

Case Study



Life Education Centres

Kirkham and Wesham Primary School, Lancashire

Engaging children and teachers with informed messages on drugs and alcohol and achieving Healthy School Status

Kirkham is a small market town in the Coastal area of West Lancashire, just a half hour's drive from Blackpool to the West and Preston to the East. The town dates back to the days of William the Conqueror and from the Industrial Revolution until the 1960s enjoyed prosperity thanks to its cotton mill.

More recently the town has acquired a large supermarket and the biggest local employer is now British Aerospace at Warton, just a few miles to the South. The area has recently been celebrating its mill heritage with many of the old mill buildings being regenerated by new businesses but the area is nevertheless considered one of multiple economic deprivation

More than a third of the children at the local Kirkham and Wesham Primary School come from wards high on the deprivation index, a factor which the school took on board when reviewing its PSHE policy and scheme of work in 2004 as part of its progress towards Healthy School status. They also acknowledged a need to address pupils' attitudes to drug, alcohol and tobacco use – in keeping with the 'Keep Safe' element of Every Child Matters.

With a view to meeting these needs and engaging community partnerships, the school decided to use Life Education's annual visits in the mobile classroom as part of its scheme of work.



Life Education delivered lessons 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 lessons which were fun, using active learning strategies and innovative teaching techniques including songs, brain games and role play. A large puppet character who the children remembered fondly from previous Life Education visits, was used alongside video as a prompt for discussions on the effects different substances have on various parts of the body. In the Year 4 programme (Key Stage 2) pupils were also introduced to the idea of taking responsibility for their own safety and behaviour whilst developing problem solving and communication skills.

During the visit, Life Education also provided the school's teaching and non-teaching staff with training sessions, in particular with a view to challenging staff's misconceptions about drugs.

Headteacher Rhiannon Jones found that the visit had an extremely beneficial impact on the school's annual pupil questionnaires with a 100% positive response to 'not smoking' and the dangers of alcohol and using drugs putting them in the 1st percentile in Lancashire.

"During the visit, the pupils open up in a manner which they may not feel comfortable to in the normal classroom situation. They value the opportunity for frank, honest discussion and the role-play has frequently been extended into the classroom with really good results."

Kirkham and Wesham Primary School has now become one of the first schools in Lancashire to gain National Healthy School Status and the school's strength in drug and alcohol awareness was recognised in its most recent Ofsted report which found that pupils had gained a 'good understanding of how to make positive choices and develop healthy lifestyles.'



