



# Springwell Leeds

# Healthy Schools Report

March 2024



 Health & Wellbeing  
Beacon School



 School Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing Services  
Children and Families Dept  
Leeds City Council

Email:schoolwellbeing@leeds.gov.uk  
Date:12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear,

Thank you for making me feel so welcome during your Healthy Schools external validation on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. I had a very enjoyable 2 days so please convey my thanks to everyone who attended the meetings.

I can confirm that the external validation was successful and am therefore pleased to confirm Springwell Academy's full Healthy Schools status and MindMate Friendly status. The setting is also a PSHE Friendly and School Food Friendly setting.

The outcome was based on information and evidence from a variety of sources, including the school's self-validation using the School Health Check, secondary sources, pre-assessment paperwork and a timetable of interviews for the two selected health themes: Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). Interviews took place with a range of stakeholders including Senior Leadership Team (SLT), parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, and pupils.

### **General:**

- This is a very special place. The kind and empathetic staff have an unwavering, committed belief in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community whilst meeting all social, emotional and mental health needs of the pupils in their care. This has resulted in excellent relationships across school.
- All visitors are given a warm, friendly welcome and this positive, nurturing ethos can be felt around the school. The nurturing approach helps build relationships and self esteem and supports pupils with their behaviour and responses.
- The environment is attractive, well kept, and calm. The numerous and meaningful displays convey a consistent message about the importance of care, relationships and doing the best you can. They are appealing, relevant and reflect the ethos of the school. Displays celebrating the pupils work instil a sense of pride and achievement and pupils were keen to show their work displayed in school.
- Parents clearly trust in the school and all the parents spoken to were unanimous in their praise for the schools inclusive, nurturing ethos. All needs are catered for. They feel that there is a real partnership between the school and its families. Parents felt that the work in school had had a positive impact on life at home for the family. Parents also commented on the care they received for themselves from the school, and that they felt there was no judgement from staff.
- The school's website is rich in information and guidance, easily accessible and up to date.

## **Personal, Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE)**

- PSHE, or Personal Learning, is very well led and managed by Michelle who shares planning and resources with staff and monitors and evaluates her subject thoroughly. She is well supported by the senior leadership team and staff are grateful for the curriculum support for PSHE that she provides.
- Personal learning is linked to the whole school SEMH offer and is at the heart of everything they do at Springwell. It is linked to the vision and aims of the school to Nurture, Inspire and Achieve, the curriculum, wider learning and enhancement, developing resilience, EHCP targets and day to day processes.
- The school uses the PSHE Association SEND curriculum lessons as the core offer but the broader PSHE curriculum is enhanced with many other resources, lessons and enrichment activities to ensure all emotional needs are met at the right cognitive and developmental levels for pupils. Staff ensure lessons are practical and meaningful for pupils. For example, using plaque tablets in relation to learning about good oral health, visiting cafes when learning about healthy eating and cooking.
- In KS4 the school uses the ASDAN series and the BTEC model to revisit and enhance learning in KS2 and 3. They cover all statutory requirements but also look closely at culture and diversity, goal setting and aspirations linked with planning for the future.
- This needs-led curriculum is proactive and preventative as well as reactive to any issues that need addressing. Pupils are taught in a safe, inclusive environment and staff are trusted to make decisions and change plans in relation to PSHE issues that arise. Any issues are tackled swiftly and confidently. The teaching staff are confident, trusted professionals and timetables are flexible to allow for this approach.
- The pupils spoke knowledgeably about their learning in PSHE. They are taught WHY it is important to engage in the personal learning lessons and programme. They were able to discuss the side effects of drinking, smoking and taking drugs. They spoke about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They were able to say why oral health was important and also spoke about the importance of sleep. Pupils were all clear about keeping safe online and spoke in detail about the dangers of sharing images and personal information.
- Monitoring, evaluating and assessment is robust. The school uses the Tapestry system to record and celebrate work in personal learning. Staff record personal learning episodes linked to other subjects. e.g recognising and dealing with feeling angry in team sport sessions in PE.
- Pupils are given many 'real life' opportunities, such as travelling on public transport, trips out, shopping etc to teach about life skills, behaviour and safety.

## **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH):**

- The school's trauma informed, relational and restorative approach underpins their work supporting pupils to form healthy relationships and how to use effective approaches to regulate their SEMH needs. Practice across school is evidence based. For example, staff work hard to ensure pupils support themselves to stay within their window of tolerance.  
The Unconditional Positive Regard approach underpins all work in school and is used by all to ensure pupils do not feel judged, feel safe and valued and individual needs are met.
- Through the SEMH and personal learning curriculum all pupils benefit from a positive and fully inclusive learning experience. The 3 curriculum pathways for students are personalised and based on nurture, play, relational activities and interactions which support learning and personal development. The school dogs help pupils to understand responsibility but also help them to regulate feelings and emotions, reduce stress and develop emotional literacy.

- There are numerous safe places in school for pupils to regulate, such as the soft rooms and the sensory spaces. Each key stage pod has a Care Team, who are all trained in child protection and safeguarding. The Care Team are an integral support for staff and pupils throughout school. They are highly visible members of the staff team and all members of the school community spoke highly of the work they do.
- Routine and consistency across school supports both behaviour and learning. There are key aspects embedded in the routines which enables pupils to have a positive start and finish to their school day. Nurture Breakfast, where breakfast is provided free of charge for all pupils, prepares them for the day. Relationship building and celebrating successes, discussing the day ahead and reinforcing values and routines are key to this.
- Team Time ensures the day ends on a positive note and this session also helps build social interactions and reinforces relationships but gives lots of opportunities for enrichment opportunities too to help support social interactions and cooperation skills. These include, sports, board games, a card school, spending time with one of the (much loved) school dogs and other outdoor activities.
- Wider curricular opportunities for pupils are extensive and broad ranging, including outdoor activities, residential opportunities and real life experiences.
- The school ensures that work around future aspirations are included in the curriculum and pupils are aware of what opportunities there are for success in their future. Many pupils gain qualifications before they leave Springwell including. Building life skills is key to the work staff do and the young people are encouraged to be independent and resilient.
- Staff reported that staff wellbeing is good. It can be a challenging job, but the team really do care for and support each other. All staff are grateful for the open-door policy and the support offered by the Senior Leadership Team. Staff spoke about the importance of the daily debrief, where staff discuss events of the day and share concerns and positive things from the day. The senior leadership team will join debrief sessions to offer practical and emotional support. Staff are grateful for the way they are managed. They feel trusted and valued as professionals.
- All staff are included in, and benefit from, regular and inclusive CPD and there are planned induction procedures for Early Career Teachers and new staff who join the school. Staff spoke very positively about the training they had accessed from the school, trust and external agencies.

## Healthy Eating

- There is a whole school approach to food and a positive and nurturing ethos around healthy food and nutrition. All food is served free of charge to all pupils. The day starts with a fully funded nurture breakfast for all pupils.
- The schools understanding of the links between nutrition and emotional wellbeing and behaviour is a real strength.
- The school has made several changes to improve food provision. There have been significant improvements since changing catering provider, the re-training of catering staff and move towards freshly prepared food being key.
- Food at lunchtime is freshly cooked, hot and tasty and meets the School Food Standards guidelines. Pupils are very positive about the school meals. Healthy options, such as fruit, are available every day and pupils are encouraged to try different foods.
- The lunchtime space is a calm, caring and nurturing food environment, which has a positive impact on pupil wellbeing. Displays are attractive and informative.
- The atmosphere in the hall was calm and there was an excellent ratio of staff to pupils. Staff eat with pupils every day.

- Pupils showed a good understanding of problems which may occur as a result of an unhealthy diet and spoke confidently about obesity and diabetes.
- There is a cooking curriculum in place which is well planned and needs led. The curriculum places an emphasis on the importance of developing cooking skills for all pupils, who have opportunities cook each week with a further focus on budgeting and life skills.
- Pupils have opportunities for growing food. The primary pupils grew pumpkins and made soup to develop their understanding of where food comes from and the food to fork journey.
- The school works hard to ensure that pupils learn how to make informed healthy choices, with a clear understanding of the importance of a balanced and healthy diet. Staff are very confident on the delivery of the healthy eating messages and it is clear that they are well embedded.

### **Physical Activity:**

- The school is providing timetabled PE for every child in school and pupils have the opportunity to swim every week. There are also wide-ranging opportunities for other physical activities.
- All sites have a well equipped and well used Sports Hall which is always busy!
- Pupils are enthusiastic about physical activity opportunities. They shared the different activities they had enjoyed such as a trip to Ninja Warrior, basketball competitions, climbing, ice skating and a trip to Herd Farm. The school also participates in the Bikeability programme.
- They understand that it is important to keep fit and healthy and could talk about the links between lack of physical activity and illness and obesity. Breaks are built into the day where needed and pupils understand the benefit activity and being outside has on their emotional wellbeing.
- The outside area is very well equipped with various areas and a range of equipment. Pupils are well supervised and encouraged to take part in numerous physical activity opportunities at breaktime. As well as timetabled opportunities for activity, pupils often choose physical activity opportunities as part of their team time and as intervention.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in other outdoor learning and adventurous activities. The school regularly takes pupils into the local area and the primary pupils have the opportunity to go out walking, playing and shopping in the local area once a week. Older pupils benefit from real life experiences when learning about travelling and road safety etc.
- School also engages with external providers and partners, such as the Leeds Utd Foundation who have introduced a range of activities including ultimate frisbee and archery.
- Pupils participate in sporting fixtures across the Trust and have recently taken part in a football competition with other schools at Bishop Young Academy.
- Primary pupils benefit from a Healthy holiday scheme, organised in school by the Care Team with the local authority. The scheme incorporates many physical and outdoor activities for pupils to enjoy.

### **Areas for development**

- To develop a Physical Activity Policy which reflects the excellent, wide ranging opportunities from which the pupils benefit.
- To develop a Whole School Food Policy which reflects the excellent practice within the Healthy Eating curriculum and food provision in school

## **Quotes from the visit:**

### **Pupils:**

"I have been learning guitar and we got to make a band. I was the lead singer."

"I know I work best when I have something to work towards."

"Design Technology is the most fun. It's good."

"I like doing Art and the nurture breakfast is good."

"Teachers don't judge you, they give a different perspective."

"We learn to be more social and grow a better mindset."

"We went to Trinity University and it made me think it would be a good place to go and I could go there."

"Science is the foundation of earth and I never want to miss out on Science."

"Teachers always help you, if you don't understand they break things down into smaller steps."

"We learn about feelings and mental health and different things to help if you need to calm down, like breathing."

"We learn about alcohol and when you are old enough, not to have too much and not to drink if you are looking after children or have to drive."

"Teachers encourage you to get along with everyone and help you understand that other peoples' feelings matter as much as yours."

"It's like a second family here, it's like my second family."

"They encourage you to be yourself. We learn about identity and who we are."

"You can go to any teachers if you are worried or have a problem. Everyone has a good ear."

### **Staff:**

"We are all very supportive of each other as well as to the pupils and parents."

"The best thing is that every day is different but rewarding. It feels like we make a difference." Every class is different and every day brings new experiences."

"I think we work hard at building relationships with parents. It's nice to see them attend events like the coffee mornings and stay and play."

"It is a challenging place to work but it is a happy place too. Staff are shaping everything movement, modelling and trying to reduce barriers."

"The unconditional positive regard system is one of the best things and the way that works for the students. We shower these young people with love and there is always a fresh start, a new chance, alongside challenge and the logical consequences system."

"There is a restorative approach in all our work. If pupils have had a falling out there is always a restorative work afterwards, when it is the right time. Staff and pupils also have a restorative conversation to restore relationships."

"Every day here is fresh and the kids feel that."

"The enhanced curriculum is not a reward, it's a lesson, it's part of the curriculum."

"Springwell allows children to play and have fun."

"We do go on trips. Sometimes it might go wrong but we've given it a chance."

"Staff work incredibly hard to understand our children and what they need."

"Good staff wellbeing is essential. It's always ok to take a breather, you can't pour from an empty cup."

### **Parents/Governors:**

"I couldn't ask for anything more from a school. He really enjoys it here, he runs out of the car every morning!"

"It's really special here. Sending my child here has changed everything, life is just so different for us now. She knows when she is getting angry, she goes up to her room, she recognises those feelings and tries to deal with them."

“Staff here are very supportive. They have made such a difference. My son was absolutely lost, now he is at college. They found he excelled in Music, they rescued him. They have rescued both the boys.”

“I hear about how the day has gone but the focus is on the positive and what’s gone well. They never leave school on a negative.”

“This school has been so good for our relationship. It has helped build a relationship between me and my son. His behaviour has had a total turnaround. He is up with his uniform on, he loves coming.”

“Staff recognise the way things are the minute they see them get out the taxi or approach school.”

Thank you again for making me feel so welcome on the day. I wish you every future success and look forward to supporting you with the Healthy Schools Health Champion Programme.

Yours sincerely,

Gill

Gillian Mullens  
Healthy Schools/ PSHE Advisor