

Life Skills at St. Michael's

At St. Michael's, we use the term Life Skills instead of PSHE. We feel that this name is a clearer way of describing the subject for children, parents and teachers. We recognize the importance of life skills to allow all children to learn and in this fast-changing, virtually influenced world which we live in, it is increasingly important for children to learn how to keep themselves safe, happy and healthy. Life Skills units are catered to fit the requirements of the wider community in Bowthorpe, using elements of the JIGSAW scheme of work, supplemented by other resources and outside agencies. In lessons, we centre learning around mindfulness, teaching the children how to self-regulate their emotions and we use discussion and group work around meaningful topics, to stimulate learning. Teaching our children how to navigate their world, with all its contradictions and opportunities, is of paramount importance to us at St. Michael's.

Intent

Academic We aim for every child in our care to achieve their academic potential and we also acknowledge that our children have different starting points and different factors in their lives which may help or inhibit them reaching this. The Life Skills curriculum must therefore flow through everything we do at St. Michael's, within specific Life Skills lessons and across the wider curriculum.

Our children will be taught about physical and mental health and amass a 'toolkit' to use when they need to regulate their emotions. We will support our children to set goals, to aim high and we will then help them to break these aspirations down into the steps required to meet them. **For example, each year group in September will have the opportunity to look to the year ahead and children will set out what they would like to achieve. These goals will be revisited in July, with children reflecting on their year, before again looking to the future. Here, Year 6 children will look towards high school and their dreams and goals for their future.** In Life Skills we will also teach our children the importance of relationships, within home, school and the wider world. Working cooperatively is key to academic success and children will be supported to cultivate respectful relationships with people from diverse backgrounds. Teachers will help our pupils to understand the importance of collaboration, how to make their opinions clear and how to constructively challenge those who

they disagree with. **As an example, every year group studies the unit 'Celebrating Differences'. The overarching Year 3 objective is "I can tell you how being involved with a conflict makes me feel and can offer strategies to help the situation. e.g. Solve It Together or asking for help." In Year 6 the overarching objective is "I can explain ways in which difference can be a source of conflict or a cause for celebration. I can show empathy with people in situations where their difference is a source of conflict or a cause for celebration."** We will instill within our children the confidence to put themselves forward by giving them a platform to shine. Children will learn to recognize feelings which inhibit their academic success, such as self-doubt, to understand that these feelings are normal and learn how to overcome them.

Character At St. Michael's, we recognise that service to school and the wider community is important to our pupils' future successes. Life skills lessons help us to look at our community, to celebrate our similarities and differences and discuss how we work together for a common goal. **An example of this is the overarching objective for Year 4's unit Being Me in My World. "I can explain how the actions of one person can affect another and can give examples of this from school and a wider community context."** We also use our lessons, to develop moral character virtues. **In Year 5, the children use a ribbon design to create their own anti-racism campaign. In another lesson, they create a snakes and ladders-style board game offering advice to people who feel they are being bullied.** Spiritual character virtues are also developed in lessons such as the 'emotional well' in Year 6. **Here the children see how positive feelings support emotional health and make them and others around them feel good.** With a continual emphasis on self-worth and potential we will inspire our children to perform, to both familiar and unfamiliar audiences. **As an example, the overarching objective of Year 3's Dreams and Goals unit is "I am confident and positive when I share my successes with others. I explain how these feelings can be stored in my internal treasure chest and why this is important."**

Behaviour Life Skills at St. Michael's is a key curriculum subject which we use to foster those positive traits set out in our curriculum intent; respect, consideration of others, cooperation and managing conflict. Each aspect can be cross referenced to lessons throughout school, which are revisited throughout the year. **As an example, in Year 6 the children look at a scenario which involves bullying but which results in fire damage to a school building. The children**

work together to pick apart this situation, identifying the behaviour shown by those responsible, but also recognizing the impact this act would have on the wider community. Mental health and well-being is of paramount importance and today's fast changing world and we have therefore selected a scheme of work which puts mindfulness and mental health at the forefront of lessons. **Each Life Skills lesson begins with a moment of mindful reflection, using breathing techniques to ensure children are ready for learning but also equipping the children with self help techniques to use away from the lesson.** Safe behaviours inside and outside school are taught and encouraged through a carefully planned scheme of assemblies, focusing on real life hazards such as electrical safety, rail safety and water safety.

Implementation

In September, a full audit of PSHE (as it was formally recognized) took place, prompted by the statutory changes laid out by the DfE in their RSE and Health Education document. All teaching staff received two days of professional development in September 19, delivered by Josie Raynor-Wells from Educator Solutions. This inset looked at all aspects of the new statutory requirements, with support on teaching lessons on gender reassignment and sex and puberty.

Through consultation with Educator Solutions, Joe Shailes (Life Skills subject leader) purchased the JIGSAW PSHE scheme of work, for use across the federation. With content mapped out for each year group on 6 keys units (Being Me in My World, Celebrating differences, Dreams and Goals, Healthy Me, Relationships and Changing Me), the St. Michael's staff began teaching the scheme immediately.

In November 2019, a working party was used across the school to discuss the early success of the scheme. It was felt that some elements were not required at St. Michael's; we have a values system in place and cross school weekly celebrations were not required. Each lesson's content was extensive and it was also decided that year groups should be selective with lessons and not simply teach the scheme in its entirety, without consideration of each child's needs.

On January 21st 2020, Joe Shailes attended training from Jigsaw on how to specifically use the Jigsaw scheme of work to deliver RSE, in line with the

statutory changes to be implemented by September 2020 (now September 2021).

January 2020 also saw the start of our Life Skills consultation which was used to identify the needs of our Life Skills curriculum. This was performed in three stages.

1. Parents were engaged either face to face or online to rank, in terms of importance, the different aspects of health education.
2. The children took part in activities where they were asked to imagine themselves as older children and they shared their perceived challenges and fears of growing up. Upper school children were invited to ask questions on any Life Skill areas which they were unsure about.
3. Teachers and leaders from each year group were asked to identify their perceived needs of their year group and rank them in order of concern.

The results of this consultation are listed in the Life Skills Consultation Report shown below, however as actions, First Aid lessons across the school by an external provider were organised (cancelled due to Coronavirus). Action points were also cross referenced with JIGSAW to ensure coverage of objectives across the school.

This academic year, the third phase of consultation is to be revisited, with teachers and leaders looking at the needs of their new cohort.

Impact

We use formative assessment to assess the children's knowledge and understanding of Life Skills objectives. We believe that assessment should not always rely on written responses and that verbal explanations allow every child to demonstrate what they have learned.

Monitoring by the subject leader involves group discussion related to the objectives covered in class and is supported by the class floor book. Floor books are evidence of the learning which has taken place in each lesson. It includes pupil responses, key objectives and evidence of learning related to these objectives. Floor books are also a useful way to revisit prior learning.

We also use assessment grids within each Life Skills unit to identify children working towards, at expected and above expected levels of attainment, relating to unit objectives.

Lesson observations, floor book evidence, pupil interviews and assessment grids are reviewed termly and are used to directly inform future teaching and learning.