuit of a river. On the way we encountered a snake and enjoyed problem solving how to best deal with him. To my astonishment most pupils opted to eat the snake.

Next week pupils will get lost and will discover a map of the rainforest in a forgotten rucksack. Pupils will develop their map skills and will deepen their knowledge of geographical features. Pupils will go on to spend an afternoon outdoors and will be tasked with building a shelter. In English they will take their experiences in the rainforest to generate some creative writing.



# East Site



Thackray Medical Museum

## CANOING

Mrs Fisher's KS4 class has been Canoeing as part of their curriculum. After a rocky start and uncertainty about engaging in the activity, pupils took the plunge and enjoyed a fun afternoon building their confidence, overcoming fear, and working on their team building skills. The pupils showed resilience and learnt how to believe in themselves. A great afternoon was had by all.



## ENGLISH

Every site seems to have a child with such acute anxiety that they almost try to make themselves invisible. Here at the East site, we tried everything to make our 'invisible' child feel visible, worthy, and most of all happy in school. However, this process is rarely remedied quickly and much patience and love is required, often over a very long period of time. Eventually the child begins to emerge from hiding (in our case very literally - from behind a screen in the room). Slowly, such children stop ripping up work, they begin to communicate, and finally they start to be curious.

We are delighted to relate that our very special, very visible, but still fairly shy boy completed his first exercise book full of writing this term - his first book in his whole school journey, despite being in Year 10. He passed Functional Skills Entry Level 3 Reading and will sit the writing component tomorrow. He never rips up work anymore and takes enormous pride in each task. Last week he even began taking homework to try to fill his learning gaps so that he can sit the GCSE English exam next year. This happy boy is confident and motivated and is a pleasure to teach, making our efforts, our team efforts, so worthwhile.

As part of their Asdan and Personal Learning qualifications KS4 pupils visited the Thackray Medical Museum and completed a workshop about muscles, travelled on public transport and enjoyed learning about medicine through the ages. The students were an absolute pleasure and Staff who accompanied them were very proud of them.



## DEN BUILDING

As part of the Elements curriculum pupils have been working on the theme of "Survival". As part of the topic pupils worked with an external survival expert to build dens and shelters, thinking about how they would survive in a hostile environment. Pupils had a fantastic time, and Chris the Den building instructor was extremely positive about the pupils' engagement and attitude. Well done all.



## NUMBER DAY 2022

Friday February 4th saw East site staff and pupils take part in the NSPCC number day to raise awareness for the charity. Staff and pupils "dressed as a digit" and took part in numeracy activities throughout the morning.

Donations were made to the NSPCC.

Well done to all those involved!



# South Site



## EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Here at Springwell, we have been doing lots of work with our pupils around Equality and Diversity, a key part of the PSHE curriculum and our every day teaching. We are so proud of the way they are reacting to our work in this area.

To help our pupils remember about appropriate language, and treatment of others, we have a key phrase which we use across sites: "we do not accept that language, everyone is equal here."

Accepting everyone for who they are is a key part of our inclusive values. We are helping our pupils feel confident in recognising and celebrating differences, and in calling out hate language or behaviour. Our pupils have produced lots of work this term when thinking widely about racism, homophobia and inequality, some of which you can see here on display.



## DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

Over the tail end of this half term, Springwell has managed to overcome many barriers that COVID-19 has tried to put in place, and we have managed to deliver expeditions for pupils aiming to achieve their bronze award and Springwells first ever cohort aiming to achieve their Silver award.

The pupils have read maps around Barnsley and parts of Sheffield and have climbed some impressive hills, whilst making some amazing memories with staff and their peers.

The pupils this year have faced unprecedented barriers to complete the physical, skill and volunteering sections of the DoFE award. Musical instruments have been played, many new sports have been tried and they have improved upon already learny skills.

The great experiences that have been provided to our pupils have been recognised by the award service and an article has also been written in the Telegraph Newspaper regarding the experiences of last year and the pupils excellent work in achieving their awards.

I am personally proud of how the pupils have been resilient and enterprising to ensure they have tasted success.



## SUPPORTING OUR TRUST

Trainee primary teachers from the Exceed Schools Direct programme at Elements Primary School receiving high-quality science training from our in-house expert, Dr Waheed Khan.

The trainee teachers learnt how to effectively deliver the primary science curriculum, with brilliant ways to engage children in working scientifically, learning using fun experiments and developing positive relationships.



TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

