

SPHE Overview – Myself and the Wider World



The strand 'Myself and the Wider World' is subdivided into the following strand units:

Strand	Strand Units
Myself and the Wider World	Developing Citizenship
	Media Education

The strand units are consistent across all class levels, reflective of the spiral nature of the curriculum. This strand places the child in the context of the world in which he/she lives. It aims to develop a respect for cultural and human diversity in the world and an appreciation for the democratic way of life. The child is encouraged to become an active and responsible citizen who understands the interdependent nature of the world in which he/she lives. The content will be complemented by the work carried out in social, environmental and scientific education (SESE).

Developing citizenship

This strand unit begins by focusing on the school or class as a community in microcosm. By experiencing community in such a practical way, children learn what belonging and participation really mean.

In a school that values caring and shared responsibility, children can learn to:

- share and cooperate
- set realistic goals and targets for themselves and others
- develop leadership and administrative qualities
- celebrate difference
- be part of something that goes beyond personal interest and recognise that they can make a valuable contribution to society

The concept of democracy becomes real and meaningful for children as they are given the opportunity to:

- voice individual opinions
- undertake a variety of responsibilities
- reach group decisions by consensus
- listen to different points of view
- work both as an individual and as a member of a group
- be involved in school decision making

These experiences lay the foundations for active and interested participation in society.

In this strand unit children explore the diversity of the world in which they live. They are encouraged to learn about their own traditions and culture and are given opportunities to compare and contrast those with other ethnic or cultural groups in society. They explore and examine how discrimination can occur in school, in the local community and in their own country. They are particularly encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour and to acknowledge where they themselves may be prejudiced and manifesting discrimination, and how this could be counteracted.

Exploring aspects of local, national, European and wider communities can help children develop a sense of the interdependent nature of the world. By appreciating this diversity they are encouraged to develop a critical awareness of their own identity in the widest sense. A sense of individual and community for caring for the environment is fostered in this strand unit also.

Media Education

The media, in all its forms, influence our actions and our behaviour and can unconsciously affect the decisions that we make. Media education encourages children to examine the media in a critical way and to explore how they can influence behaviour and opinion.

Children are given an opportunity to:

- become familiar with different media
- explore how prejudice and partiality can distort information
- explore some of the techniques used in the media
- examine how these techniques are used in promoting particular ideas or in selling particular products
- look at the media in a critical way by asking questions, exploring perspectives and examining bias
- begin to investigate advertising and marketing strategies and practice using some of these approaches for themselves
- become discerning about the messages they receive from different media sources
- examine how families and relationships are portrayed in the media, how conflicts are resolved and how intimacy and sexuality are represented
- examine the effects of advertising on various aspects of life, for example on purchasing, dietary habits, health behaviour and lifestyle.

Children are also given opportunities to explore the range of information available to them through information and communication technologies. They are encouraged to make the technology work for them and become discerning and judicious media users.