



# Newsletter

Autumn 1: November 2020

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Welcome to the second half of autumn term! As we move into the colder weather of the holiday season, the Sunfield team is focusing on staying positive and resilient in the face of the uncertainties of the coronavirus situation. As we have shared, we could not be more proud of the way that the Sunfield community, including our children and young people, parents and carers, and our amazing staff team, have continued to work together and support each other, no matter what comes our way. We are also trying to look at the difficulties of the situation as an opportunity to be more creative in the way in which we maintain our connections to one another. For example, we have started a pen pal programme on site to make sure that our learners stay connected to one another. We have also continued to build the strong relationships between the education, therapy, and care teams in working to support our bubbles on site and ensure that each learner continues in their development. With the holidays in mind, we are exploring ways that we can celebrate our assemblies and festivals at proper social distance, which should be interesting to see! Please as always let us know of any ideas you might have for keeping the celebratory spirit and sense of community alive at Sunfield.

## *Weekly themes, assemblies, and festivals*

One of the great successes of the past half term has been the implementation of our weekly themes programme. Technically, it is our **“Personal, Social, and Physical Education-British Values,-Safeguarding Themes”** programme and is aligned to meeting our statutory and regulatory requirements, but is also an opportunity to broaden how we support the holistic development of our children and young people and celebrate the values of our community together, so that each individual could experience their connection to the learning of others within a shared space.

What this means is that each half-term is assigned a broad theme to which weekly themes are connected. These weekly themes then culminate in our assemblies and festivals, to which the houses and classes all contribute. At the end of the term, we then take a week to reflect on what we have learned and how we have grown as a community and plan for the next term.

For the first half of autumn, our theme was **“Being me in my world”**, linked to the British Values theme of **“Democracy”** and the Safeguarding theme of **“Feeling and being safe”**. Weekly themes under this umbrella were, for example, **“Who do I trust?”** and **“How do we work together?”** We then held (socially distanced and outdoor) assemblies. A good example of this was the theme **“How can I make my voice heard?”** which culminated in a *sound poem* assembly to which each class brought a different sound to contribute, whether a single word, a sound from an instrument, or a poem. Needless to say, it was a lot of fun!

Our next term’s theme is **“Celebrating differences”**, linked to the British Values theme of **“Tolerance and mutual respect”** and the Safeguarding theme **“Prevent”**. We are certainly looking forward to seeing the creative ways that our team and learners find to bring this to life.

## **Safeguarding update**

The new term started at Sunfield with a newly published Keeping Children Safe in Education document. One key change of note was that mental health is explicitly included in the definition of safeguarding. At Sunfield we have always championed positive mental health and fully support this move to make mental health a higher priority for the children's workforce.

Other changes to the document focus on areas of rising concern, such as Child Criminal Exploitation. We are approaching this topic by providing bite sized training to all Sunfield staff to improve their understanding of the risks our children and young people face from potential exploitation. So far this term we have focused on identifying grooming behaviours and keep our young people safe from being drawn in to radicalisation or other forms of exploitation. One of the keys to fighting exploitation is creating a culture of inclusivity and feeling heard. If you ever hear anyone talk about the purple dragon, then this is the representation of someone they can trust to talk to. We have also created objects of reference and talking tiles

and symbols to support our young people in knowing who to speak to if they have a worry.

Part of the way we want to support parents and carers to help keep our pupils safe is to make sure that parental controls are enabled on any internet enabled device the young person can access. This cuts down the opportunities for people to reach out to potential victims by starting the grooming process online, such as in chat rooms, games platforms or through social media. To support parents locating good sources of information about parental controls we have created an area on the Sunfield website called Parent Resources and can be found by following the link below. Your internet service provider should also be able to help if you experience difficulties in turning on the right level of control for your devices and users.

<https://www.rmt.org/sunfield/parent-resources/>

## *Field 1: Genius Loci “Spirit of Place”*

The Spirit of Place (Genius Loci) works with the heritage and the uniqueness of locality. All of Sunfield’s residential cottages have been renamed in relation to the immediate environment allowing those who live and work in the cottages to connect purposely with the landscape and the surrounding community. To celebrate nature’s rhythm and to give a sense of time to our young people in the homes, each home has a seasonal table. Below is an overview of the heritage associated with the names of the cottages and a narrative behind each seasonal table.

**Linden** is a traditional name for the native lime tree of which there is a nice avenue by the Sunfield farm.



Linden developed the seasonal table at the beginning of harvest season with lots of input from our young people and the Linden team. We have divided our display into three sections. The first section on the right focuses on the harvest festival and we have lots of natural materials and animals which represent this time of year. As the seasons change, so will this area of our table. The middle section is our home and what we consider to be at the centre of everything. This will always remain as the seasonal table changes. The third section on the left represents the woodlands and surrounding areas of

Sunfield. It has lots of leaves, bark and natural wood along with woodland animals, which live here all around us.

Finally, on the wall above our seasonal table is a perpetual calendar which we have made from reclaimed wood. We have wooden, hand painted dolls which represent each day of the week and we also have 4 wooden dolls which represent the four seasons. As the days go by and the seasons change, so does the rotation of the dolls.

**Chester** is a sandstone pebble mix that can be found within the geology of the North end of Sunfield, mostly on Still Hill where the cattle graze and breath-taking views can be seen and enjoyed. The hill offers a sense of calm and challenge to our young people. The environment shapes our breathing and is noticeable here with the earth beneath our feet.

**Breccia** is found in the geology of most the east and centre of Sunfield and is a mix of mudstone, sandstone, clay and gravel.

At Breccia Cottage this term we have thoughly enjoyed our transition through Autumn, focussing on Harvest and what this means to us, into the winter months now focussing of Home and Hearth. We choose through our seasonal Table and Displays to incorporate the Autumn Oranges reds and yellows to show how throughout this period of time the enviornment changes from the vibrant Greens of summer to the tranquil colours of Autumn. During this time we have also had our monthly focus pieces that have centred on New Learning and Important people. Some of the craft that has come from this has been exceptional and with the addition of current pictures of the young people, has given them a sense of pride.



**Klinter** is the name used in the Doomsday Book for Clent and may be derived from the old Scandinavian word klint for a cliff. Halloween approaches and Klinter seasonal table has become spooky!



Autumn winds are sighing,  
Stealing through the forest brown,  
As they softly pass the tree trunks  
Little leaves come falling down.  
But a stronger gale is blowing  
And then the leaves themselves  
Rise and dance about the forest  
Just like little elves.  
Faster, faster see them whirling  
Till the gale has passed.  
One by one the tired leaflets  
Sink to rest at last.

**Aspens** are planted in the field behind the home in a lovely circle.



At Aspen our Seasonal Table is situated in our dining room, this is a time where we all come together to enjoy and appreciate craft work both young people and staff have contributed while enjoying a meal together in our home. Our seasonal table will change with the seasons and incorporate different festivals and celebrations during this period, we have handmade pictures and a clay dragon from our Michaelmas celebrates, an autumn theme and have added circles of willow to reflect the planted circles of Aspen. The young people not only contribute through making items they will also use their daily walks as an opportunity to find natural items such as leaves, conkers and pinecones which they want to bring back to our home and add to the table. Our seasonal table provides a culture in our home that offers consistency, recreation, warmth, nourishment and trust.

**Wildmoor** is the geology formation of the South and West of Sunfield, made up of pure red sandstone.

Here the Seasonal Table is in our dining room, where it can bring a sense of time to meals. It is a large display that captures the eye and allows the young people to visualise the themes that are being incorporated for the season. Wildmoor Cottage's Seasonal Table consists of a Farm, made from natural materials which the young people helped to make; using materials such as felt, clay and wool. This incorporates the ethos that Ruskin Mill - Sunfield instils within our young people. The Seasonal table display also has a large cloud, with the different weather conditions displayed, which has on occasion been incorporated into the young people's daily tasks, at being able to identify the weather and then work with their carers at getting prepared for the day. All of the young people within the home have the opportunity to add items to the seasonal table, throughout the season, and can participate in re-arranging the table for the following season, during their weekly Key Worker sessions. Not only does Wildmoor Cottage's Seasonal Table display bring light and warmth to the home, it continuously incorporates the Ethos and helps the young people to learn the importance of following the rhythm of their day.



**Shenstone** is named after the 18<sup>th</sup> Century poet and landscape designer who lived nearby at his estate, the Leasowes in Halesowen.

The boys on Shenstone Cottage have made the most of their two weeks indoors by trying to capture the outside and bring it in. Staff and young people have had conversations about autumn, the changes we experience outside and how it makes us feel. The boys have made beautiful decorations, including felting autumn leaves, carving pumpkins, making a scarecrow to keep guard and felting to celebrate our wonderful NHS and key workers! The Shenstone team are incredibly proud of how well our boys have responded to the circumstances and the creativity and spirit they've filled each day with- having the team back together has put a big smile on everyone's faces.



## *Seasonal wishes*

We hope that you have enjoyed this “socially distanced” walk around our cottages and through the seasons as much as we have putting it together! We always want to share the exciting things that are happening at Sunfield and could not be more proud of the work that our staff, children, and young people engage in day in and out to make our community a beautiful place in which to live and grow together.