Lesson 5: Vaccines - Facts vs Fake News!

WE ARE LEARNING TO: Find out facts about immunisation and vaccinations.

BORIS ASKS: Can the children find out facts about vaccinations from credible sources?
Can the children suggest ways to discern if information online is credible?

RESOURCES: Slides; worksheet; Internet access for children.

Show the children the slide and ask them what they think is happening in the picture and why. Explain that vaccinations prevent infectious diseases. Before vaccinations were introduced it was very common for young children to die of infectious diseases such as diphtheria, and polio. Thanks to vaccinations this is now very rare.

Ask the children if they remember having a vaccination (they should have had a nasal flu vaccination) or if they have been with any younger siblings when they had one. Ask what they remember about it.

Show the children the slide and tell the children that vaccines were invented by an English scientist in 1796 named Edward Jenner. He discovered that injecting a child with a harmless disease protected them from a more serious deadly one. (If you have time you could watch the film clip from BBC Bitesize clip to find out more - https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zgj8q6f)

Explain that since Edward Jenner’s discovery, vaccinations against many other infectious diseases have been invented and have saved lives - up to 3 million per year!

However, since the rise in social media there have been many fake news stories about vaccinations that have made parents cautious about vaccinating their children. This has led to a lower uptake in vaccinations and a worldwide increase in cases of diseases like measles, a highly infectious and unpleasant disease.

Ask the children what they understand by the term ‘fake news’. Explain that fake news can be a deliberate spreading of misinformation or it can be that facts are not properly checked before they shared and mistakes are made. Bad news travels fast so fake news can often be shared more widely than the truth. It is believed that this is what has happened regarding information about vaccinations and has had a significant negative impact on the numbers of children being vaccinated.

Here are some ways in which this relates to the curriculum:

R&HE

Health & Prevention 6. The facts and science relating to immunisation and vaccination
Internet safety and harms 6. How to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted

BIBLE REFERENCE
Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or turn away from them. Proverbs 4:5-9

SMSC

The moral development of pupils is shown by their:
* ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England
* understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
* interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

SIAMS
Strand 4: Community and Living Well Together
Strand 5: Dignity and Respect
Use the slide to discuss how to discern if information online is credible:

- **Look for the source** (where the information is coming from). Is it from an organisation you know and trust?
- **Compare the information with other sources** (online or by asking an expert). Are they saying the same thing?
- **Look at the spelling and grammar.** Are there errors? Reputable sources have good standards so wouldn’t publish something with mistakes.

Ask the children to suggest a credible source of information online about vaccinations (NHS, Government site, World Health Organisation).

Give the children the worksheet listing a selection of myths that have circulated online over recent years regarding childhood vaccinations and ask them to search online for the truth.

1. Vaccines contain unsafe chemicals.
2. Measles, mumps and rubella are rare so your child doesn’t need to be immunised.
3. It is safer for your child to become immune by catching the disease than by being vaccinated.
4. Vaccines can cause autism.
5. The vaccines overload or weaken your child’s immune system.

Finish by reminding children to always check what they are reading or looking at online to avoid being taken in by fake news. After all Fake is a Mistake!

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