



Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers

We come to the end of another busy and productive academic year. As always, we spend time over the summer, reflecting on the successes and joys we have experienced at Sunfield, but also reflecting on those areas that we would want to further develop and improve. We bring these reflections together in a school self-evaluation and school improvement document, which are documents owned by all staff and students to ensure we work together to further develop the Sunfield community.

As part of the reflection, and looking back over the past two years, I would like to thank Chris Lore for his outstanding leadership at Sunfield. The school has gone from strength to strength and he leaves with the gratitude and well wishes of all within its community.

Looking forward, we warmly welcome Jessica Lesniak as headteacher and William Tranter as deputy headteacher of Sunfield School. Both Jessica and William are experienced school leaders and William has worked within Ruskin Mill Trust for a number of years. We look forward to working with them and to continue the ambitious journey that we have started at Sunfield. I will share contact details with parents and carers as soon as they start their roles in September.

With thanks to all parents, carers, students and staff for their hard work, dedication and support throughout the year.

*Best wishes,
Tara Gratton
Director of Schools.*

Sunfield Tea Party

At Sunfield, we believe that our sense of being a community that supports each of our members to thrive is one of our key strengths and that at the heart of this sense of togetherness are our young people's families. This is one of the reasons that the pandemic has been so difficult, as we have not been able to invite our learners' families in to celebrate as a community, resulting at times in a sense of separation between our young people's lives at home and at Sunfield.

However, with the lifting of restrictions, we have been able to have increasing numbers of visitors to the Sunfield site and hold a Parents and Carers Tea Party. The event was, to put it mildly, simply wonderful. We set up crafts, brought the goats up to the Main House, and served refreshments. For many of our families, this was the first time they were able to meet the other families in our community or visit their children at school and see what their day was like. For others, it had been a couple of years since they were able to come into the school. After the event, many of our parents and carers wrote to us and shared how much they enjoyed the party and the opportunity to meet other Sunfield families. In addition, the Sunfield learners were perhaps even more excited to see their families on the dining room lawn. Needless to say, a good time was had by all.

What made the event extra-special for many was the thought that this was the type of place that their children get to experience every day, with all the joy and care that are such a part of being a learner at Sunfield. It is important to stress that, for all the hard work our staff team put in to make Sunfield such a special place, none of this would work without the support of our families. Thank you to everyone who attended and to all of our families for being such important members of the community of Sunfield, we hope to plan many more events in the year ahead.

Chris Lore

Herbs and nutrition at Sunfield

Maria Geuter, pioneer of early days Sunfield school, was a respected herbalist, gardener and creative cook. She upheld the view that 'plants and their unique qualities, are an essential part of a wholesome diet.' And spent much of her time observing herbs, researching how they grow, tasting them and ardently striving to raise cooking to the level of a creative art.

Just like Maria, the children of Sunfield school have also been researching and experiencing the qualities of different herbs in different ways.

In education classes are harvesting herbs, exploring with their senses and using in a variety of ways, such as making herb salt, pesto's, herb bread and tea.



Harvesting oregano in the herb garden.



Cooking with oregano: herb bread recipe

Homes are buying a range of herbs from the school shop, using them to make their meals more delicious and nutritious, and also using them as a seasonal decoration to the table.

We hope Maria Geuter looks favourably upon our efforts to be as attentive to herbs and nutrition as she was.

Lisa Winchester (Land Tutor)

The Sunfield Shop

This term the shop has seen a huge variety of fresh, biodynamic vegetables coming in from both farms, here at Sunfield and from Vale Head farm in Kinver (the farm holding of RMT Glasshouse college in Stourbridge). The gardens have long since awoken from their sleeping slumber of Winter. Over the last few months, the shop has been able to stock the following: Beetroot, Broad Beans, Cabbage, Carrots, Chard, Chilli's, Garlic, Lettuce, Potatoes, Radish, Rhubarb, Spinach and Spring Onions. All enjoyed by the staff and young people of Sunfield and the wider community of Clent and Hagley.



Biodynamic vegetables and salads grown with the students at Sunfield



What has been so lovely about this time of year has been the children and young people's contributions to the shop. Whether that has been through craft and project work or them tending and harvesting fresh produce from the land- really allowing the full seed to table curriculum to take place. One of the true advantages of the shop being next to the walled garden is the opportunity for more incidental learning to take place. There have been many occasions now where a customer has wanted more of an item and I've been able to ask a student in the garden to go and harvest some more. This has been very handy for the shop, excellent for the student, who have had further opportunities to contribute to the community. One customer said, "I can't believe I can see where the food I'm going to be eating came from and to have it brought over to me by a student is just incredible."

It has not only been the walled garden that has come alive as of late, but also the herb and flower garden. The shop has had a healthy supply of fresh cut herbs and flowers. The stunning Demeter flowers have been very popular with our customers, with customers coming back weekly to get a new bunch of flowers for 'their dining table' or to 'give to a friend'. The potted plants have also been popular this term too, with many people tending to their own gardens now that summer is here.

A warm thank you to everyone who in one way or another has supported the Sunfield shop and having made the shop's first academic year so enjoyable!

Samantha Wood
Shop Manager



Flowers grown at Sunfield with the students



As part of the wide offer of therapies in Sunfield, we have Eurythmy, but... what is eurythmy?

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

Our entire world is created through movement and this is reflected in the human organism. We move our limbs; our organs have subtle movements and our emotional life contracts and expands.

A body in movement is both healthy and alive. Eurythmy brings to expression those archetypal creative movements that underlie speech and music. Dr Steiner describes how when human speech or music sounds forth, the air is “sculpted” into gesture. Eurythmy has a rich vocabulary of movement and gesture for both speech and musical tone.

For some 90 years the unique art form of eurythmy has been slowly establishing itself in our culture.

Who is our Eurythmy Therapist?

Ursula Werner is our Eurythmy therapist at Sunfield - Ursula Werner has been a Eurythmy Therapist for over twenty years, and works at Sunfield two days a week. She has experience working with adults and children with a variety of conditions and illnesses. In her practice, Ursula uses specific combinations of exercises for each student.



Ursula engages the student not only on a physical, but also on a cognitive and emotional level. Ursula and the students work with rhythms, spatial exercises and movement gestures related to the sounds of speech. Like the sounds in our language these movements have different qualities. They can be soft and flowing, strong and decisive and/or protective and comforting. Some can enhance a person’s wellbeing by supporting breathing and relaxation and/or diminishing tension and anxiety. Some can strengthen the experience of one’s centre and boundaries, increase the ability to concentrate and enhance self-confidence. To support each student in their development, Ursula will repeatedly practice with them the specific movements which will best meet their needs. Ursula’s outcome for our students is to bring about harmony in the totality of their being and their relations with the world.

Ursula tailors her sessions to each student’s needs. In this way she is able to develop a strong therapeutic connection with every student that builds on their experience of safe adult, safe world around them, and safety within themselves.

Maria J Peris
Sunfield Head of Psychology and Therapies

Safeguarding

At Sunfield we are very fortunate to have staff that have supported each other in creating a safeguarding culture. The focus for safeguarding nationally is very much on the Early Help principle.

Working Together 2018 identifies that: “effective Early Help relies upon local organisations and agencies working together to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from Early Help
- undertake an assessment of the need for Early Help
- provide targeted Early Help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to improve the outcomes for the child

A key to the early help principle for us is knowing our young people well, working with the team around that young person to understand their needs and their communication methods, as well as keeping the on-going culture of vigilance of oversight and quality assurance. We get affirmation from our external regulators that our safeguarding is effective, as well as audits from Worcestershire Children First as well as our own internal Ruskin Mill Quality assurance process.

Things we take note of that support the early help principles may be falling attendance, an increase in incidents, changes in habits, all plus more can give us an indicator that something may have changed for that young person, resulting in an increased level of concern. Changes don't automatically mean something sinister, but we utilise our expertise within Sunfield to work together and identify what is needed to support the young person or some specific safeguarding actions need to be implemented or ultimately a referral to outside agencies.

To help staff keep up to date with their knowledge and understanding of the current issues and concerns, they all undertake an annual refresher training, we then utilise bi-weekly staff meetings to explore a topic or look at a scenario. This means we discuss local and national topics, some of those that are not necessarily evident at Sunfield, but do help to keep staff vigilant to the signs and symptoms if they were ever to become a concern for one of our young people.

In effect most of our safeguarding work at Sunfield goes into preventative actions to lessen the likelihood of incidents happening, supporting the young people to identify risk, make safe choices and know who are the trusted adults they can share a concern with. This type of work happens in key worker sessions and safeguarding sessions in school that complement the PSHE and RSHE programme.

We will be reviewing our safeguarding practice due to a new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education being published in September, this will inform us of new areas of focus as well as best practice we should be adopting.

So, as we approach the end of one academic year, we are already looking at our practice to make sure the new academic year is a safe and enjoyable as it can be for our residents and learners. If you wish to look at the new version of KCSiE 2022 or Worcestershire's Early Help document please use the links below.

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20926/early_help_guidance_for_professionals/1766/early_help_guidance_for_professionals

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Niall Crawford

DSL