

Case Study



Life Education Centres

William Byrd Primary School Harlington, Hillingdon

'Engaging parents and children in an area of high economic deprivation'

Say the name Harlington to anyone who knows the outermost suburbs of West London and most people will immediately think of Heathrow airport.

Originally a small village, Harlington, like many areas in the outer reaches of the capital, inevitably got caught up in suburban growth and is now just one of several suburbs in Hillingdon, best known for lying in the shadow of Heathrow and within the area under discussion for the third runway.

Over the last ten years, this multi-racial neighbourhood has been identified as an area of high economic deprivation with a growth of alcohol and drug-related anti-social behaviours, including broken glass bottles left in play areas and other risks to young children. This has been recognised by the local Hillingdon Community Trust which has endeavoured to ensure that all school children in the area receive a good quality drug and alcohol education programme.

Peter Brandreth, Headteacher of William Byrd Primary School asked Life Education to arrange a week-long visit by their mobile classroom as part of their planned PSHE programme. He felt that the Life Education sessions – and the alcohol and drugs content in particular, would add value as regards the 'Keep Safe' focus of Every Child Matters as well as assisting the school in meeting some of the self evaluation requirements for their Ofsted inspection.



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 looking at who and how the pupils could talk with if they were worried about any problems they had.

The teachers of Year 6 (Key Stage 2) had identified that their pupils needed some skills on ways to handle unwanted peer pressure, so Life Education worked on self-esteem, communication and assertion skills and also looked at alcohol, drugs and tobacco and the effect they have on them and their bodies.

The school also recognised the importance of engaging parents in helping to convey the positive messages the children had learnt during the week and invited parents to join the sessions in the mobile classroom, meet the Life Education educator and take part in Parent Sessions. The school also held a special Assembly on the final afternoon enabling parents to engage with everything their children had experienced during the week.

After the visit, Headteacher, Peter Brandreth, said that the sessions supported and added value to the school's existing work on the PSHE curriculum in a very exciting and engaging way, bringing specific subject knowledge and expertise to the field.

"These programmes are particularly relevant to the school. Our own teachers may not always have the most up to date information and the Life Education sessions provide real, authoritative, age-appropriate information about drugs and alcohol. This enables us to reach children who might not be receiving these messages at home.



The children also really enjoyed the adventure of getting on the 'Lifebus' itself as they may not receive this sort of activity at home or in their everyday lives and so by enhancing our PSHE provision in this way, we were also able to provide them with a fun, stimulating and memorable experience."

