

Harrogate District of Sanctuary

SCHOOL OF SANCTUARY AWARD

Name of school: Springwater School

Main contact: Jane Sidwell

Date of submission: 27 November 2018

OVERALL

One of the strengths of the School of Sanctuary (SoS) award is that it is not prescriptive. School staff can interpret the award in ways which are meaningful, in the context of each school. Jane Sidwell, who drove forward work on the award, is to be congratulated on her inventive and effective approach. She successfully adjusted SoS activity to the special characteristics of the whole school and of individual pupils and students. The learning difficulties and challenges to self-expression experienced by many of the students are such that it is remarkable that there was significant evidence of involvement.

What was obvious on our visit was that the school's deep commitment to inclusivity, safety and welcome is seamlessly extended to asylum seekers and refugees.

There were some very insightful and moving first-hand comments from students/pupils and staff. Also noteworthy is the school's use of Facebook, to share information about asylum seeker/refugee issues with parents and the school's wider community. This has attracted attention from parents across a wide geographical area.

The statement below was made by a student:

Even if you don't have special educational needs, it's a safe environment. We can look after refugees here and help them to know that not everywhere is just war and violence.

THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Springwater is an outstanding, small school for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Pupil/student ages range from two to nineteen years. Students have a wide variety of needs, including Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities, Severe Learning Disabilities, Moderate Learning Disabilities and a range of physical differences. The school also meets the needs of those on the autistic spectrum and children whose behaviour may need additional support.

Pupils/students have a variety of ethnic backgrounds and speak a number of languages, including Punjabi, Malayan, Bosnian and Arabic.

Pupils attend the school from across North Yorkshire.

There are three children from a refugee background in the school: they are all from Syria.

ASSESSMENT

Have the following criteria been met across the whole portfolio of evidence?

Criteria	Criteria met?
<p>Staff involvement / awareness <i>Were staff made aware of what School of Sanctuary means? Were staff involved in work towards the different principles? Was staff awareness of the issues surrounding sanctuary increased?</i></p>	<p>There was full support for SoS from the senior leadership in the school. Governors were informed at a meeting in May '18. All classroom staff received briefings, handouts and e-mails informing them of the issues around asylum and refugees. Workers who were not able to attend after-school meetings were informed by briefing papers.</p> <p>The wholehearted support of teaching staff, for the SoS process, is evident in their recorded statements.</p>
<p>Covering wide age range <i>Did the activities completed cover a wide age range? Or are there plans to cover a broader age range in the future?</i></p>	<p>Students of all ages were involved in Refugee Week events and in other activities adapted to their learning needs.</p>
<p>Future commitment <i>Has the school demonstrated a sustainable commitment to sanctuary? What evidence is there that this commitment will continue after the award is granted?</i></p>	<p>The school will continue to celebrate Refugee Week each year. SoS work will be embedded in the curriculum.</p>
<p>Active pupil voice <i>Were children involved in decisions about the work for each of the principles?</i></p>	<p>Pupils/students were actively involved in the making of a banner and a <i>Welcome to our school</i> video.</p> <p>The presence of refugees has made a substantial, positive difference to the school.</p>
<p>Parents' involvement <i>Were parents made aware of what School of Sanctuary means? Were parents involved in work? Were attempts made to increase parents' awareness?</i></p>	<p>A parent was interviewed by a trainee journalist about the impact of having pupils from refugee backgrounds in the school. Facebook posts have kept parents informed of activities.</p>
<p>Feedback from pupils/students <i>Has feedback from children been taken into account? Do the students feel that they have learned something?</i></p>	<p>Statements by pupils/students indicate a profound recognition that the school provides a sanctuary and a safe place for all.</p>

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Learn:

Learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary

- Visit by Dennis Brickles, Harrogate District of Sanctuary, to inform staff about asylum/refugee issues.
- “Do you know . . .” factsheet for staff on, eg, the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee.
- A guide to welcoming refugees and asylum seekers as pupils/students, including a reference to PTSD, was produced for staff
- *This school welcomes refugees* poster was displayed in every classroom during Refugee Week.

Embed:

Embed this knowledge in the curriculum and the daily life of the school.

- PSHCE guidelines have a long section on *Living in the wider world*
- In response to *The journey*, by Francesca Samma, pupils/students made birds to represent the migratory journey
- Exercise on *What would we take if we had to leave in a hurry?*
- Creation of the *Springwater welcomes refugees* banner.
- Full celebration of Refugee Week, including the use of *Simple Acts*
- Some comments from pupils/students:
 - *Refugee Week was good. It was really interesting. This school is a safe place. There is sanctuary in the playground, in school, in the sensory room and at the well-being club.* (Emily)
 - *I am happy with Sanctuary. School is a good place for everybody to stay safe, especially us.* (Sam)
- Some comments from staff:
 - *Springwater is a School of Sanctuary for all, but especially for those who have come from war-torn countries or dangerous situations. We recognise and value our diverse population (as a school but also as a country) and we celebrate our cultural differences at Springwater. Our aim is to provide an education for all and a place to learn that feels safe and free from harm.* (Kim Ayrton, Assistant Head)
 - *Gaining the School of Sanctuary status would give us recognition for the hard work and time we spend making sure we are a fully inclusive, non-judgemental and welcoming environment for anyone seeking sanctuary. It sends out a clear signal to the community and within school about our ethos and attitude.* (Shelley Hudson, Autistic Spectrum Lead Teacher)
- Use of Syrian Arabic resources, eg bi-lingual books, dolls and dual language letters to parents
- The pupils from refugee backgrounds have received intensive support, from a range of professionals, to meet their complex needs, including PTSD.

Share:

Share the knowledge and understanding with the school's wider community.

- Parents and carers are invited to a weekly school based café : for several months there was a special display, at the café, about refugees, sanctuary and welcome.
- Refugee Week activities were highlighted in the SMSC newsletter and resulted in a very positive comment from a member of the public.
- Information about refugee/asylum issues on the school's Facebook page has led to greater involvement
- Parents and carers were invited to comment, share and contribute to the vision of sanctuary via social media.
- The Welcome video on the Facebook page opens with the *Refugees welcome* poster

OUTCOME

Award to be made? **Yes**

Date awarded: 27 November 2018

Signatures

Signed by the school contact.....Jane Sidwell

Signed by assessors Mary Blacka & Dennis Brickles