



Springwell Leeds

SEND Report 2023-24

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WELLSPRING

We Make A Difference

Contents

A. Introduction - the Springwell Leeds Academy Offer	3
B. What kind of Special Educational Needs do we provide for in our Academy ?	5
C. How do we know if your child needs extra help?	5
D. How do we consult with young people at the Academy and involve them in their education ?	6
E. How we help you to support your children's learning ?	6
F. How we know what progress your children are making and how we keep you and them informed?	7
G. How do we support young people and adapt teaching to meet their needs?	7
H. How have decisions been made to adapt the curriculum or change the learning environment to best meet your children's needs?	8
I. How are staff in the school supported to work with young people with special educational needs and what training do they receive?	9
J. When we have needed expert advice and support how have we secured that and what services have they provided?	9
K. How do we check how well we are doing in meeting the needs of pupils	9
L. How we ensure that your children are included in activities outside the classroom, including physical activities and school trips	10
M. How do we provide for your children's overall wellbeing?	10
N. How accessible is our school both indoors and outdoors for young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities?	10
O. What are our admission arrangements for children	10
P. How do we prepare and support your children when joining Springwell Leeds and moving on from the school?	11
Q. What do I do if I have a complaint?	11

Springwell Leeds Academy

SEN Information Report 2022-23

A. Introduction - the Springwell Leeds Academy Offer

Springwell Leeds Academy is the same as other schools in that we:

- have high expectations of our pupils and want them to achieve as much as possible
- want our children to feel safe and happy
- create a calm and purposeful atmosphere where children can learn
- give our children the opportunity to access a broad range of appropriate subjects and qualifications, including GCSEs and prepare them for their next steps in education, training or employment
- aim to build strong relationships with parents and carers
- have a school uniform that we expect all our pupils to wear

Springwell Leeds Academy is different to other schools in that we:

- are a special academy and only accept pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan that identifies SEMH difficulties as their primary need
- are based on three sites across the city – each one has up to 115 pupils between the ages of 5-16
- work in small classes, usually with children of the same age, typically up to 9/10 pupils and 3 staff members in each class
- do not provide full time 1:1 support for pupils
- build the school day and our curriculum to support pupils with SEMH difficulties
- have specially trained staff to support the special educational needs of our pupils
- offer a range of interventions to support pupil needs
- work closely with a range of external agencies and professionals to identify and meet the needs of our pupils

Our Approach

1. Unconditional Positive Regard

At Springwell Leeds Academy we show unconditional positive regard for our children. That means we treat all our pupils with:

- Genuine warmth
- Genuine care
- Flexible consistency – we understand the needs of the individual

We also:

- Show and model resilience
- Offer multiple fresh starts
- Find a way that works
- Act positively at all times

2. Nurture

Central to the philosophy of nurture is attachment theory, an area of psychology that explains the need for any person to be able to form secure and happy relationships with others in the formative years of their lives. We adapt this approach as by successfully addressing barriers to learning, academic attainment and health and well-being are improved.

All of our practice is guided by the six founding principles of nurture, which are:

- Children's learning is understood developmentally
- The classroom offers a safe base
- The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem
- Language is a vital means of communication
- All behaviour is communication
- The importance of transition in children's lives

3. Trauma Informed

We are a trauma informed school, which means we are able to support children and teenagers who suffer with trauma or mental health problems and whose behaviour can sometimes act as a barrier to their learning.

Springwell Leeds Academy received the Trauma Informed Schools Award in 2021 which recognised:

- "Relationships with children are a strength of the school, interactions are positive and peaceful. Young people articulated that they have strong relationships with adults that help keep them safe. Students know that staff care about them and they also care about the adults."
- "The school provides a personalised approach to the learning and SEMH needs of all students. They have bespoke packages in place that best meet their needs."
- "Staff are fully invested in children and support them out of school when necessary this was particularly notable for leavers who stay in touch with the adults often returning to them for advice and support"

4. Restorative Practice

At Springwell Leeds we believe that everybody has the right to work in a safe and positive environment. We work with our pupils to give them the skills and capacity to build and keep productive relationships, cope with conflict or being upset and rebuild friendships if problems arise. To do this, we adopt a restorative approach.

Restorative practice is made up from a range of methods and strategies which we use to prevent relationship-damaging incidents from happening and to resolve them if they do happen. All our staff are trained in this approach.

5. Specialist Interventions

Where our typical offer does not fully meet the needs of a pupil, we are able to offer specialist targeted interventions which include:

- Educational Psychologist support
- Occupational Health support
- Counselling service
- Thrive
- Theraplay
- Therapeutic Art
- Anxiety Intervention Programme
- Therapeutic animal intervention
- Therapeutic Music intervention
- Targeted academic interventions such as Catch-Up Literacy.

Not all of these interventions are appropriate for all pupils and are limited by available resources to those children with the greatest need.

B. What kind of Special Educational Needs do we provide for in our Academy ?

All students admitted to Springwell Leeds Academy have some degree of special educational need identified in their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In nearly all cases, their primary need will be Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

SEMH stands for Social, Emotional and Mental Health. It is a term used to describe a range of difficulties that children and young people may experience that affect their ability to manage their emotions, behaviour, and relationships with others. Children with SEMH needs may find it challenging to form healthy relationships, control their impulses, communicate their feelings effectively, and cope with stress and change.

SEMH needs will look different for each child but examples of SEMH needs and conditions include:

- Anxiety and depression: Children with anxiety or depression may experience a range of emotions, such as sadness, worry, and fear, that affect their ability to function in daily life.
- Behavioural difficulties: Children who struggle with behavioural difficulties may display a range of challenging behaviours, such as aggression, defiance, and non-compliance.
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): Children with ADHD may have difficulty paying attention, controlling their impulses, and sitting still.
- Attachment difficulties: Children who have experienced trauma or neglect *may* struggle to form secure attachments with their caregivers or peers, leading to social and emotional difficulties.

At Springwell Leeds we work hard to understand the SEMH needs of each child so that we can plan how best to support them.

C. How do we know if your child needs extra help?

Every one of our pupils has an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) which is reviewed on a yearly basis, and with the participation of parents/carers and where appropriate, with the students themselves, progress is evaluated. Additionally, progress is monitored by Senior

Leaders and our SENCOs, who work with our teachers and other schools staff to identify interventions that can support your child's development.

The school conducts a range of assessments to evaluate students' progress and sometimes uses specialist professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT), Occupational Therapists (OT) and Educational Psychologists (EP). When children start at Springwell Leeds, teachers will carry out a range of baseline assessments which we use to create a personalised approach to learning and interventions that help support student progress. This forms an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for each child. All ILP's are reviewed three times per year.

D. How do we consult with young people at the Academy and involve them in their education ?

All our pupils have an EHCP and are encouraged to attend their annual review meeting to listen to what and how well they have achieved, discuss what is said and their next steps as well as voicing their aspirations and future outcomes. Our pupil's views along with their parent/carers and those of the Academy staff will be considered so that collectively we can work together to help them achieve.

We keep parent/carers of our children informed about their child's progress through a range of opportunities over the year. These include Parent/Carer Review sessions when parents and carers are invited into school, with their child to discuss progress with the staff that work most closely with them. In addition to this, every child at Springwell Leeds receives an annual written report in the summer term, looking back on progress across the year, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

The Academy has a school council on which representative children sit and can raise their ideas and share them with school leaders. All children in school have a pupil representative who can raise questions, problems and ideas on their behalf at the council meetings.

E. How we help you to support your children's learning ?

At Springwell Leeds Academy we believe that working closely with our families and carers is vital for the success of our children and welcome their support and involvement. We also realise that at times they will need our support too and so we work closely with them, other agencies, partners and schools to make sure we do all we can to make learning and life at Springwell Leeds successful.

Each site has a dedicated Parent Support Advisor (PSA) who can offer help and support and advice on a range of issues such as:

- your child's attendance or behaviour at home or school.
- signposting you to support for completing forms and applications. e.g. DLA (Disability Living Allowance), housing applications etc
- co-ordinate the liaison between parents, school and other professionals
- working together to keep young people safe.
- 'Early Help Support for Families/ carers'

We understand that our teams may not have all the answers, but we will always try to help parents/carers work things out. Our staff will listen to what you need and support you to access services who can offer the help required.

We offer parent/carer pop-ins, which give the opportunity to meet with other to parents and carers and share your worries and concerns. Details of these are shared on our website.

We also offer a range of workshops that focus on skills and techniques that relate to supporting young people with SEMH needs. These are usually organised by our SENCos and delivered by them or by other expert professionals such as Occupational Therapists. Details of these are also shared on our website.

We like to share and celebrate what we are doing at Springwell Leeds with our parents and carers and do this through social media via Twitter as well as a regular newsletter which goes out every half term. We like parents to come into school for the fun aspects of school like musical performances and Christmas shows and summer / winter fairs.

F. How we know what progress your children are making and how we keep you and them informed?

We always hold a Parent/Carer Review session early in the school year, as stated above this meeting is an opportunity for parents/carers and staff, along with the child to discuss progress and talk about targets and aspirations for the year ahead. These meetings are held later in the year to check on progress.

We think that it is vitally important that all our Parent/carers attend their child's EHCP meeting as this is a great opportunity to specifically discuss your child's needs and the provision in place to meet those needs. In addition to this, teachers and key workers make regular phone calls to parents to discuss small steps of progress and discuss any concerns that parents may have.

As with all schools, our teachers carefully track the progress of our children in the various aspects of their learning. This helps them identify where they are doing well and what they need to do next. These assessments are shared with senior leaders, the Governing Body and the Trust so that there is assurance that progress is on track.

G. How do we support young people and adapt teaching to meet their needs?

We understand that all our children are different and have different needs. This means we need to personalise our approach to teaching and learning. This may include:

- A differentiated curriculum
- Clarity for our students about what they are being asked to do, why they are doing it, how they are supposed to do it and how they will know if they have done well - though an "I do, we do, you do" approach
- Use of supportive techniques such as visual time tables, modelling and demonstration
- Clear instructions and simplified language
- Support with key words and subject terminology

- Access to our ICT facilities
- Structured routines and regular reminders of whole-school/class rules

Our class size is typically 8-10 children in a class with 3 adults. This means that our children have access to adults who can support them with their learning when they need it. There are also occasions where we feel that students would benefit from one to one or smaller group interventions. A list of these can be found above in the “Specialist interventions” section.

Springwell Leeds also has a number of “Care Team” staff on every site. These staff are specifically trained to support children who are struggling with their behaviour and help them regulate so they can access learning.

H. How have decisions been made to adapt the curriculum or change the learning environment to best meet your children’s needs?

At Springwell Leeds Academy we offer an innovative curriculum that is specifically developed to meet the needs of young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The overall aim of our curriculum is to meet the individual needs of pupils outlined in their EHCP outcomes through the values that underpin our mission and vision for young people.

To support pupils to meet their EHCP outcomes the curriculum is designed around these key areas and ambitions:

- Provide a personalised SEMH and academic curriculum that is carefully planned to allow children and young people to make positive next steps in life, whether that be within education, work or training.
- Provide students not only with the literacy skills to access curriculum successfully, but to foster a love for reading.
- Provide a sense of safety and security through relational and trauma informed practice; following the principles of nurture to create a learning environment where students feel safe and supported to achieve their full potential

Personalised Curriculum

The curriculum at Springwell Leeds Academy, across all key stages, has been developed in order to allow for the flexibility and personalisation required to respond to the individual needs of each child. All curricular areas aim to support students’ SEMH needs by providing learning opportunities in which students can develop social skills, self-control, self-awareness and skills for learning through highly engaging, creative, and knowledge-rich content. Through this framework, we provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum that supports every child’s SEMH, academic and vocational development, as well as their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

Individual subject areas have a curriculum that enables pupils to learn new knowledge and skills according to their starting points. This leads to a diverse range of qualifications being available for pupils to work towards.

I. How are staff in the school supported to work with young people with special educational needs and what training do they receive?

All our staff undergo regular training to support their understanding of special needs provision. Whole staff training would typically include regular updates in the following areas:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Supporting children's behaviour needs
- Understanding how best to work with children with specific needs e.g anxiety, ADHD
- First aid and Mental Health First Aid
- Subject specific training - e.g Phonics, Maths

Our training and professional development is available to all our staff both teaching and non teaching as we believe investing in them helps them to better support the children at Springwell. We also access training through Wellspring - our Trust where we can draw upon specialist knowledge and expertise from a wide range of different educational settings.

J. When we have needed expert advice and support how have we secured that and what services have they provided?

We recognise that there are occasions when we need to bring in expert professionals to help us better understand the needs of our children or ensure that we are giving them the right kind of support. Springwell Leeds regularly does this through:

- Speech and language therapists
- Educational Psychologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Student Counselling service
- Bereavement counselling
- Careers Advice

We also support parents to access other services and agencies e.g. CAMHS for your children through our Parent Support Advisers and SENCos.

K. How do we check how well we are doing in meeting the needs of pupils

Like all maintained schools and academies we are subject to regular OfSTED inspections which take place every 3-4 years. The reports from these inspections can be found on our website and the OfSTED website. In between those inspections we have a robust system of self review where senior leaders regular quality assure key areas of the school including:

- Quality of Teaching and Learning
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- SEND

Reports on all key data are presented to Governors through the half termly governing body meetings for further scrutiny.

Every Term the Wellspring Trust looks at every aspect of the Academy from Teaching and Learning to Health and Safety to ensure that standards are high and where they are not, that they are addressed quickly.

Springwell Leeds regularly invites external agencies to come into school to give us feedback on specific areas of school life. For example, we have an annual Safeguarding Audit from the Local Authority. We also have a team of leaders from schools across the Wellspring Trust conduct a Peer Review of the Academy every year, the findings of which are presented to the Governing Body.

L. How we ensure that your children are included in activities outside the classroom, including physical activities and school trips

At Springwell Leeds Academy we ensure that educational trips and visits are built into the curriculum for our young people. These are not used solely as rewards, rather an integral part of their learning. We recognise the value the experiences outside school give our children in terms of their social and academic development. We also recognise that as a school we can access opportunities not always available to parents/carers and families. These visits may be in the local community or further afield, including residential visits.

We have been, in recent years, successful in securing funding for summer and Easter schools for some of our children to access. These usually consist of a week-long programme of health and wellbeing focused activities.

M. How do we provide for your children's overall wellbeing?

As a special school for children with SEMH needs, well being is at the heart of what we do. We support the emotional, mental and social development of all our children by providing:

- A nurturing environment
- A trauma informed approach
- Support to families and children to improve attendance
- A well trained, expert and flexible staff team offering a range of pastoral support and care
- A range of targeted interventions designed to support emotional development and self-esteem
- A trained Counsellor
- Seeking advice and guidance from a range of external agencies as required.

N. How accessible is our school both indoors and outdoors for young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities?

As our three Springwell sites are relatively new, they were built with access for all in mind and are compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

O. What are our admission arrangements for children

Springwell Leeds Academy is a special academy catering for pupils in Key Stages 1-4 with Social, Emotional & Mental Health difficulties (SEMH). All places at our academy are currently commissioned by Leeds Local Authority and are determined by the Authority's Special Educational Needs Team (SENSAP) in consultation with our SENCO and Principals.

All pupils admitted on to our roll have undergone a statutory assessment and have an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP). Both the needs of new applicants and the needs of current pupils are considered as part of the consultation process..

Parents wishing to consider Springwell Leeds Academy for their child should speak to the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at their child's current school. Our full admissions policy can be found on our website.

P. How do we prepare and support your children when joining Springwell Leeds and moving on from the school?

We try to support any transition with good systems of communication and an appropriate timetable of transition visits. We aim to plan personalised transitions dependent on the needs of the child. We aim to gather as much information about your child's needs prior to joining Springwell so that proper plans can be put in place and teachers and other staff understand their needs.

When the time comes for your child to move on we will liaise with the receiving school or college and follow their transition process and again will personalise this depending on need.

Transition to post-16 education:

All students in Year 11, and below as needed, have access to careers advice, with a qualified independent Careers Advisor.. We work hard to ensure all students have a realistic and aspirational post-16 placement (education, employment or training).

We work in partnership with other education providers to make sure students make a successful transition to the next stages of their learning, through careful and co-ordinated planning.

Q. What do I do if I have a complaint?

Any parent (or in the case of Looked After Children - designated carer) who wishes to make a complaint about SEN provision at Springwell Leeds Academy should, in the first instance, make an appointment to meet with the Principal on site . We will make every effort to resolve issues informally and accommodate parental wishes. If a parent feels that the issue has not been resolved to their satisfaction they should follow the complaints procedure and policy available on the Academy website.

Any further questions can be answered by contacting the Academy on:

0113 4870555

or visit the website at <https://springwellacademyleeds.org>