

# Welcome to our latest newsletter

## Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the halfway point of the spring term, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the busy and sometimes challenging weeks we've experienced together. This half term has certainly presented its fair share of disruptions, most notably the unexpected snowfall. I know the closures and rearranged schedules caused difficulties for many families, and I thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigated these unpredictable circumstances. The safety of our students and staff is always our priority, and we appreciate your support in ensuring everyone's well-being during the adverse weather. Let's hope that's it for the wintry weather and that Spring is on the way!

Looking ahead, one area we are continuing to focus on is improving attendance. Consistent attendance is crucial for progress and social development.

Even small absences can significantly impact a child's learning journey. We are working closely with families to address any barriers to attendance, and we encourage you to reach out to us if you require any support. We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, and regular attendance is a vital component of that success.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the incredible dedication of our staff. The half term finished with a training day across the Wellspring Trust which has enabled every member of our organisation to access the training and professional development they need to ensure the quality education for all our students is the best that it can be.

I wish you all a restful and enjoyable half-term break.

### Key Dates

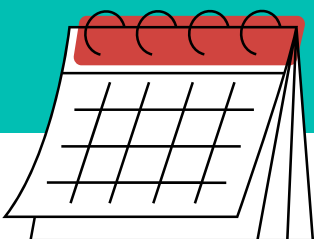
- Schools close Thursday 13th February
- Schools reopen on Monday 24th

<https://springwellacademyleeds.org/school-calendar/>



*Scott Jacques*

Executive Principal



# North Site



## Therapeutic Lego Intervention

Since November Year 2 have been engaging well with a Therapeutic Lego Intervention. The purpose of Lego therapy is to provide a fun and engaging way for children to develop and practice important social skills. Lego Therapy utilises the natural appeal of Lego to motivate children to interact and collaborate with others. These sessions have fostered improved social skills, including sharing, turn-taking, listening, communication, joint problem-solving, compromise, and collaboration. In addition to this, the students' communication skills have been further developed through the use of descriptive language when discussing Lego bricks and the building process. Through successfully completing tasks and having positive peer interactions, it has contributed to increased self-esteem and has allowed the children to develop positive relationships with their peers. The collaborative nature of Lego therapy has also provided opportunities for developing problem-solving skills as the students have worked together to overcome building challenges.

## Our Guinness World Record

Springwell Leeds North joined thousands of participants to set a Guinness World Record! On National Poetry Day, an incredible 43,516 students took part in the world's largest online poetry lesson. Students at Springwell played a vital role in creating the poem, titled "What Do You Think Counts?" Each student had the chance to vote on exciting word choices, line lengths, and stanza structures, making their voices and contributions heard loud and clear. This journey of imagination and teamwork can be read in the children's poetry archive.



# East Site



## DAZL Dance

Pupils at East have had the chance to work with dance troupe DAZL to perfect their dance routines!



## Circus Skills

Pupils engaged with external circus performers to learn some new and interesting skills - well done to all those involved!

## Well done!

Well done to all who sat their Number and Measure exam at the start of January. For many, this was their first ever formal exam and I am immensely proud of the mature attitude and resilience that they demonstrated particularly with the exam being the first day back after the Christmas holidays - Mr Lumley

## World Record

Orange Pod took part in children's poetry joint world record attempt - making it into the Guinness book of Records! Well done to all those involved.

## SEND Summit

We have the privilege of attending the annual SEND Summit at the Civic Hall on Wednesday 12 February 2025. This is a youth voice event for students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities who go to school in Leeds.

The event will provide an opportunity for secondary aged students with SEND to come together to give their views and opinions on service delivery and developments, as well as finding out about services that are available to them.

## Vinyl Steppers

Ohe band visited Springwell East on Friday February 7th - delivering workshops at KS2,3 and 4 as well as a whole school performance.



# South Site



## SENCo Surgery

A huge thank you to all the parents and carers who joined us for our SENCO Surgery this half term. We hope you found the one-on-one time with Mr Knapton-Smith valuable, whether you discussed SEND-related questions, explored support options for your child, or received guidance on medical referrals, services, and Post-16 planning. It was a pleasure connecting with you all! We're already looking forward to our next SENCO Surgery and will be sending out the dates and details shortly after the half-term break. We can't wait to see you there!

## Welcome, our New Assistant Principal!

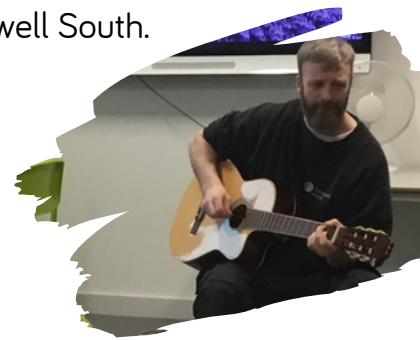
Firstly, I would like to introduce myself as I have not got to meet all parents / carers as yet, my name is Mr. Callender and I am one of the new Assistant Principals at Springwell Academy Leeds - South. It has been an absolute pleasure and joy to get to know your children across the school this half-term, they really have made me feel welcome and I hope to do what I can to make their educational journey at Springwell the best it can be.



In my first few weeks I have been blown away by the amount of experiential learning (school trips) that take place for the students at Springwell South. One of my first projects was to support Mrs. MacFarlane in reviewing the practises and process involved with these trips to continue to ensure that safety is paramount, reducing risks and increasing learning and enjoyment through the school day. This will enable us to offer a wider spread of opportunities out in the community, for the children at Springwell South. These trips are in place to enhance learning, such as Duke of Edinburgh awards, but also further develop their social skills in other settings outside of the school. My first trip with some students took place on Tuesday 4th February to Hollywood Bowl as part of the Duke of Edinburgh award and the children did you and us proud. We are hopeful to use some consultation with students during the next half-term to gain some more pupil voice and get more options for them to access as part of our experiential learning offer at Springwell South.

## South Rockstars

Springwell Leeds South has a new set of rockstars! Three students from Orange Pod have come together to perform a variety of songs in their new band with the expertise of Miss Annakin and Mr Oxley. Currently, their songs have ranged from Come As You Are by Nirvana to You Give Love A Bad Name by Bon Jovi, showing true passion and dedication to music within school. Their commitment has been recognised across school, and we couldn't be more prouder of the progress they have made.



# Attendance



## HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE?

### What if my child is poorly?

We can accommodate children in school with sniffles and minor ailments, and we will try to keep them comfortable, for example giving extra fluids, space to rest or a slightly shorter day. We would ask that parents liaise with us, so we can work out what is best for them on the day. If your child is likely to become dysregulated due to pain or illness, we would welcome a conversation to help keep them settled and safe. Some children really struggle with the break in routine that illness can bring, so it is always worth seeing what we can do to keep this continuity in attendance going.

### What if my child is refusing to attend?

Call us as soon as possible, so we can offer a call with a key adult and/or offer flexible options such as a slightly later start or a meet and greet. Often children feel empowered to tackle any difficulties and barriers to attending if they can speak to staff in advance.

### What if my child missed their taxi?

Let us know straight away. It is the parents' responsibility to get their child into school, so if the taxi is missed, please bring them in or try to arrange a lift with a relative or friend. In rare circumstances, we might be able to support by collecting your child.

### What if my child has a doctor/dentist appointment?

Where possible, please try to book these after school or in the school holidays. We understand emergencies happen, and that it isn't always easy to get an appointment. Please bring your child to school before and after their appointment, to maximise their learning time and ensure they get their attendance marks.

Please remember, we welcome (and indeed expect) children to attend with minor ailments such as a runny nose or an ache or pain. If your child has been sick, give us a call to talk this through - depending on the cause, they may not need to stay home for 48 hours. If your child is unwell but feels able to 'give it a go' please call Reception...they can let the class team know, and we can get in touch if they can't manage the full day. Lots of our children struggle with the disruption to their routine that being away from school brings, so we would always encourage attending wherever possible. We can look to make short term adjustments to support them.

As the half term holidays begin, please use this opportunity to book things like dentist appointments, so these don't impact on attendance next term.