

---

## Our Elements Curriculum

### Intent

All pupils in key stages 1, 2 and 3 are taught the Elements curriculum. The aim of the curriculum is to bring learning to life in a way that develops the whole child.

The curriculum is based on a thematic model, often found in primary schools. Each topic lasts for a half term and has at its heart a story or narrative. These narratives flow through each topic which encourages both a love of reading and writing, and also develops student empathy.

#### **What principles drive the curriculum?**

- A whole school nurture approach, securing a safe place to learn.
- Literacy underpins the curriculum.
- Differentiation, personalisation and interventions to meet pupils' special needs.
- Engaging ways of working.
- Engaging and relevant curriculum.
- Promotion of equality and diversity.
- Aspiration and achievement.

*"This is an outstanding school. All groups of pupils, including those with different special educational needs and disabilities, boys, girls, and pupils in care are achieving extremely well overall. Leaders and managers at all levels have created an excellent ethos for learning. Very effective strategies are in place to ensure that teaching is of the highest order and pupils get the most out of a very rich curriculum, which provides equally well for their academic and personal development needs." Ofsted*

The key features of a topic in the Elements curriculum:

- **Promotion of positive relationships:** Creating a safe place to learn is a core part of the Elements curriculum. Each child is given a safe base where they can settle to learn.
- **Engaging teaching and learning approaches:** Each topic begins with a "wow way in" to capture student curiosity. The pedagogical approaches used within the class foster active student participation, these include immersive learning, drama for learning, and the use of technology.
- **Stories and narratives:** Literacy is prioritised within the curriculum. Embedding a story or narrative at the heart of each project helps students become confident in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- **Extended writing sequences:** Every topic includes several extended writing tasks – these are outcomes that all planning builds towards. The use of scaffolding enables students to achieve a high standard of written work.
- **Real learning outcomes and wow ways out:** Work has a real purpose, and each topic concludes with opportunities to share the work with a wide audience. An example would be the living museum that key stage 3 curated at the end of the World War 2 topic.

## **Implementation**

*“The teamwork between staff to support learning is exceptional. Comments from pupils include ‘adults make learning fun, they know us very well and help us when we get stuck’” Ofsted.*

There’s a key pedagogical principal that encompasses the Elements curriculum – if children are interested, engaged and curious they’ll want to learn and will become passionate about their learning.

Yearly planning is then developed from the rolling programme and medium term plans show the intended overview for learning for each half term. Phase planning then breaks this into smaller integrated learning sequences. Scaffolded activities are prepared so that the writing outcomes and thematic work can be achieved by all.

With this in mind all Elements topics start with a “Wow Way In” – a learning event which captures the imaginations of the students and lays the foundations for the project.

Wow ways out at the close of a theme give a reason or purpose for the learning.

Each class teacher has responsibility to deliver the core curriculum to their own group. They will be supported by colleagues through staff development sessions and collaborative working which will allow expertise to be shared across the Learning Community.

Teachers personalise their planning to meet the needs of their individual pupils. Each learning activity is planned to be engaging, so resources, artefacts, films, books and visits are prepared.

The teachers delivering the Elements curriculum allow some of the planning to be informed by the interests of the students, so each theme does have a lot of flexibility.

At the heart of the planning is the desire to make the learning fun, engaging and rigorous for the students.

### **▪ Literacy**

Promoting a love of reading and writing is at the heart of the Elements curriculum. This is achieved by selecting interesting and engaging texts, films and other stimuli which complement the umbrella themes in each topic.

Reading is a regular feature of the school day, whether the children are reading themselves or being read to, and there is an expectation that all will read.

The completion of extended writing is also a core expectation of each topic. This outcome is achieved by creating scaffolded learning sequences which equip the students with the enthusiasm, skills and confidence that enable them to write high quality pieces.

With excellent teaching, and engaging subject matter, high expectations can translate into brilliant outcomes.

At Springwell, how the curriculum is taught is given as much priority as what is taught.

One of the underlying pedagogical principles in the Elements curriculum is that lessons should be interesting and engaging to the children.

One of the ways this is achieved is through immersive learning environments and lesson experiences. Through use of props, video, music, lighting and technology, our learners are able to develop a rich understanding of the themes.

## ▪ **Use of Technology**

Giving the pupils the opportunity to creatively use the technology is crucial in preparing them for the future. Pupils are going home, using the apps we have used in school in a more constructive and useful way. Our school blog has grown immensely with children finding a purpose to write and share their learning.

The blog continues to provide our pupils with a platform to write for a real audience, therefore giving them a purpose to write. When pupils have a purpose, it impacts positively on the quality of their writing. We are now in a position to use social media creatively to share our pupils' work with the world, attracting feedback to the blog, raising self-esteem, motivation with the aim of enhancing academic attainment.

Technology has transformed the learning environments of Springwell from four walled classrooms to no walled classrooms, with the pupils having a wealth of information at their fingertips. As mentioned previous, never before, were we able to connect, communicate, collaborate and create on a local, national and global scale with such ease and transparency.

## ▪ **Wellbeing (PSHE, SEAL & Global Learning)**

The Wellbeing curriculum is integrated into the Elements curriculum. This supports the development of the whole child and in particular enables them to develop the students' social and emotional skills. Immersive learning and exploring narrative help students to become more open minded and develop a greater sense of empathy.

A Growth Mindset approach is used to help pupils develop resilience and self-confidence. Pupils are encouraged to engage with their negative feelings and learn how to overcome them. This enables them to achieve.

Positive nurturing relationships are at the heart of the pedagogical approach and all staff are encouraged to develop a deep understanding of child development and psychology.

This creates a calm and purposeful learning environment with clear routines, structures and rituals which help the pupils settle and learn.

## **Impact**

The students at Springwell clearly enjoy their learning while achieving high outcomes. Many children arrive at the school with a variety of complex needs and barriers to learning. The Elements curriculum is designed to ignite the curiosity of each child and help them to overcome these barriers.

By emphasising literacy within the Elements curriculum, pupils become confident readers, writers, speakers and listeners. Literacy outcomes are high and the quality of work produced exceptional.

The focus on Wellbeing means the curriculum encourages pupils to develop as rounded individuals who have empathy, reflect on their learning, and have a more resilient outlook.

Allowing planning to be flexible enough to follow the direction pupils are interested in promotes engagement and can help the teachers to learn new things as well.

"Unconditional positive regard" gives the pupils and staff the safety net of being valued. Successes and triumphs are celebrated and fresh starts are given.