

Health education and its place in schools education essay



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The health education programme at Thornden School is lead by Mrs S. Braithwaite; she is also the one of the schools deputy head teachers and is the SENCO for the school too. In addition to Mrs Braithwaite, there are two other senior members of staff who, each co-ordinate a significant aspect of the PSHEE programmes. These are Mrs L. Welch, and Mrs G. Heron who teach the ' Sex and Relationship' and ' Citizenship' modules within the PSHEE programme.

How is health education organised within the curriculum?

In key stage 3 the health curriculum is organised through the tutorial periods with the PSHE related items being discussed during Wednesday mornings extended tutorial periods. Key stage 4 pupils have one PSHE session each week, where they cover a particular unit within the specification.

How is it taught/ delivered?

Health education is taught through the tutor system in years 7, 8 and most of year 9 by the pupils tutor, usually on a Wednesday when tutor period is extended to 30 minutes when personal health, matter affecting society and other topical issues are discussed. Apart from these issues each year group have their own units more related to their age as well;

Year 7: units on puberty

Year 8: keeping safe

Year 9: alcohol and drugs.

The programme of study is overseen by the year head who meets with the tutors before the Wednesday tutorial to discuss what will be covered in this week's session.

However, for years 10 and 11 the content is taught by senior members of staff and through a double lesson each week. At key stage 4 the content is more focused on informing and discussing issues that pupils may face during this time of their lives and how to make the right choice. The material is split up into three sections which are taught throughout the year; Sex and Relationship, Citizenship and Personal health.

Who teaches health education?

Health education is taught by the pupils tutor in years 7, 8 and 9. The heads of year inform the tutors at their weekly meeting the tasks which the pupils should complete as a part of the PSHE time.

Mrs Braithwaite believes health education should be taught by experts. Therefore, more sensitive topics like 'sex and relationship' to year 10 and 11 pupils are usually taught by experienced teachers. These modules are taught by Mrs Braithwaite, Mrs L. Welch and Mrs G. Heron who co-ordinate the PSHE programme at Thornden.

What agencies does the school liaise with to promote the health of pupils?

The school usually liaise with the local police service and fire brigade when having sessions on drugs, alcohol, and fire safety for key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils. The school also invites a representative of the pregnancy advice council who works with teenage mothers and give advice and help to

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the pupils about sex and relationships. There is a babysitting and unplanned pregnancy course for key stage 4 pupils as well.

How does the school use these agencies to deliver and support health education?

By inviting these agencies to come to school and talk to the pupils about their field of expertise the pupils gain a valuable experience of some of these really big issues. For example, when a police officer comes in and talks about drugs and alcohol to the pupils, the pupils are encouraged to ask questions where they are assured that there is no judgement on individuals.

Unit 2: How Health education can be developed within teaching Science?

There are many ways in which links can be made between work in personal well being and other subjects and areas of the curriculum. Health and well being concepts of education are the materials that are taught through science lessons as well as PSHE lessons. Examples include linking works on nutrition, sex and relationships, drugs, alcohol and tobacco with work in science which help pupils to make responsible choices.

Under national curriculum at all secondary school, through science lessons pupils learn about how to make healthy food choices and live a long, healthy life. Science modules are designed to inform pupils the scientific effects of different sort of food on health, the importance of regular exercise to stay healthy and the diseases caused by living unhealthy. They also learn the facts about the alcohol, tobacco and drugs use and misuse and the consequences of misuse on human body.

By teaching the reproductive system to key stage 3 pupils, some parts of PSHE contents are delivered to pupils. The unit covers the male and female reproductive system, the menstrual cycle, puberty and fertilisation where within each topic pupils gain acknowledgment of biological information about sex and their body. This part of science education makes pupils aware of the physical and emotional changes in the human body and also explains the sexually transmitted diseases.

To develop health education within science, I believe more pupils centered, research based lessons should be run to maximise the learning outcome and understanding of pupils. It is also important that links between science and PSHE are planned and coordinated and teachers are well aware of the prior knowledge of pupils to enhance their engagement with the concept and process of the subject.

In my first placement I did not get the opportunity to teach any health related biology lessons as I mainly taught physics and chemistry to key stage 3 and 4 pupils. However, in my future experience I am sure that I will get the chance to teach certain aspects of science that cover more of PSHE contents.

Unit 3: SEN

The title of 'special Educational Needs' was first introduced in 1978 to any child needing extra support (Soan, ed 2004). "Special Educational Needs (SEN) is a legal term. It describes the needs of a child who has a difficulty or disability which makes learning harder for them than for other children their age" (BBC Website, Parents).

All teachers should expect to teach children with special educational needs and all schools should play their part in educating children from their local community, whatever their background or ability (teachernet website, schools and families). It is important to note that The National Curriculum Inclusion Statement [QCA/99/458] states: ' all teachers are teachers of SEN' (Soan, ed 2004). Even though, education is the key to a more fulfilling future for children, but for those with special educational needs, many barriers can stand in the way of the right education. However, there has been more legislation within the last few decades to ensure the barriers to integration are removed.

Thornden School is judged by Ofsted as an ' outstanding' school in every single category. Throughout my time in Thornden I found SEN department very well organised and offering help and support to a wide range of pupils with special needs. It is both the SENCO and the SEN administrators who develop the schools SEN policy. The SEN department coordinates the 12 LSA/HLTA and their involvement with the SEN pupils. Pupils learn in different ways and also can have different kinds of SEN. In Thornden, pupils with special educational needs such as dyslexia, social development problems or sensory problems are diagnosed and added to SEN register for more help and support. The support is provided by specialist expertise and in steps which are set out in special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The ' Every Child Matters' policy has an important role in Thonden School and the SEN department aims to help every child with different needs and abilities to act as effectively as the others.

Unit 4: QTS Standards

The two standards that I think I have made the most improvements in are; Q14 “ have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject/curriculum areas and related pedagogy to enable them to teach effectively across the age and ability range for which they are trained” and Q2 “ demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from children and young people.”

Standard Q14 is a standard that I feel I've done very well as I made sure to have a good knowledge and understanding of each topic I taught. For each lesson, in terms of preparation, I tried to find the common misconceptions and how to dissolve them for pupils. Through discussions with my mentor and other teachers, I set the learning objectives based on pupils abilities and assessed pupils' progress towards those objectives.

Standard Q2 was the first standard that was noticed by my mentor within my first day of teaching when I was recognised as a ' good role model'. In my opinion, pupils only behave well if they have been treated well. I also believe praising and encouraging good behaviour give it more values and make it more significant. Therefore, in each lesson I demonstrated appropriate values and emphasised on good behaviour and the importance of respect to others. I assured that each individual in the class felt valued and confident that I and other pupils will support him/her throughout the lesson. For example, I insisted on silence when one pupils was asking or answering a question by reminding other pupils the rule of respect for other people which I had set at my first lesson.