



## **Implementation of statutory RSHE in a secondary school – a case study by Armthorpe Academy.**

Armthorpe Academy is a secondary school in Doncaster. There are currently 576 students on roll, pupil premium levels totalling 38.8%, 8.2% of students with English as a second language and 16.8% of students with SEND. We were an early adopter of the RSHE framework but prior to that had no provision in place. When the new statutory requirements were released in 2019, we worked hard as a school and a Trust to ensure our provision was of a high quality. PSHE, incorporating RSHE, is now taught to all students for one 55-minute lesson each week by non-specialist teachers.

### **RSHE policy and curriculum review process**

The review of our policy and curriculum development was informed by relevant data in order to ensure we were meeting the needs of learners. A local survey tool, the Doncaster pupil lifestyle survey, provided us with an insight into the thoughts and experiences of students in Year 8 and Year 10. It gave staff vital information about student's prior knowledge of RSHE related topics, what they do well and areas of knowledge and skills that could be improved. For example, data showed that a large number of students in Year 8 did not use the dentist on a yearly basis and only brushed their teeth once a day. Alongside this, we also created a school student voice questionnaire to gain a well-rounded view of learners' lifestyles, gaps in their knowledge and prior learning from primary school. This data provided us with a good starting point for prioritising the outcomes in the guidance in order to address learners' areas for development. We created a draft RSHE policy and curriculum plan that was approved by the designated governor, before beginning our parent consultation.

### **Parent engagement**

Our first step was to take the policy and curriculum plan to a small group of parents (parent forum) for their approval before it was uploaded to the school website with a feedback section sent directly to the PSHE lead. A text was sent to all parents/carers asking them to review the policy and curriculum and provide feedback if they felt appropriate. We only had a few responses which, with more clarification of the topic being taught, were easily rectified. No parent or carer asked for their child to be withdrawn from any lessons which demonstrates how supportive parents are of the new statutory framework.

### **Leadership development**

The PSHE co-ordinator and SLT link attended a number of online training days, the most beneficial being led by L.E.A.D. Equate TSA. This was supported by the purchase of resources for RSHE such as condom demonstrators and testicular and breast screening items. Our PSHE co-ordinator is also a member of numerous social media forums on both Facebook and twitter which often provide information about courses being run in the local area and support effective sharing of resources between PSHE leads. The trust also holds termly PSHE network meetings in order to share and develop resources and improve overall quality of PSHE lessons which have proved very useful.

### **CPD for teaching staff**

In order to prepare non-specialist staff to teach the wider PSHE curriculum to a high standard, we used online training resources. The training covered the basics of how to teach effective PSHE safely

such as having a class contract and how to deal with difficult conversations – our teachers found this very useful as it provided them with the tools to structure a PSHE lesson.

As a school, we find it imperative that there is a strong 'culture' for PSHE, that all staff and students understand the importance of the lessons. At the start of the year, all PSHE teachers met to discuss culture setting within PSHE. Here, expectations were discussed, and questions asked. All staff are expected to: read through lessons and research the topics prior to the lesson; create a class contract; identify a 'best piece' of work for each lesson which is used for assessment to ensure that all students are progressing and learning content relevant to them. Whilst students may make notes throughout the lesson only one 'best piece' of work is added to their folder at the end. By building this strong culture for PSHE and setting high expectations, teachers have greater accountability for planning and delivering high quality lessons. Learning walks were used in the first term to improve the confidence of teachers and thereafter to ensure that the quality of teaching remained at a high level. The majority of staff appreciated the support, it worked particularly well during a lesson on eating disorders and healthy coping strategies.

Another way we have supported the non-specialist teachers is by ensuring that all the lessons are pre-planned by a specialist teacher, this ensures that the correct content is being taught during the lesson, making them more purposeful and beneficial for the students. It also reduces the workload of the class teachers, allowing them time to research the topics covered in each lesson to ensure they are fully prepared. By using pre-planned lessons, it also ensures that all lessons and resources are quality assured. At the end of each half term, teaching staff are given time to sit with the PSHE co-ordinator to evaluate lessons and give feedback on what worked well and what could be improved, ensuring that all lessons are fit for purpose.

In designing the timetable, the specialisms of teachers were taken into account to ensure that, in the absence of specialist PSHE teachers, sensitive or difficult topics are taught by teachers of relevant subjects, for example social science and science teachers.

## **Resources**

Whilst developing the curriculum we used a mixture of resources from online sources and those that have been created by specialist teaching staff. This approach has enabled us to create a curriculum that is relevant, up to date and well resourced. Staff have spent time researching the most up to date information regarding challenging topics such as how substance misuse can impair your judgement, types of FGM and contraception. By resourcing more sensitive content, teachers are upskilled to have this knowledge but also deliver engaging lessons to get the best from students; for example, we bought some Beer Goggles from an accredited source to explore the impact of alcohol. Students put the goggles on to experience how alcohol affects the senses. The lessons that this resource is used in include alcohol and driving, unsafe sex and the impact that drugs can have on your basic functions.

## **Differentiation**

The variety of resources enables staff to differentiate appropriately for their groups. Some of our less able groups need to have concrete examples of 'real-life' scenarios and contexts to be able to develop their understanding and processing of the issues implicit within the PSHE curriculum. All resources have differentiated outcomes which enable teachers to teach to the top and scaffold for those students who are less able. There is also a greater focus on mastery in less able groups before the content moves on, this enables the weaker students to work through the curriculum in a more

bespoke way. All the above, has created a meaningful and engaging atmosphere within lessons as students do not feel over- stretched or under-challenged.

### **Ongoing review**

At the end of each term, class teachers review the lessons they have covered in order to improve them if necessary. The whole curriculum is reviewed on a yearly basis in order to ensure the content is still relevant to our students and also meeting guidance set out by the DfE. We re-use the learner RSHE survey at the end of the academic year to check understanding and make sure any misconceptions present at the start of the year have been addressed. If at this point misconceptions or gaps in learners' knowledge remain, the next year's curriculum would be updated as appropriate to meet their needs. For example, some students were still unaware that sharing explicit images of somebody under the age of 16, even if you didn't take the photo, was against the law. More information about this issue was added to the curriculum and it was readdressed the following academic year in more detail. We are keen for our curriculum to be adaptive to the needs of our learners at any given time, therefore if they are encountering a particular issue, this will be addressed in lessons at the time and within adaptations to the next year's curriculum as required.