

Case Study



Bishops Lydeard Church of England Primary School, near Taunton, Somerset

Developing Emotional Wellbeing- including drugs awareness, in rural England

With its 16th century coaching inns and picture-postcard cottages, first impressions of main street at Bishops Lydeard are generally of the traditional English village. Situated between the wilds of Exmoor to the West and the Quantock Hills to the North, this small village near the market town of Taunton is in the heart of the West Country and some of England's finest countryside. But contemporary life beyond the tourist brochures is not always quite as straightforward as the image may suggest.

Local housing is a mixture of private and social housing with two large Estates where drug-use and heavy drinking have both become problems for some young people.

In 2003, Mrs Anne Smith, Deputy Head of Bishops Lydeard Church of England Primary School, arranged for Life Education to visit the school the following Spring and deliver sessions from Reception to Year 6, having been impressed by a demonstration of Life Education's work and recognising how it could support the school's own PSHE and SEAL work.

Life Education delivered sessions for children at Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) and Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Key Stage 2) about how the body works and how to keep physically and emotionally healthy and safe. The specially-trained



educators provided classes which were fun, using active learning strategies and innovative teaching techniques including songs, brain games and role play. The use of videos, song and a puppet – Harold - were used as prompts for discussions, many of which supported the school's SEAL work on emotional wellbeing -such as recognising how personal behaviour affects others - listening to one another and keeping safe.

Mrs Smith also felt that the Year 6 (Key Stage 2) sessions were particularly relevant as the Life Education visits generally take place in March at a point in the school year when many pupils are beginning to feel anxious about their transition later in the year to Secondary School.

The topics covered in the Year 6 sessions included drugs and bullying – both areas which Mrs Smith felt were especially relevant to this group. The sessions explored pupils' attitudes towards drugs and the facts about their effects on them and their bodies and also, with a view to providing pupils with skills to handle unwanted peer pressure, worked on self-esteem, communication and assertiveness skills

Life Education has continued to visit the school annually since 2004 and Mrs Smith comments: "Emotional wellbeing is very important to the ethos of the school and so we're always looking for ways to develop that. After the Life Education sessions, the children *remember* what they have learnt and they come out not only better informed about drugs and how to take care of themselves, but can also talk articulately about making choices for themselves."

