

Case Study: Terri McCargar, Librarian, Latymer Upper School

Information literacy skills

With an increasing focus on health & wellbeing at the school, the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) curriculum was expanded from a series of assemblies to include a fortnightly timetabled lesson in Year 7. The Head of PSHCE & Wellbeing approached Terri, the librarian, to request to hold lessons in the Library. Pupils would work in small groups to research a BOUNCE topic (the school's internal term for health & wellbeing: Brain, Optimism, Unwind, Nutrition, Connect and Exercise) of their choice, and develop a campaign (e.g. Eat Five-a-Day) as a simple website.

As Year 7 has no timetabled library lessons, Terri had been looking for an opportunity to teach students information literacy skills. This seemed an ideal opportunity to support the PSHCE curriculum while also teaching students transferable research skills.

Terri was able to deliver two lessons: 1) finding good academic sources online and 2) a library-based lesson on finding information in books, plus a brief overview on using images responsibly and creating a simple bibliography. Pupils spent the next 2–3 lessons (4–6 weeks) researching and writing their projects, and there was a spike in loans and reservations of relevant PSHCE books during this time.

Pupils were asked to share the link to their published Google Site with their teacher; the Library team would add marks for Research Skills using the mark scheme developed in collaboration with the Head of PSHCE.

The quality of the research varied enormously. While most groups referenced at least one book and one online source, they struggled with synthesizing the “facts” they had learned into the persuasive writing for their campaign. The bulk of many campaigns relied on pupils' own opinions with little or no link to their research. They fared much better with the images, which were generally well chosen and referenced.

Terri had previously worked with teaching staff to develop the School's Academic



Year 7 pupils find sources of information for their PSHCE campaign.

Honesty Policy, which states the expectation that pupils use a range of sources and list them in a bibliography, acknowledge any words, ideas or concepts originally produced by someone else that have been used through referencing and follow the referencing style recommended by their teacher. As Terri suspected these skills were not routinely expected or taught in the lower school, and that many teachers feel less confident in teaching/assessing these skills, teaching all Year 7 pupils how to reference sources (including images) in a simplified bibliography was a great first step towards addressing this. Doing so in the context of a PSHCE project, where the teachers were drawn from different departments (Religious Studies, Classics, English, Biology and Mandarin) and none was a subject specialist, had the added bonus of reinforcing – for both teachers and students – a skills-based approach that is transferable to any subject.

The development of the PSHCE programme is an important part of the five-year strategy for the school. The Library's involvement reinforced its central role in supporting the teaching & learning at school. Terri found it was helpful (and ultimately reassuring) to see the variety of teaching styles and approaches; the more individual teachers she works with, the more she learns from them and the more they see how the Library can support teaching and learning in a variety of ways.